**Module contextualization of *Perspective on School Leadership*(Key Area 1)**

**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING**

During the development of the contextualized material the following were kept in consideration:

1. Module available from the website of NUEPA was used as the main source of work.
2. Inclusion of content in the module includes:
* Common situational experiences of teachers working in the government schools of the state.
* Extended/ additional tasks for more clarity on technical definitions and theoretical concepts (where need was observed)
* **All new content have been marked in blue** and incorporated within the existing module structure.

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 **PERSPECTIVE ON SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

**Introduction**

This course seeks to develop an understanding of leadership and its impact on school transformation.It builds a conceptual understanding of school as a learning organization, as a place for promoting growth and development of children and as a ground for continuous experimentation and change. This course, thus, focuses on building a vision for change and transformation of school.

**Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course you will be able to:

1. Understand Leadership in the context of schools
2. Develop a vision for school Transformation
3. Understand the need for transforming schools as learning organizations
4. Understand processes required for transforming schools to learning organizations

**Units**

1. Understanding School Leadership
2. Schools as Learning Organization
3. Building a School-based Vision

**Mode of Practice and Assessment:** Individual Reflection and Multiple Choice Questions

##### **Unit 1: Understanding School Leadership**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of the unit you will be able to:

1. Define leadership in your context.
2. Understand your role as an administrator vis-à-vis a leader.
3. Identify strategies to help you towards a transformational leadership role

**Key words**: Influence; Innovate; Transformation; Team Building; People Development

**Introduction**

This unit builds a conceptual understanding on school leadership, the multiple roles of school heads and its impact on students’ growth and development.  It focuses on schools as grounds for continuous experimentation and change.

Let us begin the learning from our own understanding of leadership.

**Situation:**

Mr. Mohan Sharma has been appointed as Principal of a government school in West Sikkim through the merit system of Sikkim Public Service Commission. Prior to his appointment, he was working as a Post Graduate Teacher of English. He was a diligent teacher whose objective was to improve the performance of students in his subject. He got along well with his colleagues who formed a large part of his social network. Hence, his interpersonal relationship revolved mainly around his own peer group. For his new role, Mr. Sharma has not received any orientation from the department to prepare him.

Now, in his new position as Head of a school:

* What are the required skills do you think that he needs?
* What should be his objectives and goals?
* What changes must he bring about in himself to prepare for his new role – both personal and professional?

Discuss in groups

**Are you a Leader by Position or Leader by Action?**

There is difference between two kinds of leaders: **Appointed** leaders or leaders by position and **Emergent** leaders or leaders by action. Emergent leaders or leaders by action, are those who emerge from the crowd through their actions, influence people in large numbers, take them along in pursuance of a goal and remain in the hearts forever through their knowledge, skills and most importantly attitude. You may know of many political or spiritual leaders who are charismatic but a few stalwarts like Dr. Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore and Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam were known for their contributions in the field of education. Other prominent leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Abraham Lincoln, Nelson Mandela and many others were known for their charismatic personalities which shown through their commitment in leading their countries from the front.

As a School Head/ Principal, you may be an appointed leader, occupying the position of a head due to your seniority or may be through a qualifying test based on a formal letter for a fixed tenure, which is valid till the date inscribed on it, but before you expect others to obey you and bring changes in your school, do a small reflective exercise.

**Reflective Questions**

* Have you actually been able to make space for yourself within your institution and among your colleagues to emerge as their leader?
* Do you have the required skills to convince your staff and develop collaborations?
* Do you have sufficient knowledge of the central and the state norms of administration, finance and personnel management so as to take decisions?
* Do you have the preparedness and required communication skills to build healthy partnerships?
* What do you think you would need to learn as knowledge, skills and attitude to emerge as a leader rather than just be an appointed one?

**Key Message**

* Leadership is neither in-born nor a positional power
* Leadership is experiential
* Leadership is imbibed through continuous learning from errors

##### 1.1: Leadership Defined

Leadership in lay man's language is understood to be an authority or someone with enough power or influence heading a group of people or organization. Let us try to unpack these terms "Power", "Authority" and "Influence" and see how these could actually help us define or redefine "**Leadership**".

