

## Curriculum Evaluation: Inputs for Principal's Instructional Leadership

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### ABSTRACT

*One of the most important components in education is the curriculum. It undergoes evaluation and development to be responsive to the needs of the times. It adapts to the kind of teachers and learners because teaching and learning are dynamic. The main drivers of the curriculum are the education leaders primarily the principals who are the instructional leaders. The main task of the principal is instructional leadership which means overseeing the teaching and learning process starting with the curriculum. However, the administrative tasks of the principals deprive them of becoming effective instructional leaders. This study aims to present the experiences of the researcher in curriculum evaluation under different principals in a private sectarian school in Manila and seeks to identify how principals can take a strong leadership presence in the challenges in instruction and curriculum evaluation. A critical reflection which is an extension of "critical thinking" and asks us to think about our practice and ideas and then it challenges us to step back and examine our thinking by asking probing questions was used as the method in this study. The researcher looks back into his experiences and identifies the key points in curriculum evaluation vis-à-vis the tasks of instructional leadership. It found out that curriculum evaluation, primarily an integral part of instructional leadership. The principals have to do curriculum evaluation as a collaborative task and process. Moreover, curriculum evaluation with instructional leadership should be giving importance to professional development and mentoring of academic heads and teachers.*

### Keywords:

Curriculum Evaluation; Instructional Leadership; Collaborative Process; Professional Development

### ABSTRAK

*Salah satu komponen terpenting dalam pendidikan adalah kurikulum. Kurikulum mengalami evaluasi dan pengembangan agar tanggap terhadap*

*kebutuhan zaman. Hal ini menyesuaikan dengan jenis guru dan peserta didik karena proses belajar mengajar bersifat dinamis. Penggerak utama kurikulum adalah para pemimpin pendidikan terutama kepala sekolah yang merupakan pemimpin instruksional. Tugas pokok kepala sekolah adalah kepemimpinan instruksional yang artinya mengawasi proses belajar mengajar yang dimulai dengan kurikulum. Namun, tugas administratif kepala sekolah menghalangi mereka untuk menjadi pemimpin instruksional yang efektif. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menyajikan pengalaman peneliti dalam evaluasi kurikulum di bawah kepala sekolah yang berbeda di sekolah sektarian swasta di Manila dan berusaha untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana kepala sekolah dapat mengambil kehadiran kepemimpinan yang kuat dalam tantangan dalam pengajaran dan evaluasi kurikulum. Refleksi kritis yang merupakan perpanjangan dari "berpikir kritis" dan meminta kita untuk memikirkan tentang praktik dan ide-ide kita kemudian menantang kita untuk melangkah mundur dan menguji pemikiran kita dengan mengajukan pertanyaan-pertanyaan menyelidik digunakan sebagai metode dalam penelitian ini. Peneliti melihat kembali pengalamannya dan mengidentifikasi poin-poin kunci dalam evaluasi kurikulum vis-à-vis tugas kepemimpinan instruksional. Diketahui bahwa dalam evaluasi kurikulum, itu terutama merupakan bagian integral dari kepemimpinan instruksional. Kepala sekolah harus melakukan evaluasi kurikulum sebagai tugas dan proses kolaboratif. Selain itu, evaluasi kurikulum dalam kaitannya dengan kepemimpinan instruksional harus memperhatikan pengembangan profesional dan pendampingan kepala akademik dan guru.*

***Kata Kunci:***

Evaluasi Kurikulum; Kepemimpinan Instruksional; Proses Kolaborasi; Pengembangan Profesional

## **1. Introduction**

The duties and responsibilities of the principal are huge and can be very overwhelming. The school principal's professional world is characterized by overwhelming responsibilities, information perplexities, and emotional anxiety (Friedman, 2002). Every principal has to attend to a lot of instructional and administrative tasks which include planning, organizing, monitoring, and decision-making both for the teachers and students. Aside from the day-to-day activities, the school principal has to think of plans and activities that will make the school continuously relevant and responding to the needs of the changing times. The most obvious task of the principal is instructional leadership though what usually comes to mind is the administrative task. It is expected that the principals as instructional leaders supervise instruction, observe and guide teachers, and provide direction on instruction.

