
Leaders of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

The primary responsibility of curriculum leaders is to develop the collective capacity of the organization to assure that all students are successful. One of the functions of these individuals' work to assure the capacity of the system and the success of the students is their collaborative leadership in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Effective curriculum leaders must assure that there is a laser-like focus on the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment with identified district-wide standards and benchmarks at every grade level. This, of course, means having a deep, conceptual understanding of the Iowa Core and assuring that *what* is learned is tightly aligned with *how* it is learned – and *how well* it is learned. And just as important is being able to make the Iowa Core alive in all buildings and with each and every student in a systems-wide approach. Curriculum leaders are constantly painting the picture of this shared vision for learning and for teaching to achieve the intended success of the students – always providing evidence for movement toward the vision. (Iowa Teaching Standard 1)

Their leadership in leading curriculum teams requires a thorough understanding of learning and teaching within the content areas, including a picture of what instruction and assessment for learning look like.

High expectations for learning require that all – students and educators - are students of learning. Assuring teachers have deep content knowledge is a top priority for quality instruction to achieve the intended learning. When teachers do not demonstrate conceptual understanding of their content, learning suffers; therefore, curriculum leaders must assure avenues to develop the teachers' content expertise. (Iowa Teaching Standard 2)

Monitoring and evaluation for quality and consistency assure the implementation of standards-based approaches and result in evidence of building capacity in others. This requires that curriculum leaders build the capacity of others in the use of data: modeling and promoting their use and teaching the building leaders to collect, summarize, analyze, and communicate data as well as develop the capacity of classroom teachers in this area. Using real data with the staff creates the urgency for instructional improvement in individuals and in the staff as a whole. Frequent assessment of student progress and discussions around these data move the staff toward the shared vision of student results and help answer the real question, "What do students know and are able to do as a result of the teachers' lessons?" Leadership by curriculum leaders in developing the capacity of teachers and administrators to frequently use various assessments – including screening, diagnostic, formative, and summative - is paramount in assuring systematic implementation and ongoing evaluation of teaching *for* learning. (Iowa Teaching Standard 5)

Learning requires that supervision is frequent, rigorous, and focused on the effectiveness of instruction. Therefore, the majority of efforts of effective leaders of learning must be on monitoring, coaching, and supporting teachers to do a first-rate job. Learning walks is one avenue to address effectiveness of instruction, but does require curriculum leaders' clear definition of attributes of quality teaching for learning as well as training and feedback for administrators in learning walks to assure a district-wide and standards-based approach in achieving the shared vision of teaching for learning. (Iowa Teaching Standard 4)

In addition, these curriculum leads must work with others in the district to assure that resources (i.e., time, money, people, and expertise) are allocated equitably and adequately to achieve the standards-based learning.

The bottom line of leadership in curriculum, instruction, and assessment is focused on creating a *can-do* culture in which *all* educators believe they are there to improve instruction so all kids can learn.

It really is all about student success and the instruction to achieve the learning!