***Power****is an ability to change the behavior of other person(s) with manipulation of reward and punishment.* There are three kinds of power: (i) coercive power (personal harm) (ii) remunerative power (money) and (iii) normative power (norms, rules and regulations). The traditional kings, bureaucrats in government sector enjoy leadership by virtue of power position they hold to exert leadership in one's own sphere of work.

***Authority****is legitimized power.  Where power is ability, authority is a right.*

***Influence****is an ability to change the behavior of other person(s) without the manipulation of reward and punishment.*

You can exert your leadership in all the three ways, but the best way is to influence others is without authority and create a climate of trust, free from fear of rewards or punishments.  The impact of influence is stronger, enduring and lasting. One premise that can be drawn on leadership, apt in all school situations is “Leadership is an influencing process".

**Situation:**

Ms Sabitri Rai is a head mistress of a Government Secondary School in South Sikkim. She undertakes the following activities in her school.

* She makes it compulsory for teachers to attend meetings after school hours.
* She regularly takes proxy classes in middle school where she conducts English speaking classes which has resulted in a marked improvement in students’ speaking skills. This has also inspired teachers to volunteer for proxy classes where they conduct meaningful activities beyond the text.
* She checks the Lesson Plans of Teachers, observes classes and provides feedbacks regularly.

Discuss in groups.

In which of the above situation is she exerting *power*, *authority* or *influence*? Why do you think so?

**Key Message**

Ask yourself, what do you exercise more; Power, Authority or Influence?

##### 1.2: Move beyond Administration to Leadership

While in school you perform different roles - at times like an administrator you look into the organizational responsibilities and at times like a CEO of a company you are managing the different departments within school and those aligned with school. But in this hustle and bustle of events what you miss out is thinking and being like a leader and visualizing where each of the tasks that you spend time on - takes you and your school in terms of improvement.

There is an inherent difference in the way one works as an administrator, manager or a leader. Examine the figure below and decide where you stand while functioning as School Head in your workplace.



In the given list, provide examples of your role as Administrator, Manager and Leader.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sl | Administrator | Manager | Leader |
| 1 |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |

You will see in the figure, as the arena of work widens so does the nature of your functioning. When you work only within the rules and regulations while executing tasks, you tend to exhibit more of administrative tendencies. Your spectrum of work is narrow. This is more pronounced in a highly bureaucratic structure, wherein one does not come out of comfort zone, rather resorts to boundaries set by higher ups. In most cases you wait for instructions, are reactive and do not depend on your own decision making skills.

When you use your wisdom to run your school smoothly by supervising various school activities and departments, you are working more as a manager with extended boundaries, slightly more than administration. However, the role of a leader is much beyond.

* A leader holds vision, invites people to develop a shared vision and translates vision into practice with well developed and nurtured teams.
* A leader creates an environment that promotes collaborative human relations, building and leading teams, supporting team efforts.
* A leader inspires through actions and motivates through providing a supportive culture.

Perhaps as heads of schools dealing with multiple roles and responsibilities, you would have much more to add to this understanding. Based on this initial discussion, let us reflect on our understanding on School Leadership.

A leader is expected to go beyond administration and management to provide leadership by fostering an environment for change. In order to become a leader, you will have to achieve four goals as illustrated in the model proposed by Boles and Davenport (1975)



***Source:*** *The Leadership Process in Harold W. Boles and James A. Davenport (1975) Introduction to Educational Leadership Harper and Row, Publishers, New York, p. 158*

The figure demonstrates while managing, monitoring, administering your school, you are supposed to achieve four goals in order to become a School leader. To the extent you are carrying out school activities like maintaining performance of students and teachers, students' attendance, school results, teachers' regularity and punctuality, provision of learning opportunities for teachers and learners like professional development for teachers, inviting subject specialists and resource persons for facilitating teachers, equipping library with reference material and teacher guides for teachers etc., one may  contend  that  you  are achieving Goal one and two.

Those who initiate changes and implement innovations can claim to accomplish Goal three. Further, those who have attained success in satisfying personal needs of teachers and professional needs of the Institution to the extent that both become compatible to each other and grow simultaneously can be considered to be successful in accomplishing Goal 4.

As long as your efforts are limited to achievement of first two goals, you are an administrator. To become a leader, you will have to cross the dotted line. Translating leadership continuum, one may assert, few can claim to be leaders with attainment of first three goals, majority are administrators and very few reach Goal four.