Despite the overwhelming responsibilities of the principals particularly as instructional leaders, teachers still consider becoming a principal in the future. Every year, many teachers in the public schools in the Philippines take the National Qualifying Examination for School Heads (NQESH, 2015) hoping that they will be appointed as principals. In private schools, teachers take graduate

studies, attend seminars, initiate activities, and make sacrifices to be on the shortlist of candidates for the position of principal. The common perception is the principalship is a prestigious position that is often associated with administrative work and less on instructional leadership. For aspiring principals, this thinking must be changed for principalship is about the development of instruction and more importantly of teachers.

In reality, the question asked is “*Is instructional leadership the principal's priority?*” A study pointed out that while most would agree that instructional leadership is critical in the realization of effective schools, it is seldom prioritized. Instructional leadership differs from that of a school administrator or manager in several ways. Principals who pride themselves as administrators usually are too preoccupied in dealing with strictly managerial duties, while principals who are instructional leaders involve themselves in setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, and evaluating teachers Jenkins (2009). This observation is also supported by another study which shared that the changing conditions in schools prevent principals from devoting more time to instructional leadership. The study addresses the issue that the press of management responsibilities deprives the school of a valuable instructional-leadership resource: the principal's time (Turnbull et al, 2009).

As observed in the Philippines, public school principals are preoccupied with a lot of administrative work which prevents them from attending to their instructional tasks. With no other assistants than the department heads, he unconsciously fails to attend regularly to his duties as an instructional leader. The observation can be the same with the private schools but not as strongly felt as in public schools. In most cases, the principals have academic assistants like assistant principals and subject area heads who are directly responsible for instructional concerns. However, the supervision of instruction should never be delegated to the assistants for it is the main task of the principal to supervise the teaching and learning process.

In the study on the interpersonal challenges of instructional leadership, it was found out that the barriers to improving the quantity and quality of instructional leadership are considerable (Le Fevre & Robinson, 2015). Much of the discussion has focused on the administrative tasks that distract principals from the core business of improving teaching and learning. While the relative amount of time spent on instructional and administrative tasks varies by country, school size, school context, and methods used to assess time expenditure, increased time on instructional leadership have been a commonly expressed aspiration of both leading researchers and practitioners (Hallinger, 2005). This is very alarming because what happens with instruction if the principal's focus is on administration. Jenkins (2009) emphasized that the instructional leader makes instructional quality the top priority of the school and attempts to bring that vision to realization.

This study aims to present the experiences of the researcher in curriculum evaluation under different principals in a private sectarian school in Manila. It will also discuss current practices on instructional leadership vis-à-vis curriculum evaluation. This study will also include the experiences

in online teaching and learning where the curriculum was modified due to the limitations of virtual classes. Moreover, it seeks to identify how principals can take a strong leadership presence in the challenges in instruction and curriculum evaluation.

## 2. Method

This study uses critical reflection as a method based on the researcher's thirty years of teaching in basic education and three years of teaching educational leadership and management in graduate school. Critical reflection is used to further positively contribute to ways and practices of teaching the course. As a method, it has provided avenues for a deeper and complex understanding of practice experiences with the hope of improving future practices (Ancho, 2020). Moreover, it emphasized that by “challenging and changing assumptions and practices”, one becomes a critically reflective practitioner.

As a method, a particular approach to critical reflection involves an overall process of learning from experience, with the express aim of improving professional practice. Critical reflection is a way of learning from and reworking experience. Participants begin by presenting a story of their experience which they believe is crucial to their learning about their professional practice. They reflect on this experience with the help of colleagues in small groups. The process is divided into two stages. It begins with unearthing fundamental assumptions (primarily those that are to do with power and connections between the individual and the social context) that are implicit in the participant's story. Examining these assumptions allows for better scrutiny of blind spots or discrepancies. This initial process usually enables participants to recognize values or beliefs that are fundamentally important to them, and this allows them to remake their understanding of their experience in a way that fits better with these fundamental ideas (Fook, 2011).

The researcher revisits his experiences in curriculum evaluation with different principals in a private sectarian school and ideas shared by his students in the graduate school. There were two focus group discussions (FGD) conducted by the researcher. First, he asked three academic heads and teachers from the private sectarian school who have been with him for twenty-five years. Second, he asked his five Ph.D. graduate students who have been in the teaching profession for at least ten years to participate in a focus group discussion. The FGD questions were validated by five experts in educational management who are teaching in graduate schools and currently occupying school leadership roles. The following are the interview questions: 1) Based on your experiences as a teacher or academic head, how did your principal/s perform their duties in curriculum evaluation? 2) How did your principal act as an instructional leader particularly in curriculum evaluation? 3) As instructional leaders, what should principals do to make curriculum evaluation an important factor in the development and enhancement of teaching and learning?

