

# Developing Leadership Capacity, Renewing Enthusiasm for the Role

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## Educational Leaders: Creating a Culture of Change

School leadership is dynamic, multifaceted and ever-changing. In today's climate of enhanced expectations, principals are responsible for quality teaching and learning in their schools by improving their school environment. They need to be educational visionaries; curriculum developers; evaluation experts; community creators; budget analysts; facility providers; and managers of legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives.

The principals cannot perform the entire leadership task by themselves. They depend on contributions from many others in their institutions. This sharing of leadership responsibility leads to bonding between staff members and in easing the demands on school principals. It has an empowering effect on teachers. It allows them to better anticipate and respond to the demands of the working environment.

Perhaps my passion for educational leadership came from my family of teachers and educationists. I believe in cultivating leadership talent by investing in my own teachers and creating opportunities for teachers to develop leadership skills.

## THE SUPER SIX: A Model of Organic Leadership

Everywhere I look, I see signs suggesting 'going green' and 'benefits of eating organic food' which are considered good for our health. Everyone is focused on living a healthier lifestyle these days. So how does "going green" and being more "**organic**" relate to leadership and how leaders lead?

Just as eating more natural and organic foods seem to be healthier over the long term, being an organic leader means being able to develop healthy relationships and make healthier choices for the institution's future growth. Organic leaders make it healthy, beneficial and safe for everyone to contribute.

**As an organic leader**, the focus on satisfaction and healthy relationships potentially lead to inclusive work environments where everyone is expected and encouraged to bring their best talents and skills to work every day, knowing they will be valued and appreciated. In this endeavour, my Super Six Team was created wherein I have a set of six leaders 'in the making', persistently supporting me in my ventures to be the best in the education industry. They have been designated with responsibilities as per their forte which results in better performance and output.

## Transforming Education: Inspiring Growth Mindset

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other. Without strategic and purposeful planning, communication, and hands-on support, school goals cannot be realized, teachers'

development cannot be sustained, and students' achievement suffers. The Vice-Principal takes care of these day-to-day working conditions in order to make our school a better place with a conducive environment for learning and teaching.

Growth mindset helps the students and teachers to improve the way they work and their ability to cope with pressure. The corridors are festooned with motivational posters, and messages on the mindset of great heroes who simply believed their way to the top. These are all attempts to put growth mindset theory into practice through motivation as the need of the hour is not to proceed with 'a set mind' but with 'a mindset for growth' or 'a progressive mindset'.

### **Strong and Robust School Assessment Programme**

We strongly believe that assessments are an integral and enjoyable part of learning which is not distinct from the learning process itself.

Under the supervision of the **Head of the Examination Department**, teachers use a variety of assessment strategies, tools, and techniques to build a detailed understanding of each learner's development. Documenting, Detailing and Reporting of the evaluation is done methodically, transparently and with great attention to detail and as per the individual needs of the students. This data helps teachers to design learning experiences tailored according to the needs of their students.

### **STEAM: Future focussed Teaching and Learning**

Education is the foundation on which a country is built. It helps our children to reach their full potential, both as productive members of the society and as responsible, principled citizens. The **Senior Coordinator** of the school supervises the classes to have knowledge, understanding and enthusiasm for creative teaching and learning as a key to raising achievement, aspiration and motivation. Her role also includes streamlining remedial teaching, peer mentoring, and exam schedule to ensure a robust school system.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are a set of skills that students need to develop in order to succeed in the information age. The 21<sup>st</sup> century skills can be broadly categorised into three types:

- **Learning Skills** which include critical thinking, creative thinking, collaborating and communicating.
- **Literacy Skills** which encompass information literacy, media literacy and being technologically literate.
- **Life Skills** such as flexibility, social skills, resilience, assertiveness, productivity and leadership that are essential to deal effectively with the challenges of life.

Smooth implementation of this **STEAM** is ensured under the headship of the **Senior Coordinator**. It is an educational approach to learning that uses Science, Technology,

Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics to guide student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking.