**Task:**

On the basis of your experiences/observations in different schools that you have worked in or any notable work of school heads you know of within your state, provide examples for each of the following. Give reasons for your choice.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Goal 4: Satisfying Needs  |  |
| Goal 3: Innovating  |  |
|  Goal 2: Providing Learning Opportunities  |  |
| Goal 1:Maintaining the School  |  |

**Key Message**

* A leader is an effective administrator and a good manager but sees h/his role as beyond these two.
* A leader is able to influence without authority, initiate and implement innovations and also achieves success in satisfying personal and professional needs of teachers and the school.

##### **1.3.** Bring Changes in the System: Aim for Effective School Leadership Being a Transformational Leader

Transformational leaders do not simply administer structures and tasks but concentrate on **developing people**, try to make deliberate efforts to win their cooperation and commitment. They actively try to influence the ‘culture’ of the school and stimulate cooperation, coherence and more independent learning and working.  Here School leadership is particular about bringing about success in school development processes. Since the basic purpose of schools is learning, leadership in schools concentrates on the results, the success of the teaching and learning processes, and on the relation between the outcomes and the specific processes which led to them.  In such arrangements you will agree that leadership is all about interactions that influence and bring change.

Click into the link given below and you would read about the "Prerna" initiative in Himachal Pradesh which talks of the transformation leadership that began at all levels- district, block, cluster and school. Even NGOs significantly contributed to the efforts.

[***Prerna Report***](http://ssaindia-gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/prerna-report_final.pdf): <http://ssaindia-gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/prerna-report_final.pdf>

**Strategies to develop the transformational leader in you**

1. Encourage experimentation, innovations and peer group learning
2. Conduct meetings that help staff to think and reflect on their subjects, performance and overall school improvement
3. Challenge assumptions, provide alternate perspectives and promote dialogue
4. Involve staff in deliberating on vision, values and goals that shape the school
5. Create a professional learning community
6. Encourage reflective dialogue and open discussions in school
7. Survey the professional needs of teachers
8. Encourage micro researches and action researches

Being ***a leader*** and ***an effective leader*** in a school set up are two different things. The trajectory from a leader to effective leader and transformation of ordinary to innovative schools is all about laying good systems and workable procedures within one’s arena of work. Leadership is all about building a shared vision. However there are other key skills like decision making, problem solving, time management, responsibility and work allocation, making staff accountable and following a multipronged approach in the process of transformation. Becoming an effective school leader is highly demanding. It calls for certain specialized jobs to be undertaken. Following are some of the pathways you may want to follow to become an effective leader:

***Organize your world of work:***This is like setting the stage for initiating the process of changes in school. It becomes important that one assesses the resources available, creates a school-based vision, lists the annual goals and targets, defines strategies and assessment procedures, outlines success criteria and distributes responsibilities. All this will help avoid the unnecessary hustle that comes with the principal’s role. The school head needs to engage in four important things for organizing:

* Annual, monthly and daily targets based on the School Development Plan
* Assessment procedures and success criteria to check the progress
* Roles and responsibilities defined and timelines fixed
* Efficient time management between financial, administrative, academic and social roles

***Understand your school:*** Every school has its data on class wise enrollment, attendance, retention, achievement levels, health status, data of every child based on the socio-economic factors, children with special needs, socio-cultural and political context of the school, academic and infrastructural facilities and much more. All this data helps in understanding the school and placing it in a context while planning and assessing its needs and progress but most of time the data is not utilized for school improvement. This school based data could be used for:

* Assessing grade-wise and subject-wise performance of each child
* Learning about teaching and learning difficulties both for teachers and students
* Planning for the academic and physical infrastructural needs of the school
* Understanding the socio-cultural and economic context and expectations of the community

Based on such an assessment, leaders can then establish their own priorities, fix goals and targets for the school.

***Build team:*** It is an admitted fact that every individual is unique and is an embodiment of capabilities and strengths. It is for the school leader to objectively recognize the potential of every staff and accordingly assign responsibilities, acknowledge work and support for overcoming limitations. This attitude of a leader would go a long way in building teams.

***Understand each team member:***Most of the initiatives for school improvement would go waste if one neglects human resources in the system. After all, the head is dealing with human beings and not machines. Each individual in the system will have h/his own opinion, viewpoints, ideas and perspectives. How do you handle these differences and take everybody along is an art and would require skills in understanding people.