To analyze the data gathered in the study, coding was used by the researcher. In coding, the researcher organizes data collected into segments and assigns a word or phrase to them as labels

(Creswell, 2014). Key themes were identified in curriculum evaluation. With these themes, principals will be guided in their roles as instructional leaders, particularly in curriculum evaluation.

The researcher is currently an assistant principal in a private sectarian school in Manila, Philippines, and has been with the school for more than thirty years. He is also a part-time faculty of the college of graduate studies in a teacher education institution in Manila, the Philippines where he teaches educational leadership and management, and curriculum and instruction. His intensive experience as a basic education teacher and academic head including as a professor in graduate school gives him more insights and realizations in curriculum evaluation as an important role of an instructional leader.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

The two focus group discussions and reflections of the researcher based on his experiences led to the identification of key themes in curriculum evaluation that are needed in enhancing instructional leadership. The four themes are curriculum and instructional leadership, curriculum evaluation as a process and collaborative task, curriculum evaluation and professional development, and curriculum evaluation and principal's mentoring.

#### *3.1 Curriculum and Instructional Leadership*

The curriculum is dynamic and continuously evolving. It keeps up with the local and global developments. Moreover, it must respond to the needs of the changing times. Considering human diversity, it should address the needs of the people and cut across all cultures and generations. Since the curriculum is dynamic, the principal is challenged to be always abreast with the times. This is the challenge that every educator and more importantly every principal in leading a school. For example, the curriculum must respond to the needs of 21<sup>st</sup>-century learners whose interests and skills are quite different from the learners of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, the curricular programs must adapt to these changes brought about by today's learners' needs and interests. If the principal is more concerned with his administrative tasks, how is the school through his leadership addressing the challenges and issues in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century educational landscape? Principals are first and foremost instructional leaders. Their primary focus is on teaching and learning which includes curriculum development and evaluation.

Instructional leaders are led from a combination of expertise and charisma. These were hands-on principals, hip-deep in curriculum and instruction, and unafraid of working directly with teachers on the improvement of teaching and learning. The second dimension of the conceptual definition of instructional leadership indicates "Managing the Instructional Program" which focuses on the coordination and control of instruction and curriculum. This dimension incorporates three leadership functions namely supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress. Moreover, this dimension requires the principal to be deeply engaged in stimulating,

supervising, and monitoring teaching and learning in the school. These functions demand that the principal has expertise in teaching and learning, as well as a commitment to the school's improvement. It is this dimension that requires the principal to become "hip-deep" in the school's instructional program (Hallinger, 2005).

As instructional leaders, principals are also curriculum leaders. Many school principals who are also curriculum leaders initiate the planning of curricular revision at the end of every school year based on the experiences and information gathered during the year. This is ritually done in preparation for the incoming school year (Bago, 2008). The work of the principal as a curriculum leader is indicated in the "Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale" (PIMRS) developed by Hallinger and reviewed after 25 years. The instrument which was reviewed in 2008 based on different researches has been proven as a reliable means of collecting data on principal instructional leadership for both the elementary and secondary levels. The PIMRS covers key areas in instructional leadership namely framing the school goals, communicating the school goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, monitoring student progress, protecting instructional time, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, promoting professional development, and providing incentives for learning. Strictly speaking, coordinating the curriculum is one of the ten areas in the instrument. The indicators ask the extent of the principal in making clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice-principal, or teacher-leaders), drawing upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions, monitoring the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives, assessing the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests, and participating actively in the review of curricular materials. However, looking at the dynamic meaning of curriculum, it certainly encompasses all areas in the instrument because the curriculum is not only about the program but the totality of education.

The four major components of the curriculum are reflected in the ten areas in the PIMRS. The first component which is aims, goals, and objectives is framing the school goals and communicating the school goals. Subject matter/content is found in coordinating the curriculum. The learning experiences are highlighted in providing incentives for teachers and providing incentives for learning. Lastly, evaluation approaches are found in supervising and evaluating instruction, monitoring student progress, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and promoting professional development. Therefore, curriculum evaluation is a key task in instructional leadership.

