

The Art of Teaching and Learning: Pedagogical Leadership Resources

BY MELISSA CASTEEL

“A pedagogical leader keeps the organization focused on the teaching and learning process among the children, staff, and families.”

– Margie Carter

Recent [Whole Leadership](#) blog posts by [Jill Bella](#) and [Mike Abel](#) got my wheels spinning reflecting on the concept of pedagogical leadership. As a proud #ResearchNerd, I began a search –for resources related to pedagogical leadership and early childhood.

In the McCormick Center archives, I landed on an article by Margie Carter, “[Improving Your Program with Pedagogical Leadership](#)”. Carter speaks to the complexity of the field and the importance of leaders being competent in many areas, “To achieve sustainable quality, programs need sophisticated business practices but also a leader with people skills, pedagogical understandings, and the wherewithal to develop an organizational culture that reflects their values on how to achieve quality.” My response was, “Oh, is that all!” Actually, my anxiety level was raised just a tad, and I kept searching.

In [Pedagogical Leadership](#), Coughlin and Baird present the following four principles to help pedagogical leaders “build an intentional culture where reflection and inquiry form the foundation for transforming practice”:

1. Use a Protocol to Support Reflective Thinking and Inquiry: Protocols support a disciplined approach to reflection and inquiry
2. Set Up Professional Learning Communities: A strategy to shift the focus from teaching to learning
3. Allow Time: Sustainable change requires time to reflect and collaborate
4. Paralleling Practice: Leaders creating the same types of learning experiences we want for children

“...Pedagogical leaders challenge others to see themselves as researchers in the teaching and learning process. In turn, this practice builds a culture of reflective teaching that helps us to sort through the complexities of our work.”

– Anne Marie Coughlin and Lorrie Baird

Building a culture of reflective practice comes to mind first when thinking about how leaders can support the process of teaching and learning. Creating space (physical, psychological...) for teachers and leaders to

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come together and learn while grappling with the challenges associated with our work can be a catalyst for growth. In the words of Margaret J. Wheatley, **“Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful.”**

Although the term “pedagogical leadership” may or may not be used, here are few more resources that address this comprehensive topic.

1. [Birth-3rd and Leadership: Steve Tozer’s message to the birth-3rd community: This Preschool Matters...Today!](#) blog post speaks to the important role good leadership plays in improving teaching and learning.
2. [Early childhood education resources](#): A collection of recent research/resources compiled by the Center for the Study of Education Policy.
3. [Inspiring Peak Performance](#): This book presents five strategies that together will help transform your program into a professional learning community.
4. [Lead Learn Excel Library](#): A comprehensive digital library, created for instructional leaders of early education schools and centers who aspire for instructional excellence and kindergarten readiness for all children.
5. [Leading Pre-K-3 Learning Communities](#): Competencies for Effective Principal Practice Executive Summary. A guide from the National Association of Elementary School Principals to support the essential role of principals in creating quality learning systems.
6. [Pedagogical Leadership from a Distributed Perspective within the Context of Early Childhood Education](#). This article takes a deep dive into the meaning and significance of pedagogical leadership.
7. [Reflecting in Communities of Practice](#): A Workbook For Early Childhood Educators. Includes activities to help understand and practice the key elements of reflective teaching.
8. [The Visionary Director](#). Provides a concrete framework for achieving a vision of excellence for early childhood programs and includes resources to help teachers become reflective practitioners.

“A good objective of leadership is to help those who are doing poorly to do well and to help those who are doing well to do even better.”

– Jim Rohn

Very unexpectedly, Twitter has become a source for my own professional development. If you are a fellow #tweep, here is a link to some of my favorite [leadership follows](#).

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