

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE OF CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP

I would encourage the reader to accept the challenge of curriculum leadership in his or her school. The reader may feel a reluctance to step up and lead, to be the organizer, and this is natural. Many times I have heard new curriculum leaders say, "But, I'm really only a classroom teacher," or "I really don't know too much about curriculum work."

In fact, former teachers make the very best curriculum leaders because they rarely forget that the entire curriculum activity is ultimately about what happens to students in the classroom. Curriculum leaders aren't just making fancy plans; they are designing real learning experiences for students. Designing learning experiences, ultimately, is the job.

Embedded in the reluctance of some new curriculum persons to assume leadership is a faulty perception that because they have gained the title, they are the leader. In reality, the individual will only be the real leader in curriculum as long as he or she can serve the needs of those who follow his or her lead. In this sense, leadership and follower-ship are interchangeable roles.

SUMMARY

Leadership in the field of curriculum can take two basic forms. Leaders can focus solely on maintaining the existing program through scheduled reviews, controlled activities, and limited problem solving; or the leader can broaden the work by providing vision, organization, and motivation so that others may participate in school design. The author believes that curriculum leadership in today's schools must move beyond the maintenance or management function to address school reform for now, and for the future.

The tasks in both maintenance leadership and dynamic leadership overlap, and the minimal role of maintaining serves to support a more dynamic and future-oriented curriculum leadership role. In every community, and every school, local conditions will determine the ratio of these two forms of curriculum leadership.

END NOTES

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