In "Curriculum Theory and Practice", presented the four ways of approaching curriculum theory and practice. There are two ways which address the issue that this paper is driving at. Curriculum as a body of knowledge to be transmitted and curriculum as a process are two curriculum ideas that are very evidently emphasized in this paper (Smith, 2009). Instructional leadership is always a process that needs to be felt by everyone in the school. Having an impact on the quality of teaching in schools, school leaders must provide the necessary focus and direction to curriculum and instruction, and manage the school organization efficiently to support student and adult learning. Being a body of knowledge to be transmitted, the principal must assure that the content to be delivered

and the activities to be conducted are consistent with the vision-mission of the school. If instructional leadership is not the priority of the principal, it may lead to distorted teaching and learning. Instructional leaders need to know what is going on in the classroom. Without this knowledge, they are unable to appreciate some of the problems teachers and students encounter (Jenkins, 2009)

As an instructional leader, the principal has to ensure that the curriculum is carried out effectively. Through his formal and informal observations and dialogue with the teachers, he will be able to gather data that he can use in curriculum evaluation. According to Bago (2008), to carry out the task in responding to academic goals and personal growth needs of the students and teacher, the instructional leader continuously looks for ways to assist teachers in doing their classroom tasks better. Whenever and wherever necessary, the instructional leader provides intervention measures to improve the teaching-learning experiences in the classroom. Principals have to observe classes and provide mentorship most especially to beginning teachers. Included in supervision is the discussion of learning activities as reflected in the curriculum before, during, and after classroom instruction. It is unimaginable for instructional tasks without curriculum evaluation particularly by conducting classroom visits and observations.

### *3.2 Curriculum Evaluation as a Process and Collaborative Task*

To improve teaching and learning, curriculum evaluation is important to be carried out. The principal should be equipped with the knowledge, skill, and patience to implement different approaches in curriculum evaluation like Ralph Tyler's framework, Daniel Stufflebeam's Content Input Process Product (CIPP), and Robert Stake's paradigm (Descriptive Data). The CIPP framework provides a feedbacking mechanism which is essential in curriculum evaluation. After the observation, the principal and teacher reflect on the process, and the principal provides feedback to the teacher. Teaching as part of the curriculum needs to be assessed to be improved and responsive to the needs of the learners. This is similar to the framework of Robert Stake. With the observations being evaluated based on the intents, the principal can provide descriptions and judgment on the process or program.

As a collaborative process, the principal spearheads curriculum evaluation with the assistance of the academic heads and teachers. As a process, it leads to good professional relationships and personal relationships. Looking at the future, that the principal of the future must lead a complex learning organization by helping to establish new cultures in schools that have deep capacities to engage in continuous problem-solving and improvement (Fullan, 2003). An instructional leader must always involve the teachers in curriculum evaluation but it all starts with establishing good relationships. The principal develops relationships that instill trust, integrity, interdependence, and commitment from the members of the school community. He models and fosters open honest communication and respect among staff as the foundation for collaborative learning. Principals rely on the commitment of individuals to the purposes of the organization and foster it through positive interdependence.

Support from the full school community is achieved through structured opportunities for input into the appropriate decision-making process. He leads with a heart. The importance of collaboration in curriculum development. If schools are to respond effectively to these calls, they need to work in collaboration with families and the local community in seeking to achieve two broad aims through the curriculum specifically a curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for all students to learn and to achieve, and a curriculum should reflect and influence the values of society, as it aims to promote students' spiritual, moral, emotional, social and cultural development and prepare all students for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of life. These aims provide an essential context within which a curriculum needs to be developed (Boyle & Charles, 2016.)

Once established, the principal can make the teachers work on curriculum evaluation. Through the principal's relationship and involvement in curriculum evaluation, he will be able to identify teachers who have a strong commitment to the total learning of the students and those who just do the job because it is a requirement. Leaders must only bring inside the bus the right people. When principals work with the right teachers, collaboration in curriculum work will be easier for commitment will be high. Establishing relationships and fostering a strong sense of commitment in teachers is an important skill that instructional leaders should have. It can only be done if principals will spend more time with teachers through formal and informal conversations (Collins, 2001).

Taking the framework of Stake, describing, and judging are important in curriculum evaluation. Inclusive in the curriculum are the teachers who play a significant role in the teaching and learning process. The curriculum is not only about the content but more importantly about the stakeholders. Curriculum evaluation is more than the program because it is about those who designed and implement it. Teachers have to be assisted and supervised by academic heads and the principal. In the end, they will be judged or evaluated to find out how they have responded to the curriculum process.

