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Instructional Leadership Platform

ELP 664: Teacher Evolution and Supervision

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Balancing the accountability demands of teacher evaluation with the importance of providing culturally responsive instructional supervision

An educational platform for a school leader defines what they stand for as they work to create a community of education professionals to guide students to learn. With my core leadership values of integrity, service, respect and belief in human potential, the learning outcomes and program goals for ELP 664 have deepened these beliefs allowing me the experience to integrate them into supervision developing stronger bonds with educators. These relationships will strengthen the school community in which I will lead. I follow a behavioral leadership style as a teacher and will continue as an administrator leading by example, modeling, and growing relationships encouraging others to lead students by keeping the human aspect forefront in our educational community.

The Danielson Framework for Teaching, NYSUT Teachers Practice Rubric and the Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework are three teacher observation rubrics that provide education practitioners with clear cut indicators and criteria an evaluator is looking for when observing a teacher. The scoring classifications of ineffective, developing, effective and highly effective offer teachers a positive or negative word that defines them as an instructor. From personal experience, I have found that it is a competition between teachers to be classified as highly effective. Anything less than that contributes to lower morale in schools where teachers believe administrators as not appreciating the mastery of their craft. Veteran teachers can hold animosity toward newer teachers if they receive the effective or highly effective rating. Our guest speaker, Dr. Samulski-Peters from Buffalo Schools, shared evaluators are trained not to award highly effective often; most teachers are effective. In my experience, teachers strive for the top ratings. When they see on paper, they are less than highly effective, it brings down their professional attitudes and they often start to do less. I used the Thoughtful Classroom

Framework for my second observation practice and had a positive experience with the teacher I was observing who really needed the assistance of encouragement to keep going and growing. Through the 4 P's of Mr. Andrew Bowen's presentation, I collected the evidence, praised what the teacher exhibited, posed questions on how she could foster her relationships and shared with her strategies to help improve her practices. My take away from this experiential assignment was that no matter how we are to assess teachers, leaders must encourage, support, and assist in their growth.

Pre and Post conferencing is a practice all observation and supervision participants benefit from. It was surprising for me to learn that some of the teachers in our class are not required or even have the opportunity to conference with their evaluators about their observations. When completing the supervision exercise, I put much emphasis on the pre and the post creating a deeper relationship between myself and who I was evaluating. Through our guest speakers, Dr. Marla McGhee and Dr. Sally Zepeda, I was inspired to professionally focus on these sections of supervision. Approaching the evaluation through a lens of partnership, not a grading system that awarded titles of ineffective or effective, changed the narrative of the task. I allowed the teacher to lead the discussions and together we had an evaluation experience we both benefited from. I created a checklist which the teachers appreciated to know what I was looking for putting their minds at ease from the pre that I wasn't out to catch them not doing something they are required to do. I scripted student and teacher commentary in both classes on a lab day and shared this with the teachers during a post which they found enlightening and entertaining at the same time. During a hectic lab period, so much is happening the teachers shared with me it was nice to hear what the kids actually said and how they responded. This practice was reaffirming to the teachers of their professionalism and guiding students through stressful work

based experiences. Lastly, I used the student seating chart to show the instructor movement throughout the room which validated them as well showing they do provide assistance to those that need it the most and all students were receiving time with the teacher assisting during labs. Both Dr. McGhee and Dr. Zepeda encouraged us to bring in the human aspect of supervision. I did and saw firsthand the benefits of being more of an equal to educators and not a leader they feared who would nitpick at the things they were missing in their classrooms and instructional methods labelling them from deficient to highly-effective. As an educational leader, this lesson will stay with me to build positive, working relationships with my staff to help develop an educational community in my building that supports growth while keeping the human aspect in the forefront.

