

TCHR3004 Assessment 2 Portfolio – Interview B

Student's Name

Institution

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Introduction

An educational leader in ECEC is central to enhancing the learning environment and compliance with the national standards for children. Successful leadership in ECEC settings requires not only the supervision of teams of educators but also leadership for nurturing staff and promoting the culture of enhanced professional practice by NQS and the National Quality Framework (ACECQA, 2020). Practitioners require policymakers and educational leaders to foster practice-regarding practices that are effective for child human development, safety, and provision of supportive environments for children (Martin et al., 2020). This paper uses Interview B to analyze the leadership practice that an educational leader adopts. It concerns responsibilities occupied, keys to leadership, and operational issues confronted. Furthermore, the research examines how the leader supports children's learning and learning environment and what quality means regarding educational achievement. The paper is grounded in current scholarship on leadership in ECEC settings (Waniganayake et al., 2017) and identifies how leadership facilitates improved, lasting, and high-quality benefits for children.

Role and Responsibilities of an Educational Leader

The role of an educational leader in an ECEC setting is complex and multi-dimensional, encompassing several responsibilities aimed at improving pedagogical practices and ensuring that children's developmental needs are met. As cited by the ACECQA (2020), educational leaders are challenged to help educators do the right things properly in teaching their learners as guided by the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Framework. This comprises support of professional experience through reflective practice and generating avenues for enhancement of teaching practice.

According to Interview B, the roles of educational leaders are not limited to overseeing curriculum matters only. This implies that the leader is involved in ways such as the following: The staff is coached, and the leader facilitates a forum for critical reflection while enhancing the evaluation of the contribution of each educator (Martin et al., 2020). The leader also engages the families and supports openness and communication between the families and the child in his learning process, supported by Early Childhood Australia (2015). This partnership with families benefits children's care, education, and learning and ensures the child's rights are upheld. Hence, through reflective practices and collaboration, the educational leader is responsible for supporting innovations in education and sustaining the learning context that is most desirable for children.

Leadership Style - a collaborative leadership approach

Leadership style significantly impacts the effectiveness of an educational leader within an early childhood setting. In Interview B, the educational leader also uses collaborative leadership and delegates most decision-making processes to a team. As Douglass (2019) has highlighted, this leadership style is most helpful when it comes to the cultural attainment of the educational workers. The leader in Interview B arranges a meeting to encourage educators to reflect on their practice and find a solution to the problems that change the educational context for children.

It also fosters the personal development of educators based on best work practices since enhancing collaboration fosters the involvement of the educators in organizational decision-making processes, hence fostering formed and highly motivated teams. In addition, according to Waniganayake et al. (2017), the pattern of collaborative leadership is helpful in managing the various issues related to educators and children. It allows the leader to meet all these needs at the same time and fosters employees' creativity and vision for the center.

However, this type of leadership may prove irritating, as it finds unity in decision-making difficult. As the educational leader in Interview B also points out, collaboration is not something that happens ‘one day’ and does not need any further attention, especially since most schools employ educators with different experiences and ideas.

Challenges Faced by the Early Childhood Educational Leader

Educational leaders in early childhood settings face many challenges, particularly in balancing their administrative responsibilities with pedagogical leadership. In Interview B, the leader lists several vectors, such as sustaining constant communication with the diverse staff, dealing with workload pressure, and caring about the individual needs of educators and children. There has been a fundamental problem in how all educators are encouraged and facilitated for continuing professional development as they also find ways to meet the regulations set in the National Quality Framework (ACECQA, 2020).

The other central concern is to advance and articulate the shared vision of quality education, especially since educators may be at different levels of professional training and practice. According to Waniganayake et al. (2017), in leading learning teams, educational leaders deal with dynamic human resources; hence, they have to demonstrate interpersonal skills and knowledge of each person’s potential and development areas. Interview B Participant 2 said that Sally stressed the challenges of promoting coherence or conformity in teaching and learning, especially when the team is in disagreement (Martin et al., 2020).

External pressures like satisfying regulatory requirements and family expectations can produce conflict since the leader has to balance two competing needs. In their work, Douglass (2019) argues that leaders in ECEC face these challenges, with the main endgame being providing quality and inclusion for every child in ECEC. Interview B’s leader also discusses several issues the organization faces. Although the leader responds to these challenges using

collaborative leadership and reflective practice, the interviews show that organizational members' flexibility and ability to cope with adversity are tested (Logan et al., 2021).

Advocacy for Children's Learning and Development

Advocacy for children's learning and development is a core responsibility of educational leaders in ECEC. Interview B shows that the leader pays specific attention to advocacy for children's rights and needs, mainly focusing on ensuring that each child is supported and given a conducive environment for learning. This advocacy is underpinned by the provisions of Early Childhood Australia's (2015) Statement of Intent, which outlines the organization's commitment to enhancing the equity of quality education for children.

As it will be recalled from Interview B, the educational leader speaks on behalf of children, creates optimum learning contexts to suit the student clients, and encourages overall system thinking among the learning facilitators. This is accompanied by advocacy of practices that enhance learning and the child's social, emotional, and physical development. The leader is also fully devoted to active involvement with families because the families' participation is integral to a child's development.

Advocacy, as seen in Interview B, also involves protecting children's learning environment, as the leader often makes alterations to the curriculum to help children with disabilities or those coming from different cultural backgrounds understand what is being taught. This comes as a result of embracing the equity principles that constitute the purpose of educational leaders, which, according to Douglass (2019), is the advocacy for equitable education for all children.

Quality in Leadership and Educational Outcomes

The concept of quality in early childhood education is closely tied to the leadership practices employed by educational leaders. As indicated by ACECQA (2020), quality of

education is not a one-off meeting of specific regulatory requirements; it is a process through which service quality enhances the ongoing improvement of both pedagogy practice and of educators themselves, as well as children's learning capabilities. Interview B shows that the educational leader believes quality is a process of continuous improvement, extra thinking, professional growth, and cooperation among educators to guarantee that the learning setting stays sensitive to children (Logan et al., 2021).

Leadership is essential in ensuring that quality results are attained. Douglass (2019) states that educational leaders should pay much attention to providing contexts that allow reflection on practice, innovation, and constant professional learning. In Interview B, the leader introduces critical conversations with educators to get them to think about how they can improve their practice for the overall benefit of children.

Moreover, activities focused on sharing educators' views on the leader and the educational practices described in Interview B showed that creating an environment to encourage collaboration is a priority for the leader. Support for this approach is found in Waniganayake et al. (2017), who establish that quality in early childhood education is informed by the effectiveness of the leaders in fostering team commitment and professional development.

It is for this reason that in the course of Interview B, the educational leader makes sure that quality learning is maintained through a process of also assessing the learning environment, advocating for the use of evidence-based practices as well as advocating for the observation of Teaching strategies while catering for the needs of all children (Logan et al., 2021). Through building organizational culture and positive development, the leader contributes to the overall high quality of the offered center services and positive educational results for every child.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the role of an educational leader in early childhood education is both challenging and rewarding (Logan et al., 2021). In Interview B, the leader understands collaborative leadership, advocacy for children's learning, and the call for and support of quality education. Through discussing the issues related to diversity management and equity promotion, the educational leader guarantees that children receive quality and appropriate care and education for their total development (Logan et al., 2021). Incorporating the state-of-the-art research by ACECQA (2020), it becomes clear that leadership is the critical characteristic that facilitates the development of promising learning composite environments that benefit all learners, including children.

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