PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP AS A STRATEGY TO BUILD QUALITY

Laura McAlister, Sound Child Care Solutions, WA
Steve White, Sheltering Arms, GA
Gigi Yu, Collaborative Teacher’s Institute, NM
Mindy Zapata, Southwest Human Development, AZ

Facilitator
Louise Stoney, Opportunities Exchange

What is Pedagogical Leadership?

The word Pedagogy means the theory and practice of education

Pedagogical Leadership refers to how we lead teaching and learning in early care and education programs
## Control
- Teachers/Directors accountable to regulators, funders, state standards
- PD is mandated & always delivered externally
- Peer communication is discouraged
- Staff wait to be told what to do
- Compliance with standards (licensing/QRIS/HS) is goal

## Order
- Teachers/Directors accountable to each other guided by a set of center-wide core values
- PD woven into the daily work; with time & space for staff to reflect & learn from one another
- Curiosity and peer communication is encouraged
- Staff understand their role and feel empowered to act
- Standards are a platform or framework, not a goal

---

## Pedagogical Leadership: How Shared Services Helps
- Site Directors can serve as instructional leaders (when freed up from multiple administrative tasks)
- Shared, embedded quality improvement staff can support teachers to strengthen teaching and learning
- Teachers have time ‘off the floor’ to think and plan; opportunities to reflect on their work, with peers, in professional learning communities
- Children receive the individualized, reflective teaching they need to succeed
Panel Discussion

A structured conversation with leaders from four organizations that use a Shared Services framework to support Pedagogical Leadership.

Each organization approaches the issue in a different way.

Let’s begin by learning a bit about each organization.

Sound Child Care Solutions
Seattle WA

- Alliance includes 6 centers, 26 classrooms in diverse neighborhoods (12 dual-language) & over 100 staff from 18 countries
- Shared Functions include financial/admin tasks (e.g. payroll, benefits, billing, purchasing, reporting, HR etc.) as well as:
  - Staff recruitment and substitute pool
  - Pedagogical Leadership and professional development (cross-site learning communities; internal coaches)
  - Structure for collaborative decision-making and leadership
- Directors’ time freed up to focus on teacher supervision, family relationships, quality early learning
- Curricula varies among centers all focus on working from a sense of meaning & shared core values
Sheltering Arms
Atlanta GA

- Non-profit ECE corporation with 16 sites serving a total of 2,200 children
- Primary focus is low-income children however some sites served mixed-income & include partnerships with schools, Educare, economic & workforce development, etc.
- Receives funding from over 100 sources, including HS/EHS, GA PreK, CCDF, philanthropy, parent fees and more.
- Sites are linked by common core values and approach, regardless of funding.
- Sites receive agency-wide support for business and pedagogical leadership.

Southwest Human Development
Phoenix, AZ

- Arizona’s largest non-profit agency
- Includes more than 40 public + private programs serving 135,000 children and families including: child health and welfare, disabilities, Head Start/Early Head Start, training and education.
- Delivers professional development, training and coaching statewide
- Additional services include mental health, disabilities, early literacy, child welfare, and more
- Centralized administration for all programs & services that employ 900 staff
Collaborative Teachers Institute
Santa Fe, NM

Project of Santa Fe Baby Fund at the Santa Fe Community Foundation. Includes:

- Community of Practice to help experienced educators become pedagogical leaders in their programs and schools.
- Tools for studying “pedagogical documentation” and reflection to support best practice.
- Substitute and Staff Recruitment Support

http://www.collaborativeteachersinstitute.com/

Job-Embedded Professional Development

What does this mean?

What’s different about this approach?

What does it look like in action?
Leading Continuous Quality Improvement

Responsibility vs. Accountability

“Responsibility involves an internal commitment to self-improvement, the improvement of others around us, and the school community at large.”

“Accountability, on the other hand, has tended to mean that we are being held accountable by some outside authority. Accountability measures often mitigate against the development of responsibility, because external demand can evoke compliance and resistance.”

From *Building leadership Capacity in Schools* by Linda Lambert.
**Shared Leadership Principles**

**“We Used to Think”**
- Accountability was enough
- Training was enough
- Data is a “bright, pretty graph”
- Assign tasks/expect great results
- Leaders have all the answers
- We’ve ARRIVED!

**“We Now Know”**
- Shared responsibility is essential
- Thought-provoking learning is key
- Data is continuous… it drives practice & planning
- Provide shared opportunity and support
- Leaders elevate and support mastery
- You have never ARRIVED but celebrate success during the journey!

**SCCS Approach to Pedagogical Leadership**

- Cross-center Pedagogical Leadership – called the Community of Reflection and Practice (CORP)
  - Teachers apply to participate and study together
- Cross-center Directors Leadership Team (meets monthly)
- Mentors: SCCS has three types
  - Mentors who lead the CORP
    - Shared across many classrooms in consortium
    - Conduct Side-by-side mentoring
  - Coaches From City Universal Preschool
  - Site specific Mentors
- Relief Squad available to all sites
  - Staff support, shared floaters + a shared substitute pool
A New Approach to Accountability

Classroom Teachers Begin to:
- See children’s strengths and competencies.
- Have a new sense of curiosity & purpose
- Gain confidence in observing children, conducting assessments and adapting environments.
- Find their own voice and leadership style.

Collaborative Teachers Institute Structure

1. Monthly Facilitators Training Meetings
   - Each participating program selects a “Facilitator” – the Center Director or an interested teacher
   - Facilitators are trained to support teacher inquiries and team collaboration
   - Facilitators learn to strengthen the connection between teachers’ learning and children’s learning

2. Onsite Collaborative Teacher Meetings
   - Regular, structured meetings for all teachers at a particular site
   - Meetings follow a protocol to support learning.
   - Documentation of children’s interests is shared and collaboratively interpreted
   - Teachers learn to deepen the children’s learning as well as their own
Discussion

• What have you learned about staffing patterns/structures that support pedagogical leadership?
• How can we help staff shift from culture of compliance to a culture of reflection?
• What about accountability to funders – how can we go beyond scores to real reflection?

Leadership as a Behavior Not a Role

“In this chaotic world, we need leaders. But we don’t need bosses. We need leaders to help us develop the clear identity that lights the dark moments of confusion and to support us as we learn how act on our values.”

Margaret Wheatley
“. . . When there’s a shared vision (as opposed to the all-too-familiar ‘vision statement’), people excel and learn, not because they are told to, but because they want to. But many leaders have personal visions that never get translated into shared visions that galvanize an organization.”

Peter Senge

“Without connections, nothing happens. The more access people have to one another, the more possibilities there are.”

• Learning Communities
• Focus on inquiry, curiosity, critical thinking
• Peer-to-peer, in role-alike groups