Let us do a little reflective exercise to understand ourselves and our assumptions:

Reflect on your level of working comfort with the following and mark as *very comfortable*; *comfortable*; *not so comfortable.*

Why do you think it is different?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Members of faculty |  |
| 2 | Administration  |  |
| 3 | Grade IV Staff |  |
| 4 | SMC  |  |
| 5 | Parents |  |
| 6 | Department Officials |  |

* Why certain behaviors disturb or irritate me?
* How comfortable I am in working with all members of my team?
* Do I have reservations towards some and special regards for others in my team?
* Do I exactly say what I mean while engaging in a dialogue with my team?

As a leader you have assessed your overall relationship with peers, subordinates and superiors, and you would be better equipped to give shape to the strategic plan of development of your school.

***Create a shared vision:*** At times, the most influential of leaders fail in implementing their best of ideas at the implementation stage because they were developed in isolation without the involvement of all stakeholders. The simplest thing for achieving the school vision would be making teams of staff, students and community and asking each community member to come with the school of their dreams. Collate all the ideas and ask each one of them the kind of role they would like to play to develop such a school, this would fix the responsibility of each as well enthuse everyone to work towards the shared vision.

***Reinforce Positive outlook:***Attitudes have a big role to play in bringing change whether in self or in institutions.  I can blame the State, the Centre, the government for all that is wrong in the system and not do anything or I can understand the system, see where my role is and can possibly bring a change and initiate it. It is all a matter of attitude.  By already accepting that nothing is possible, no one would ever try to come out from the comfort zone. Just by visualizing the possibility of change, one finds that one is changing even without being aware of it. It is the role of a leader to generate such conviction in the team through self initiation and motivation from time to time.

**Key Message:**

Being an effective leader requires a sustained effort at many levels, such as being able to organize one’s work, time-management, understand individuals, build teams, create a shared vision and reinforce a positive outlook.

##### **Unit 2: School as Learning Organization**

**Learning Objectives**:

At the end of the unit you will be able to:

1. Know about the 5 characteristics of a Learning Organization.
2. Practice inward thinking towards self-development.
3. Reflect on personal beliefs and attitudes which influence your thinking, behavior and interactions
4. Understand team learning, problem solving and vision building as collaborative exercise.

**Key Words**: Learning Organization; Personal Mastery; Mental Models; Shared Vision; Team Learning; System’s Thinking

**Introduction:**

Organizations do not organically develop into learning organizations; there are factors prompting their change. Especially established organizations are seen to get into the daily routine task completion and running the routines than helping themselves grow. Thus many organizations when they grow, they lose their capacity to learn and become rigid. When problems arise, their thinking is very conventional and largely aimed at finding the causes and blaming it on the system than being a part of the solution finding team. This shifts the responsibility of the efforts as well as its results. To remain competitive, organizations need to restructure, create a competitive advantage and develop a stakeholder responsive culture. This unit deals with enabling school heads develop schools as learning organizations for its continuous growth and improvement.

***The Paradigm of Learning Organization* VIDEO https://youtu.be/2gMOT1I3RNM**

##### **2.1**: What is a Learning Organization?

A **learning organization** is an organization that facilitates the learning of its members and continuously transforms itself. This concept was coined through the work and research of Peter Senge and his colleagues. There are multiple definitions of a learning organization and their typologies in the literature. Peter Senge stated in an interview that a learning organization is a group of people working together collectively to enhance their capacities to create results they really care about. Senge popularized the concept of the learning organization through his book The Fifth Discipline. In the book, he proposed the following five characteristics of a learning organization:

1. Personal Mastery
2. Mental Models
3. Shared Vision
4. Team Learning
5. System’s Thinking

##### **2.2: Personal Mastery**

“*At the heart of a learning organization is a shift of mind – from seeing ourselves as separate from the world to connected to the world, from seeing problems as caused by someone or something ‘out there’ to seeing how our own actions create the problems we experience. A learning organization is a place where people are continually discovering how they create their reality and how they can change it.*” Peter Senge

It means turning the mirror inwards on ourselves. It starts by clarifying the things that really matter to us. IMAGE



Personal Mastery is the first discipline of a Learning Organization. Some premises underlying practices of personal mastery are:

***Personal Purpose and Vision***– Having a clear focus on “How can I make a difference?”

*“Personal vision is a key to unlocking the power of purpose. A personal vision is powerful to the extent that it expresses one's underlying purpose. It is the vehicle for bringing purpose into the domain of acts and commitments.”* Peter Senge *The Fifth Discipline Field book*

***Personal Values***– Being guided by and acting out from a clear set of values.

***Personal Perception***– seeing ourselves more accurately. This also extends to how you see other people, events and situations too.

