

Academic Leadership for Strengthening Learning Competencies in Elementary Schools in Jammu & Kashmir

Introduction

Academic leadership is an important area as the main focus of work of a school head ultimately boils down to the learning of the students in the school. As a school leader your key role is how to strengthen the learning competencies of students of your school. This module, through its multiple components, would enable you to understand how to make yourself an academic leader of your school for strengthening learning competencies of yourself, your staff and students in order to make your school a professional learning organization. The themes covered in this module range from academic leadership, how academic leadership contributes to student learning, learning outcomes, learning competencies with focus on 21st Century Skills and roles and responsibilities of an academic leader.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Identify & describe a perspective on academic leadership
2. Explain & improve learning competencies of self, your staff & students

Key Words: learning competencies, professional learning organization, academic leader.

Hours: 3 hours

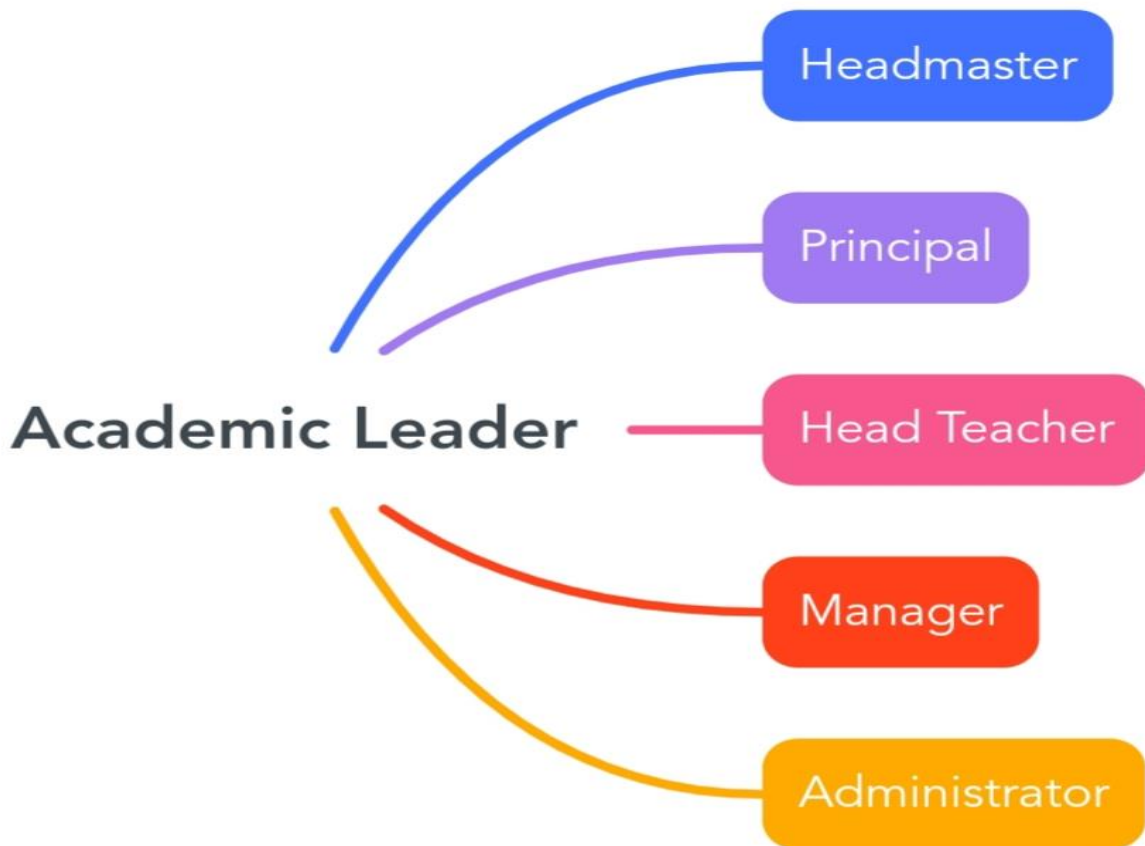
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1. Academic Leadership

What do you think is academic leadership in general and your perspective of it in your own context?