No doubt that instructional supervision is the main role of the principal. The set of activities to be carried in the classroom to improve the teaching-learning process will be observed, described, and evaluated by the principal. In supervising instruction, the principal holds face-to-face interaction and relationship building between the teacher and the supervisor. He ensures that there is improvement in students' learning through the improvement of the teacher's instruction. Through his supervision, the principal influences the teacher's improved performance and students' improved learning. With the strengths and weaknesses communicated to the teacher by the principal, it will guide teachers to increase their capacity to achieve learning goals for their students. Principals support instructional activities and programs by modeling expected behaviors, participating in staff development, and consistently prioritizing instructional concerns on a day-to-day basis. They strive to protect instructional time by removing issues that would detract teachers from their instructional responsibilities. Moreover, principals ineffective schools are involved in instruction and work to provide resources that keep teachers focused on student achievement. They are knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction and promote teacher reflection about instruction and its effect on student achievement (Stronge, Richard, & Catano, 2008).



Most of the teachers in graduate school study not only for personal gain but also for what they can contribute to education particularly in their respective schools. Principals who don't emphasize supervision of instruction are remiss of their duties with the teachers not knowing their strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Effective instructional leaders need to be resource providers. It is not enough for principals to know the strengths and weaknesses of their faculties; they must also recognize teachers' desires to be acknowledged and appreciated for a job well done (Jenkins, 2009).

The involvement of teachers in curriculum development and evaluation is imperative and important. In the teaching and learning process, the other side of the coin is the teacher. Most curricula start to gain life from the time it is conceived and written. Planning and writing the curriculum are the primary roles of the teacher. A teacher is a curriculum maker. Teachers write a curriculum daily through a lesson plan, a unit plan, or a yearly plan. The teacher prepares activities for the students to do. The teacher addresses the goals, needs, interests of the learners by creating experiences from where the students can learn. The teacher designs enrich and modify the curriculum to suit the learner's characteristics (Bilbao et al, 2008).

As a curriculum developer, teachers are part of textbook committees, faculty selection boards, school evaluation committees, or textbook writers themselves. Teachers are empowered to develop their school curricula taking into consideration their expertise, the context of the school, and the abilities of the learners. By so doing, teachers become architects of the school curriculum. On the other hand, a developed curriculum remains inactive if it is not implemented. At this point, teachers' role shifts from developer to the implementer. From a designer or technician to a decision-maker. Which of the plans should be put into action and how should it be done are decisions which the teachers should make. Curriculum implementation is now giving life to the written material. To do this, there is the need for another actor, the learners.

No curriculum will succeed without the learners. The teachers' role now shifts from planning to doing. Doing here implies guiding, facilitating, and directing activities that will be done by the students. The choice of the activities, the methods to be utilized, the materials to be used are some of the considerations that the teachers should have in curricular implementation. The teachers' role as an implementer is very essential. Oftentimes, unsuccessful implementation of the curriculum becomes the root of educational failure. Thus, some would say that the root of the educational problem is the teacher. Although this statement can be argued, it points out the inability to implement well a curriculum. Therefore, teachers must be guided by the academic heads and principals, and be provided with opportunities for professional development. Even in 1974, it was already suggested that professional development is possibly the only legitimate indicator of the success of an innovation, although it is considerably more difficult to measure than the take-up of project materials. Educational change is a process, not an event, and that the individuals and social systems involved interact with each other over time and are changed by the change process itself (McCormick & James, 2018).

If the curriculum is not implemented accordingly due to the inability of the teacher, it is here where the principal comes in. The principal as an instructional leader has the responsibility to guide the teacher in curriculum implementation. The visibility of the principal in supervision will be highly appreciated by the teacher though initially might be afraid of seeing the principal doing his rounds or being called by the principal for a conference. Being a front liner, the teacher is responsible for giving life to the curriculum in the classroom. But he can never do that if he is not guided and mentored by an academic head or the principal. A teacher may have learned all the educational theories in the university and through his pre-service training but the real action requires the guidance of a more seasoned educator or an expert teacher. Once trained, the teacher may be empowered to carry out curriculum implementation and later provide feedback to his mentors.