***Personal Alignment***is the degree to which our personal vision, purpose, values and behaviors are congruent with each other.

***Personal Awareness***is how much you know (or are willing to know) about yourself – what makes you the way you are, your wants, drives, needs, desires and preferences. It is being able to step back and become an observer of what you are really like: your patterns of thinking, feelings and behaviors; seeing how these patterns impact others and affect the quality of your interactions; strengthening those that get you good results and changing those that do not.

***Personal Transformation***is the creative capacity we all have to re-shape, re-new or re-invent ourselves to be more in harmony with our personal vision, values and purpose.

*Personal Mastery* **VIDEO** <https://youtu.be/d2g8CbOXRSU>

**Reflective Questions**

1. Do you set your goals every day, every week?
2. Do you assess yourself at the end of a class, a discussion, a task or vis-a-vis your goals?
3. As a school principal, when did you last plan for the learning of your fellow colleagues?
4. As leaders how would you want to support and strategize the personal mastery goals for your colleagues?

How do you foster a climate in which the principles of personal mastery are practiced in daily life?

**Key Message**

Personal Mastery is the ability for self-awareness and self-transformation.

##### 2.3:  Mental Models

*Mental Models* **VIDEO https://youtu.be/\_1fSnq4dy2U**

**Case Study Reading:**

Mrs. Pemkit Lepcha, a dedicated and hardworking teacher is transferred to a school from South District to a school in North District of Sikkim. She possesses sound knowledge in her subject and also involves herself actively and voluntarily in the school co-curricular activities in school. The previous school head informs the new school head about her capabilities, dedication and her work ethics.

Imagine you are the new head

* What would be your perception of Mrs. Lepcha be and why?
* How would you decide to utilize her services in the school?
* How do you think perceptions/ mindsets affect what we do?

Discuss in groups.

**Reflective questions**

In the above case study you saw how the previous head’s s image about Mr. Lepcha guided your actions. In fact, you were so confident about what she could do that you did not even question yourself for once. Thus Mental Models are the pictures or images, assumptions or stories of how we perceive the world works and how people are. It would be like wearing a green glass and seeing the entire world as green. Psychologists call this “Selective observation”.

The discipline of ‘mental modelling’ means questioning our attitudes and beliefs and:

* Making our assumptions and inferences more transparent to us and to others.
* Surfacing our own personal pictures of the world and rigorously scrutinizing them.
* Increasing awareness of our own and others’ attitudes, beliefs and perceptions that influence thinking, behavior and interactions
* Continually re-evaluating our mental models to increase our capability to better govern our own actions and to continuously grow.

**Bridging the Thinking and Saying Gap**

Argyris believed that people can be taught to see the flaws in their mental models through the practice of left-hand column technique. For example, you had a discussion with the vice-principal about a new policy direction for staff development and improving teaching-learning. For number of reasons we usually do not choose to say what we actually think and mean. Here is a dialogue wherein what we actually say is in the right hand column and what we actually think in the left-hand column:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Principal** | **Teacher** |
| **Thinking**I wonder if remedial classes will help improve the students’ performance. | **Saying**I believe having remedial classes will help the low performance students. So, why don’t we start conducting remedial classes for an hour every day after school | **Thinking**Oh No! It’s going to be extra load for me. | **Saying**Yes, Ma’am. I think that’s a great idea. We should do it. |
|  |  |  |  |

Can you think of similar situations in our schools? What are the ways in which we can minimise such thinking and saying situations.

**Key Message**

In your life you may come across many occasions where what you say and what you think do not match:

* Question your thoughts; ask yourself, what is the basis for thinking in this manner?
* Do I have evidence that proves my thought or otherwise?

##### 2.4: Shared Vision

Before you begin, make a brief note of self- reflection on the following and share.

* Why did you choose to be a school head?
* What do you want your school to achieve – immediately and on the long run?
* Who can help you achieve this?