**STEAM** lessons employ Design Thinking which is a structured framework for identifying challenges, gathering information, generating potential solutions, refining ideas, and testing solutions.

Hon'ble Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's '**Make in India**' initiative which aims to make India a global manufacturing hub has increased the onus of the academic institutions to churn out highly skilled individuals in the fields of Science, Technology, Arts and Mathematics. Our children will need to be globally competent to survive the ever increasing competition and meet the demands of a highly advanced and ever evolving world.

#### **Community Service: Giving back to the Society**

The school was selected for the **Vidya Daan Project**, a program which has been launched by **CBSE** in an attempt to synergize countrywide developments in the field of education. It provides schools and teachers a space to share their best practices and e-content with the entire nation to enable better teaching-learning **at no cost**.

**The Head of the English Department** spearheaded the project and involved the entire department.

The work has been appreciated by the Board. The school has been awarded with the **CBSE Teachers' Award 2018** for content development under the **Vidya Daan Programme**. This is a model example of Organic Leadership where leaders are created.

#### **Student Council: Facilitating Every Child to Engage and Lead the Change in their World**

Students have the ability to mobilize people to achieve a positive change. Student council is a great place to launch a new idea that can benefit the school community. The **Head of the Commerce Department** is made responsible to strengthen the position of the student council and improve their leadership skills. She develops plans to involve every pupil in decision-making, social action and honing key skills for life.

To contribute effectively to the today's increasingly complex societies, students need to think critically, communicate effectively, collaborate with diverse peers, solve difficult problems and engage with technology, to name a few requirements.

As students become a part of the Students' Council, these skills are developed through various activities for their future success. They draft and formulate the council manual that includes the main agenda, the plan of action and the achievements of the Council.

## Leadership within the Classroom

With the aim of empowering learners with the ability to realize their full potential, 'Leadership within the Classroom' Programme is initiated under the administration of the **Head of the Hindi Department**. The objective of the programme is to nurture leaders of tomorrow by developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in learners. For effective implementation of the innovative strategy- **ABCD**, the following parameters that form the backbone of the school are defined:

- **ACADEMICS**
  - The in-charge lay emphasis on '**self-structured learning**' beyond the four walls of the classroom and propagate the idea- **the world is our classroom**.
  - As drivers of their own learning, the students prepare self-improvement study plans and devise **PACE** approach (Plan, Act, Create & Communicate and Evaluate) for academic improvement.
- **BELONGINGNESS**
  - The in-charge emphasises on inculcating values of good citizenship and ingrain a deep sense of belongingness for the school.
  - The students are engaged in multifarious activities, environmental initiatives and cultural programmes.
- **CO-SCHOLASTIC**
  - The in-charge focuses on physical fitness, art education, skill development projects based on **STEAM** Education and Artificial Intelligence.
  - The budding leaders use problem solving skills to resolve various issues.
- **DISCIPLINE**
  - The group is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining discipline through counselling and open discussions.
  - The in-charge endeavours to imbibe a sense of self-discipline among the students.
  - Balanced Diet plans and exercise regime for students are designed.

The students are asked to identify the parameters that they wish to work upon as per their interest. In a class of forty, the students are divided into four groups. Each group (comprising of ten students) take on the responsibility to work on a particular domain.

Putting together the entire strategy isn't a cake walk. It has its share of ups and downs like any other new project taken up. It took around a year to implement the strategy effectively. The parameters are now divided as per the House system. Each house has been assigned a domain to work upon during their tenure and everyone gets a chance to show their skills in each of the mentioned domains.

### **Team Super Six: Leaders in the Making**

That is my team of six teachers as potential leaders. I call them '**Leaders in the Making**'.

The challenging roles assigned to the teachers keep alive the bubbling excitement and the urge to prove themselves, as is required to be a leader. They constantly endeavour to do better and most of all motivate those, working with them, to achieve higher.

### **A New Dawn**

With the passage of time, learning environment of the school has improved. Resistance has turned into commitment and the positive impact of leadership is evident in different aspects of the administration of the school.

Everyone can work together to transform schools, and my experience as an organic leader with a participative approach shows a great way to start!