Effective instructional leaders need to be instructional resources. Teachers count on their principals as resources of information on current trends and effective instructional practices. Instructional leaders are tuned in to issues relating to curriculum, effective pedagogical strategies, and assessment. Principals must also train other academic heads and tenured teachers to be experts in curriculum evaluation (Jenkins, 2009). A fundamental reform, which involves the introduction of a new curriculum into the education system, requires massive support for teachers, especially for novice teachers which are identified as the weak link in the process. Veteran teachers should be trained to supervise and mentor novice teachers. Establishing a clearly defined role such as this may contribute to the empowerment of veteran teachers as well as to the enhancement of their feelings of responsibility and involvement (Adin-Surkis, 2015).

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, classes are held online and through other modalities. Knowing that online teaching and learning has a lot of limitations including other learning alternatives, the Department of Education (DepEd) came out with the most essential learning competencies (MELCs). As stated in the guidelines in the use of the MELCs, it is not just a response to the challenges of the current pandemic but is also part of the DepEd's long-term response to the call of SDG 4 to develop resilient education systems, most especially during emergencies. Thus, it can be used under certain circumstances as a mechanism to ensure educational continuity through the curriculum dimension. The MELCs will enable DepEd to focus instruction on the most essential and indispensable competencies that our learners must acquire, as we anticipate challenges in learning delivery. It will also lighten the burden of converting classroom-oriented learning resources into learning resources adapted to distance learning. However, due to lack of time, consultation and review were not done collaboratively as expected. Only a few people were involved in the crafting and development of the MELCs including the learning packages. This resulted in a lot of confusion and even delay in the opening of classes. Education leaders and teachers had to clarify the implementation including the content of the MELCs. Indeed, if collaboration is less, more problems will arise in curriculum development and implementation. This should be a learning experience for all educators most especially the education leaders. It is expected that better MELCs development and implementation will be carried out next year. The Department of Education has partnered with teacher education institutions for the development and evaluation of the curriculum.

The presence of the principal or even the superintendent is important in ensuring that teaching and learning are done according to standards. In most cases, principals find themselves in a dilemma between instructional and administrative tasks. When principals arrive in the office and start reading the papers on his desk, he might not be able to leave the office and may not be able to talk or be seen by the teachers. Principals must have high visibility not only for teachers to be always ready but to be perceived as someone who can assist them in instruction. Jenkins (2009) emphasized that effective instructional leaders need to create a *visible presence*. This includes focusing on learning objectives, modeling behaviors of learning, and designing programs and activities on instruction.

In the supervision of instruction, it is axiomatic that instruction supervisors should be knowledgeable in determining teaching effectiveness. It is a non-negotiable skill that all supervisors must possess and continue to develop. They should be able to assess the behaviors and practices of teachers during a classroom observation and provide valuable constructive feedback to help teachers improve their teaching skills. The teachers will always be part of the curriculum and they should be guided by the principal. Therefore, the principal should have high visibility, available for consultation for the improvement of teaching and learning. Curriculum evaluation is a process that entails the presence of the principals, academic heads, and teachers. Being a process, it is a relationship (Bago, 2008).

### *3.3 Curriculum Evaluation and Professional Development*

As an instructional leader, the principal must be updated on the developments in teaching and learning so that he can share and mentor the teachers meaningfully. Since education is continuously evolving, the principal should always keep himself abreast with the latest trends in education. Hence, he must lead the teachers in professional development. One of the competencies of school heads, as prescribed by the Department of Education, is professional development. It states that quality professional development has the power to increase educators' knowledge of academic content and teaching skills while changing what educators believe about student learning and how they interact with students. Powerful professional development can transform schools into places in which all adults and students are deeply engaged in learning and making meaning of their lives. Principals should analyze and assess the needs and interests of teachers and other school personnel. Curriculum evaluation requires continuous professional training both for principals and teachers because curriculum evolves. The professional development of teachers, individually or collectively as part of the social system of the school, appears crucially important to the improvement of educational provision. If this is so, it is worth looking at professional development a little more closely (McCormick & James, 2018).