**Exercise:**Discuss the following questions with your staff/faculty members, with a representative group of students and parents. Collate all the suggestions and discussion points on chart paper for display and with the help of a core team of 1-2 representatives of each group make a final presentation.

*What kind of School do you wish to create*? Elaborate on the following:

* Teaching learning environment
* Students performance
* School ambience
* Parent support
* Teacher-student relationship
* School-community relationship

Fullan suggests that the intent of building a shared vision is to continuously help members expand their thoughts and personal visions. If people do not have their own vision, all they can do is **comply to the existing but not commit to it.**Mink says that this would not happen overnight and is very challenging. Mink states that vision answers to the question, “What kind of school do we want to create?”

**How do you develop a shared vision?**

VIDEO <https://youtu.be/3WDogzQFf2E>

What do you think will be the challenges youwill face in the process of creating a shared vision?

Discuss.

**Key Message**

Shared Vision is when everyone involved in the school carries a similar image of a collective idea on how the school must transform

##### 2.5:  Team Learning

While team learning sounds a bit like team building, it actually focuses on the learning activity of the group rather than the development of team processes. Individual learning, no matter how wonderful it is or how great it makes us feel, is fundamentally irrelevant to organization because virtually all important decisions occurs in teams. The learning units of organizations are teams who need one another to act. Team learning means an organizational commitment to work together synergistically.

Team Learning VIDEO https://youtu.be/ro\_PIz5Qo3o

**Case Study**

Let us look at a practical example of the different ways in which a conventional team and learning team might approach the same issue.

**Conventional Team**

The Mathematics team at the Model School, Rohtak had always considered themselves to be efficient. Most of the staff had been with the school for a long time and were quite stable now. They knew their job well and were also quite trained in administrative tasks. Any new comers were either given junior classes or were made to assist others. *Miss. Malik* and *Mr. Wangdu* would take the board classes. All agreed since the purpose was to achieve good results. Not surprisingly, there was some dissatisfaction amongst some staff members, who would have liked to teach the top and saw no reason why they should not be given the opportunity. While by and large this remained beneath the surface or indirectly surfaced as an occasional remark in staff meetings. On the whole the team’s purpose was achieved year after year and the faculty produced good Board results.

**Learning Team**

As a learning team, this case would have been handled in the following manner:

* Firstly they would have organized for a genuine discussion about the main purpose of Mathematics education. This would challenge the individual and faculty beliefs and assumptions on teaching of mathematics and its purpose.
* Secondly they would examine the current practices in the teaching of mathematics until a consensus was reached on the common team goals that everybody could commit to.
* Thirdly the team would have thought from the perspective of the commonly agreed purpose and goals. Team members could have analyzed the current practices and seen if these were helping or hindering the purpose of that goal. It is possible that an open discussion around this issue would have highlighted that while the current practices yielded 100% board results, they had built capacity of only Miss Malik and Mr. Wangdu and loss of any one of them would result in considerable jeopardy.
* Fourthly the team would discuss how to make learning a satisfying experience both for students and teachers enhancing their educative skills and treating everybody as equals.
* Lastly the learning team would find ways to develop the capacity of all its members in the conviction that this interchange of knowledge and skills enriches performance at both individual and faculty level.

Thus, if the practice of examining beliefs and reflecting on practice is established at a collective level, the team has the will, the capacity and the procedure to go on learning and solving problems to the benefit of the whole organization. The team has now learnt how to learn.

VIDEO <https://youtu.be/i8DvGPfocNI>

**Reflective Questions**

* Based on the case study, identify and list out the characteristics of a learning team.
* What processes would you create in your school to develop a learning team?

**Key Message**

Team learning is a collective process of examining beliefs, problem solving and reflecting on practices to improve school processes.

##### 2.6: System's Thinking

*“The Fifth discipline i.e. Systems Thinking is the cornerstone of how learning organizations think about their world .... the essence lies in a shift of mind: seeing interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains , and seeing processes of change rather than snapshots.”*

Applying systems thinking to school situation requires taking a helicopter view and keeping the macro reality in mind than in isolation. Systems thinking lays emphasis on continuously asking the question ‘WHY’ than ‘WHO’. For example, recently there was a media report on mass cheating in a particular state. At this point of time, giving stern ultimatums and holding staff and principals responsible for it would punish the culprits but not curb the menace of mass cheating. However, asking larger questions and looking at the root cause as educationists may help us understand where it originates from and therefore how to deal with it.