Your reflections/ideas about an academic leader must have been the following:



An academic leader is one who acts as a bridge between the teachers and the students. “Within each individual school, (academic) leadership can contribute to improved student learning by shaping the conditions and climate in which teaching and learning occur.” (Pont 16)

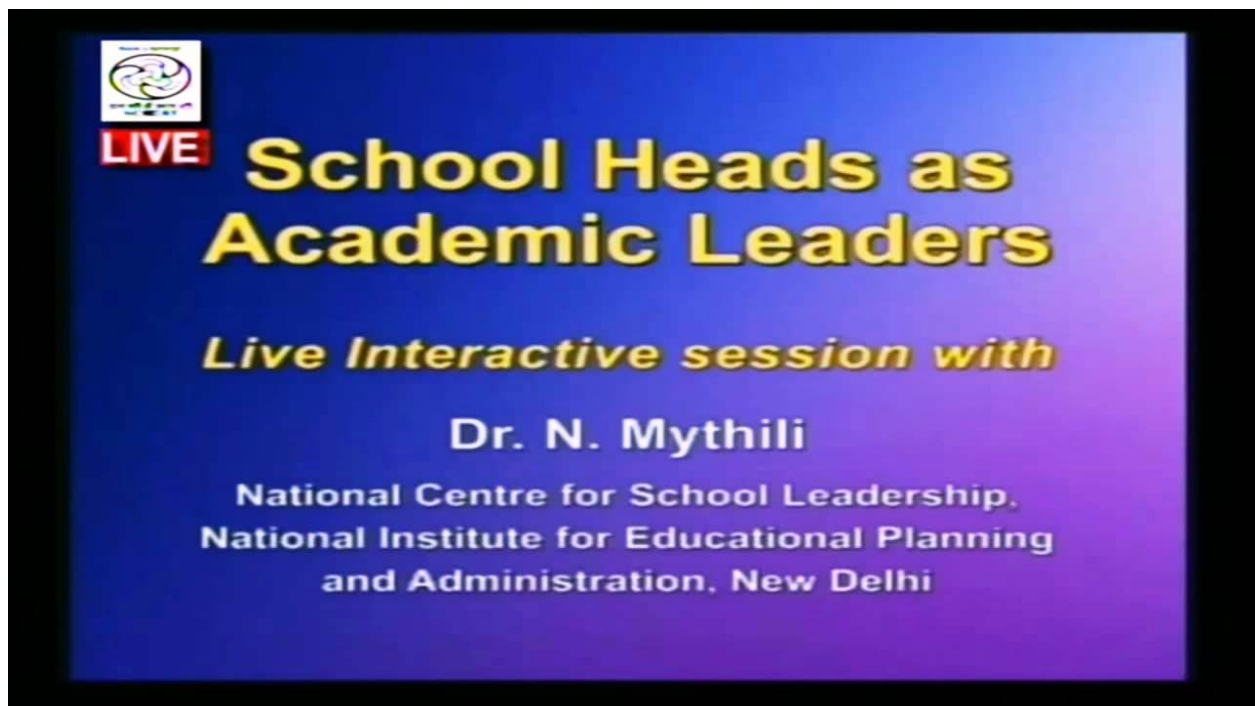
Academic leadership contributes to student learning

There is ample research that school or academic leaders contribute to improvement in learning outcomes of students by providing circumstances and opportunities in which teaching and learning takes place effectively. “A large body of research on school effectiveness and improvement from a wide range of countries and school contexts has consistently highlighted the pivotal role of school leadership in making school more effective.” (Pont 16)

However it is to be kept in mind that ‘the relationship between school or academic leadership and student learning is mostly indirect’. (19) As we know, a school leader does not directly work inside the classroom but his influence on the learning of students is mainly done ‘through other people, events and organizational factors such as teachers, classroom practices and school climate.’ (Hallinger)

Thus, school or academic leaders have a number of roles and responsibilities for enhancing the learning of the students.

Now watch this video and respond to the reflective questions given below:



https://youtu.be/NZ8NOLiz_EU

Reflective Questions

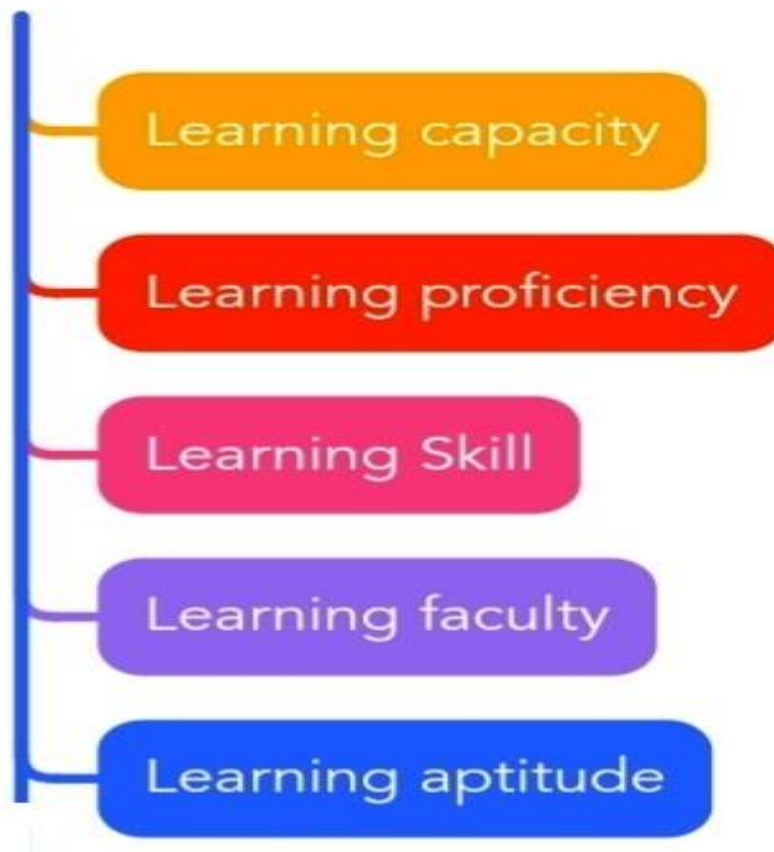
1. Who is an academic leader? How is it different from the one you had in your mind earlier?
2. Why do we need an academic leader to enhance the learning of the students?

2. Learning Competencies

How would you define learning competencies of the students in your school?

Your reflections/ideas about learning competencies must have been the following:

Learning Competencies



Before we understand what learning competencies are, let us recall the definition of learning outcomes. NCERT in its Learning Outcomes Book (2017) defines them as: “Learning Outcomes are assessment standards indicating the expected levels of learning that children should achieve for that class. These outcomes can be used as check points to assess learning at different points of time. The learning outcomes would help teachers to understand the learning levels of children in their respective classes individually as well as collectively.” (i)

Thus we can say that learning outcomes are statements that describe knowledge, skills and attitudes students should acquire by the end of a lesson/class.

Learning competencies are the combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are expected to be developed in the students. NEP-2020 lays greater emphasis on the development of 21st Century Skills in the context of making our students future ready. The following figure taken from <https://pin.it/ugarlhksartssf> represents these skills in a comprehensible manner as these skills are critical for our students to be able to compete globally.



Learning Competencies can be measured through Learning Outcomes with following characteristics as mentioned in NIPUN Bharat guidelines:

1. **Explicit and measurable learning outcomes are defined which are the pathways for competency acquisition.**
2. **The pedagogy is based on activities, experiences, integration of arts/sports/technology, etc. and connecting the learnings to real-life situations, so that child learns to apply knowledge.**
3. **Children advance to the next level of learning outcomes only upon achieving certain level of proficiency at the current level.**
4. **Primarily formative assessment is used, and skills or concepts are assessed in multiple contexts to ensure that both deep understanding and applications are acquired by children.**

So, learning competencies are the abilities and capabilities that students develop and apply for successful learning, living and working.