Curriculum evaluation is an ongoing process making principals and teachers always on their toes, adjusting to the demands of the times. Hence, principals must facilitate the identification of the professional needs of teachers to develop a faculty development plan responding to the needs of the teachers. Professional and personal growth can be accomplished through well-planned and strategic

staff development programs. A school that seriously carries out its responsibility of providing its faculty the opportunities for growth and development is usually rewarded with excellent teaching performance. There are additional benefits to be derived from allowing and making teachers grow and develop both personally and professionally for the school. Some of the more desirable results are high faculty morale, commitment to the profession, loyalty to the institution, and improved interpersonal relationships. Those with supervisory functions (principals, assistant principals, subject area coordinators, etc.) also need to undergo training to help them develop the needed competence and confidence in performing their tasks as instructional leaders that will enable them to promote and sustain a community of learners that allows the school to deliver service optimally. If their knowledge and skills in teaching are updated, they will be able to meet confidently the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. As mentioned more often, teachers are perpetual learners because education is always evolving. Having updated knowledge and skills, principals and teachers will be able to do curriculum evaluation relevantly and meaningfully (Bago, 2008).

Looking into the aspects of instructional leadership, curriculum evaluation is not simply about the evaluation of the program. It is an assessment, analysis, evaluation, and enhancement of the entire process which includes primarily the people involved namely the principal, academic supervisors, teachers, and other academic personnel who have a direct influence in teaching and learning. Through training and mentoring, they will be updated and provided with opportunities to sustain their strengths and correct their weaknesses. The primary mechanism for improving student achievement comes through the school learning climate, then implies that principals need to make school climate the priority in their school improvement efforts. This also implies that training programs that prepare principals to lead urban schools need to recognize learning climate as a priority. At the same time, this does not mean that other aspects of principals' roles are unimportant. When we consider the relationship of principal leadership and instruction within schools - comparing one teacher to another - several mediating factors, including the quality of professional development, professional community, and partnerships with parents, have significant associations with instructional quality. The quality of professional development has the strongest relationship. This suggests that principal leadership is important for assisting individual teachers to improve their performance, perhaps where principals feel help is most needed or where they prioritize school efforts and resources (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012).

Professional development activities can be undertaken through the active participation of university faculties, practicing principals, and prospective principals engaging in study groups, curriculum development, peer observation, and collaborative school-based research. Principals should be innovative by creating more professional development and training opportunities instead of waiting for the Department to arrange professional development programs (Maestry, 2017).

### *3.4 Curriculum Evaluation and Principal's Mentoring*

A principal does not assist the teachers just to comply with the requirements but to make every teacher a better facilitator of learning, leading to improved student learning. As an instructional

leader, the principal finds ways to guide and mentor the teachers for better classroom teaching through varied methods like professional development and coaching. In any situation, the principal assists the teachers in facing and addressing educational and social challenges in learning leading them to commit to their profession. Principal instructional leadership achieves its effects through setting a direction for the school, organizing the learning environment, and developing teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2018).

Effective principal-teacher interaction about instruction, processes such as inquiry, reflection, exploration, and experimentation result. Teachers build repertoires of flexible alternatives rather than collecting rigid teaching procedures and methods. A focus on instructional leadership, of course, contrasts with broad-based research on effective school leadership. They described the RG model of effective instructional leadership, which consists of the two major themes—talking with teachers to promote reflection and promoting professional growth—and related strategies. Brief descriptions of teachers' perspectives on affective and reflective/reflectively informed behavioral effects of such leadership are also presented. According to their data, talking with teachers in and outside of instructional conferences was the cornerstone of effective instructional leadership. The principals valued dialogue that, above all, encouraged teachers to become aware of and critically reflect on their learning and professional practice. Proactively advising on the improvement of instruction was one central and powerful element of principals' verbal interaction with teachers. Principals made suggestions to teachers both during post-observation conferences and informally in day-to-day interactions. Principals' suggestions strongly enhanced teachers' reflective behaviors, which included implementing new ideas, using greater variety in teaching, responding to student diversity, preparing and planning more carefully, taking more risks, achieving better instructional focus, and using professional discretion to make changes. Teachers also reported positive effects on motivation, satisfaction, self-esteem, efficacy, sense of security, and feelings of support (Blasé & Blasé, 1999).

On giving feedback, the teachers said that by visiting classrooms and giving post-observation feedback to teachers, effective instructional leaders “hold up a mirror,” serve as “another set of eyes,” and are “critical friends” who engage in thoughtful discourse with the teacher about what was observed for instructional improvement. Teachers also reported that feedback had positive effects on motivation, self-esteem, efficacy, and sense of security. Even classroom visits (“walk-throughs”) without dialogue or feedback by principals had some positive impact on teacher motivation, self-esteem, and reflective behavior, including better planning/preparation, focus, and greater innovation/creativity.