**Whyare children cheating**?
For good results

**Why do they want good results**?
Pressure from parents and society to perform well

**Why do parents pressurize**?
Because they want viable future for their children in this intensely competitive world

**Secondly, why do teachers cooperate in copying**?
Because they feel their performance is judged through the students’ grades

**Is learning directly proportional to teaching**? **Why do the children feel they do not have the required competence?**

Because they have not understood the concepts

**Why have the children not understood the concepts?**

So in this case for reaching at the exact cause we will have to continuously ask ‘Why’ questions and for cheating to be eliminated, parents, teachers, and the community will need to be involved in finding solutions for a problem too complex for ultimatums to resolve. Because, the essential properties that describe any system are properties of the whole which none of its parts demonstrate. For example, the essential property of an automobile is that it can take you from one place to another. No single part of an automobile – a wheel, an axle, a carburettor – can do that. An automobile is not the sum of its parts; it is the product of their interactions. Hence one has to look at the entire system as a whole to identify causes and work on resolving problems from the root.

*Systems Thinking* VIDEO <https://youtu.be/Y-2S1aRemL8>

**Reflective Questions**

* Take any problem that you recently faced at school. Use the systems thinking perspective and analyze the problem.
* Discuss on how a learning team would have worked on the same problem than a conventional team.

**Key Message**

Systems thinking equips a leader to look at issues and problems from a macro perspective, while at the same time looking at the inter-relationships between different aspects of the same problem. It also helps the leader to resolve problems at their root cause rather than at a superficial level.

***References***

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VIDEO Peter Senge https://youtu.be/0QtQqZ6Q5-o- Video link of a lecture of Peter Senge

VIDEO Importance of learning in Organization https://youtu.be/lUP4WcfNyAA

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##### Unit 3: Building School Vision

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of the unit you will be able to:

1. Understand the meaning and importance of School Vision.
2. Identify the difference in School Vision, Mission and Goals and Objectives
3. Conduct a Vision building exercise

**Key Words**: Vision; Mission; Goals and Objectives

**Introduction**

A futuristic vision and direction is a key to any progress. Even a ship sailing in an ocean requires the torch tower and magnetic compass to tell the directions and show the way forward. Similarly vision in a school is the spotlight that gives direction and guides through to the school-based improvement. Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe (2008) examined different studies on educational leadership from all over the world to identify and isolate those leadership practices that have significant impact on student outcomes.  They found that there are 5 sets of leadership practices that make a real difference to student outcomes and the second most significant amongst these, after promoting teachers and teaching-learning, was establishing clear vision, goals and expectations. Thus school improvement begins from the statement of vision created through active involvement of all members of the school.

##### 3.1: What do you mean by Vision?

Vision is an imaginary picture drawn for a school in the most simplistic terms. In the literature concerning leadership, vision has a variety of definitions, all of which include a mental image, a future orientation, and aspects of direction or goal. Seeley (1992) describes vision as a "goal-oriented mental construct that guides people's behavior." Vision is a picture of the future for which people are willing to work together.

A vision is a statement of hope, of better future, a promise that **things can and will change with positive actions.** It is **“**Ideal Hope”—the way it “ought” to be**,** both for the beneficiaries as well as the functionaries. Nanus in 1992 explained Vision as "a signpost pointing the way for all who need to understand what the organization is and where it intends to go".  Vision provides a picture of what the staff wishes to attain, and therefore it is closer to the school requirements and priorities, more as a guiding statement from where the journey of school improvement begins. It provides direction and pathways to the school in its struggle for becoming the best.

As important as it is to know what vision is, it is also important to know what vision is not. **Vision is not a prophecy or prediction; neither is it a tendency for over attachment to particular philosophies.**

##### 3.2: How do you differentiate Vision from Mission?

A mission is a vision turned into action, while a vision tells us about the future end state, a mission tells us the details about what is going to be done, why it is done and who is going to be served. Mission statements relate to the vision, are short action steps put in bullets and are potential directions to assess our journey towards the vision. All mission statements have these three elements: **Cause, Actions**and **Impact**. Here are some simple examples of mission statements that incorporate the Big Ideas above:

Examples of some mission statements (Cause Action Impact):

* Develop safe and secure learning environment for children through developing student friendly infrastructure, maintenance of safety and hygiene norms.
* Improve Student learning outcomes through activity based lessons ensuring maximum student participation.