The role professional development plays in bridging the gap between teacher evaluation and culturally responsive instructional supervision

“The terms evaluation and supervision are frequently and incorrectly used as synonyms.” (Mette et al, 2027, p. 710) I struggled with the difference between evaluation and supervision at the beginning of this course. As a future leader in education, I will refer to observations as supervision in the future if allowed depending on contract parameters. The health and wellbeing of my staff will be part of my platform as a leader. Supervision and providing accurate and valuable staff development in my building will assist in creating an educational community that supports each other to better provide instruction for our student population. I come from a school where all professional development is planned and executed by the staff from the Education Campus, not from our building principals. There is often a large disconnect between what the teachers are required to sit through and what teachers need to support improving their craft as instructors. Allowing principals to organize and create professional development for their staff would assist in improving the teachers in the educational community the principal has created.

“The purpose of supervision is to indirectly help student achievement by helping a teacher improve instruction, which requires different instructional goals and strategies based on the strengths of individual teachers.” (Mette et al, 2027 p. 710) Through effective staff development, the relationships created through supervision will expand from teacher to teacher leading the group to grow inspiring each other. As teachers differentiate instruction for their students, administrators should do the same when developing their staff.

Leadership actions to ensure students receive culturally responsive instruction

Culturally responsive instruction is necessary, non-negotiable, and must be part of the conversation through education leadership, staff developments and teacher training programs. Dr. Shannon Waite shared with us through her writing and the JCEL Jabber Podcast her interpretation of writing from our country’s Founding Fathers that “all men are created equal”. (JCEL Jabber, December 4th 2023) Growing up in a small town of mostly white labor-class and middle-class citizens, I was educated with mainstream textbooks that taught us the ideology of the Founding Fathers of our country. I was not exposed to the idea that African Americans, Asians, or Middle Easterners were even a variable in an American town. In the article *Towards a Theory of Critical Consciousness: A New Direction for the Development of Instructional; and Supervisory Leaders*, written by Dr. Waite, she states “The Founding Fathers were not talking about all men; they meant White, cisgender, heteronormative, wealthy, landowning men, like themselves”. (Waite, p. 69) This incredible statement had the power to alter over 40 years of my own thinking. I am ashamed that my adult, educated and intelligent brain, never saw this way of thinking. As she stated in the podcast, educational leaders and teachers need to truly be culturally responsive, developing critical consciousness and being courageous to stand up for all students. While I have always believed all children deserve education regardless of zip code,

race, culture, sex, and socioeconomic class; this way of thinking is a much deeper philosophy that I plan to integrate into my leadership.

Personal connections and insights that influence my instructional leadership beliefs

Thirteen months ago, I decided to finally make the commitment to enroll in a school district leadership program which has been a career goal of mine for almost 20 years. Knowing now what I didn't know then, I think why did I wait so long to roll up my sleeves and immerse myself in educational leadership? I have grown as an individual in ways I never imagined. I had never set foot into an urban school until a dual class project this past summer; never thought numbers or data meant anything in education, besides test scores and attendance, until I took the budgeting and data class this past fall. This semester I have developed a deeper understanding of teacher contracts through the eyes of the Union and the District. Lastly, this course has shown me differences between evaluations and supervision while staying true to being a culturally responsive educator who keeps the human aspect forefront. Dr. Waite stated in the JCEL Jabber the following "If you focus on your purpose, you will always have a job; if you focus on your job, you won't always have a purpose". (Waite, 2023, 47:38) My purpose as an educator is to provide the tools needed for all in my educational community to find their purpose, help them elevate that purpose and guide them to being positive, contributing members of the communities in which they serve. As a teacher I have been sharing this philosophy with my students and modeling to be prepared, find your inspirations, surround yourself with uplifting individuals while giving to those who can benefit and you will always be fulfilled and successful. My leadership platform is an elevated version of my teacher philosophy. I will use the teachings of this program to lift up those around me, help them to fulfill their goals, inspire educators to see students in a culturally responsive light and encourage an educational community that supports all.

Works Cited

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