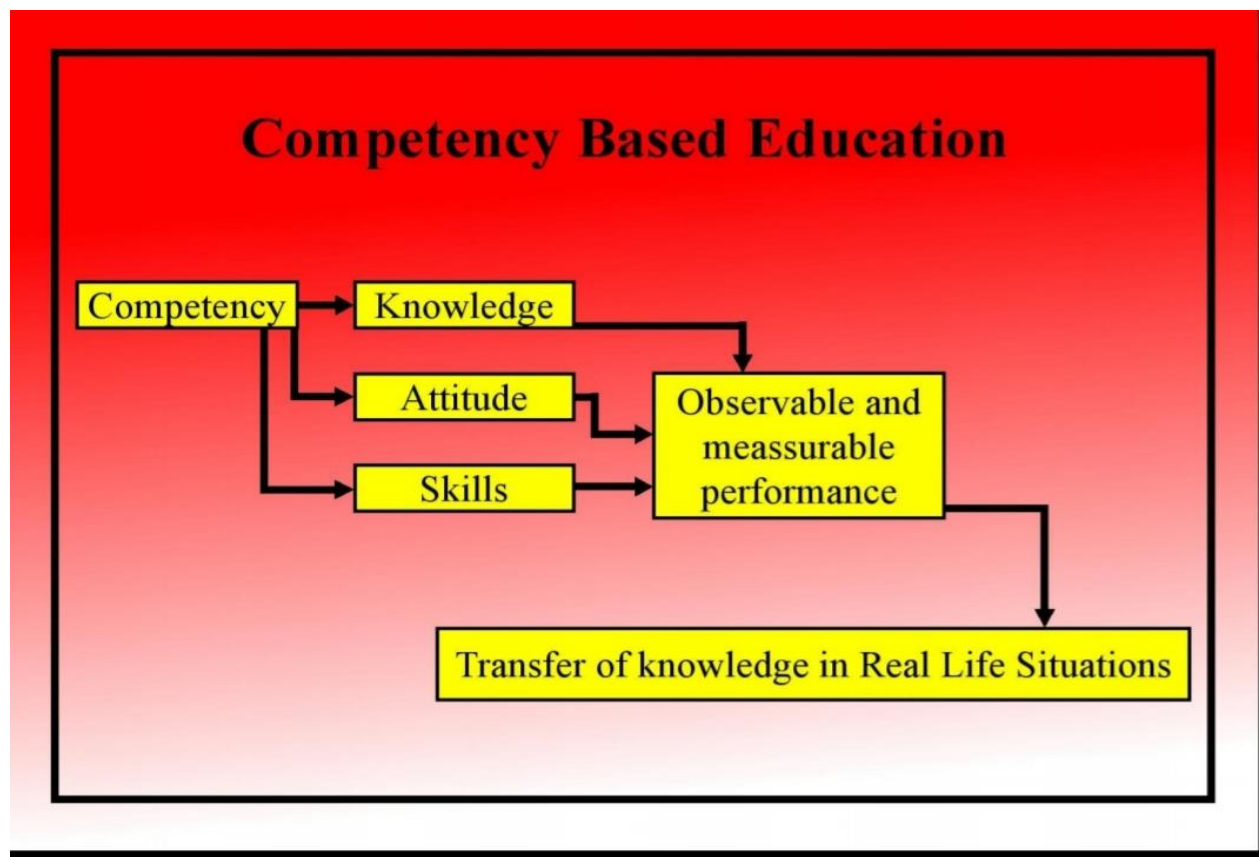


Figure 1: Source: NISHTA

Reflective Questions

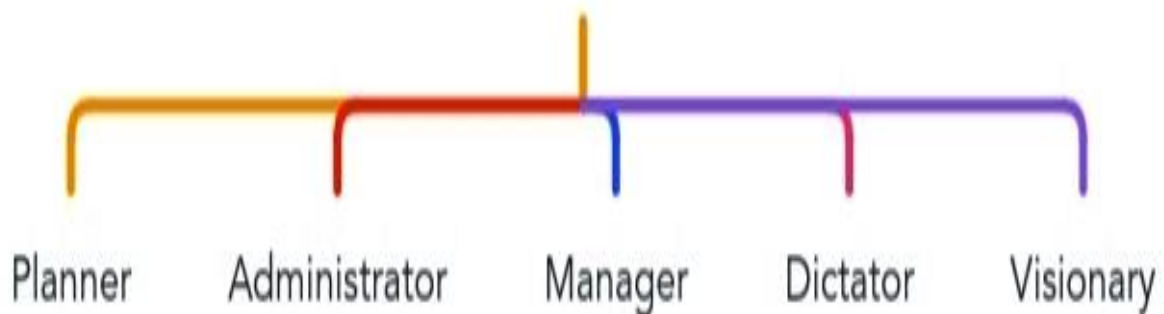
1. How do you identify learning competencies of students in your school?
2. How are learning competencies different from learning outcomes?

3. Roles and responsibilities of an academic leader

What do you think are the roles and responsibilities of an academic leader?

Your reflections/ideas about roles and responsibilities of an academic leader must have been the following:

Role & Responsibility of an Academic Leader



OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) in its report has identified four major domains of roles and responsibilities as key tasks for school (academic) leaders for strengthening learning competencies within their schools. They are:

1. **Supporting and developing teacher quality.**
2. **Defining goals and measuring progress.**
3. **Strategic resource management, and**
4. **Collaboration with external partners.**

Now watch this video and respond to the reflective questions given below:



https://youtu.be/gJE_zVqhaCE

Reflective Questions

1. How do you identify your role and responsibility as an academic leader in your school?
2. What steps do you think must be taken to improve the learning competencies in your school?

References

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Time Slot	Theme	Duration
Module: Academic Leadership for Strengthening Learning Competencies in Elementary Schools in Jammu & Kashmir		
10:00 -10:40	Academic Leadership	40 min
10:40 – 10:50	Energizer	10 min
10:50 – 12:20	Learning Competencies	90 min
12:20 – 01:00	Roles & Responsibilities of an Academic Leader	40 min