##### 3.3: How are Goals and Objectives different from Vision?

Goals and objectives are also statements of purpose but their essential characteristic is that they ought to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound. Example: when one says “by 2030, I would like all children in my school to attain more than 85% in board examinations” This means that the statement can be measured while setting a time target also. It is measurable and could be achievable too. You will get more ideas when you look at a few more goal statements:

* Create and sustain teacher and child friendly, fear-free environment to maintain regularity in children attendance and participation, leading to enhancement in the learning levels to at least 60-80% in three years and 100 % by 2022.
* In a span of three years, transform our school into an innovative organization by providing learning opportunities for promoting good reading habits, create inclusive spaces in the classroom to encourage every child to learn at her/his own pace and grow with all the classmates

##### 3.4: Who should be involved in the process of Vision building?

Ideally vision for a school can be built when all the stakeholders, the teaching and non teaching staff, students, parents, community get together and come to a common consensus on what their school should look like in the next few years, may be  5-10 years ahead. This entire process can be led by the School Head.   Senge (2000) reminds that a vision created by a leader will not and cannot be sustained. All people have some idea or vision about what they want to accomplish each day. Such as, teachers have a vision of the best practices they wish to implement in the classroom; students have aspirations of what they want to learn; parents might have a vision that their child is able to read, and educational leaders have a vision to meet state mandated standards. Thus in the process of vision development it is very important to involve the following:

1. Those who **benefit**from the vision
2. Those who will **implement** the vision
3. Those who are in the **decision making role** and will facilitate the realization of vision.

Schools and school leaders all over the world are being challenged to meet the present needs of students as well as gearing to prepare students for the next generation challenges. Until school leaders realize and prepare for next generation, no improvement can take place. They must meet this challenge first with a vision, a picture of the future for which students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members are willing to work. They ensure its attainment by continuously collaborating with others to develop a shared vision.

##### 3.5:  Exercise on Vision building

Let us take a small preparatory exercise to clear our thoughts on how would we like to see our schools in future.

It is advisable to work on the vision exercise with your school staff. (You can also conduct a separate workshop with few student representatives if it is a secondary/higher secondary school and SMC/SDMC/SMDC members)

**Step 1:** “Where would you like to see your school 5 years from now?”

**Step 2:** After writing your answer, discuss as a full group which includes all teachers, students, parents and SMC/SDMC/SMDC members. Have someone record the answers on a flip chart.

Please take about 10-15 minutes to do this exercise.

**Step 3 (if needed):** Now, make a small team (no more than 2-4 people) to collate the ideas into a small statement for review at a later time by the full group.

This little exercise has engaged every member of the school in an imaginative exercise which eventually would be the starting point for any change and articulation of a vision for change. However before we enter into this exercise it is equally important for us to develop a conceptual clarity on vision, mission and goals.

**Key Message**

* As a leader, encourage everyone to provide an inspiring image of the future for themselves, their colleagues, constituents, and most importantly, their students
* Create a space for the staff to invest time and energy in developing a vision and preparing
* Translate vision into real-school practice as the foremost step for school improvement through the preparation of a school-based development plan

***Assess Yourself***

1. Which of the following best defines a leader?
2. Authoritarian; Managerial; Team Builder
3. Influencer; Innovator; Organiser
4. Influencer; Provider; Administrator
5. As a school head, you prefer to work only within the rules and regulations while executing tasks. In such a situation which of the following role are you exhibiting?
6. Administrative
7. Managerial
8. Collaborator
9. Setting regular goals for oneself and your work is part of
10. Personal Mastery
11. Mental Modelling
12. Systems Thinking
13. If what you say and think do not match, you need to
14. ignore the issue and continue with what is best in the situation
15. question yourself about your conviction
16. weigh the evidences before you
17. Mark True or False
18. School Vision is a prediction of what your school would be like in the future
19. It is the duty of the school head to develop School Vision and share with stakeholders for implementation to attain it.
20. Missions should specify the impact.
21. Goals and Objectives need to be realistic.