On modeling, teachers said that it was always followed by a conference in which it was discussed. Such modeling and subsequent discussions were not considered offensive because principals had cultivated respectful and trusting relationships with teachers. Modeling (like suggestion and giving feedback) was viewed as an impressive example of instructional leadership, one that primarily yielded positive effects on teacher motivation as well as reflective behavior, including increases in innovation/creativity, variety in teaching, focus, and planning/preparation.

On giving praise, focusing on specific and concrete teaching behaviors, significantly affected teacher motivation, self-esteem, and efficacy. It also fostered teacher reflective behavior, including reinforcement of effective teaching strategies, risk-taking, and innovation/creativity.

In addition to the strategies discussed above, other principal behaviors that enhanced teacher reflective behavior included distributing professional literature, encouraging teachers to attend workshops and conferences, and encouraging reflective discussions and collaboration with others.

On emphasizing the study of teaching and learning, it was found out that principals who were effective instructional leaders provided formal staff development opportunities to address emergent instructional needs. These opportunities, along with teacher input, discretion in attending, and support for innovation, resulted in effects on reflective behavior: innovation/creativity, variety in teaching, risk-taking, positive responses to student diversity, and instructional focus, as well as effects on motivation, efficacy, and self-esteem. Principals enhanced the value of staff development sessions by becoming learners themselves and participating with teachers.

On supporting collaboration among educators, it was found out that principals' instructional leadership hinged on the development of teachers as learners who collaborate to study teaching and its effects. Principals described in our study seemed to recognize that collaborative networks among educators were essential for successful teaching and learning and could be expanded through staff development. This was accomplished by modeling the philosophy of teamwork, providing time regularly for collaborative endeavors, and advocating sharing and peer observation. Collaboration among teachers resulted in increased teacher motivation, self-esteem, efficacy, and reflective behavior, such as risk-taking, instructional variety, and innovation/creativity.

Coaching and mentoring make the teachers well-guided in teaching and learning. Curriculum as a process is the entire teaching and learning process. It is more than the program being implemented because it is about everything related to the curriculum. When an instructional leader provides direction to the teachers, he mentors them in the process of curriculum evaluation. The curriculum is alive when teachers implement and evaluate them together with the principals. With all the positive findings on instructional leadership, it stresses that principals should devote more time to instruction particularly the curriculum which is the heart of instruction of (Blasé & Blasé, 1999).

#### **4. Conclusions**

Instructional leadership is all about supervision of instruction. Instruction is useless without a curriculum. Since the curriculum is the backbone of teaching and learning and where all other aspects of education are anchored, its dynamism can only be realized through curriculum evaluation. Principals whose main task is the supervision of instruction must devote more time to curriculum, classroom observation, feedbacking, professional development, walk-throughs, and principal-teacher relationship. A study found out that the relatively little time principals devoted to instruction are somewhat surprising given the research and district emphasis on the principals as the instructional

leader of the school (Horng et al, 2009). A similar study which is part of its initiative to improve educational leadership, the Wallace Foundation developed a time/task analysis tool that allows principals to keep track of their time as precisely as a lawyer keeps track of billable hours. When they use the tool, principals consistently find they are spending 70% of their time on “buses, budgets, and behavior” and only 30% of their time on instruction conducted (Turnbull et al, 2009). Becoming aware of how they spend their time and then disciplining themselves to delegate many of the management tasks to a trusted staff member is one of the first steps principals can take to become a better instructional leader, according to the Wallace Foundation. One strategy advocated by the Foundation to free up more of a principal's time for instruction is to have a staff member play the role of School Administration Manager (SAM). A SAM is an assistant who takes on many of the principal's most time-consuming management tasks. As curriculum leaders, principals must not ignore the process of curriculum evaluation and devote more time to instructional tasks. Curriculum evaluation is not just about the program. It is about everything related to the curriculum. And the most important of them all is the teacher. Therefore, the principal should engage the teachers in a meaningful discussion through formal and informal encounters.

How can a principal claim that the school year was great if what he did mostly throughout the year is on administrative tasks like attending meetings? Looking at all the tasks related to instructional leadership which are all about the curriculum, his time must be spent mostly on supervision of instruction. How can a curriculum be dynamic if the principal himself does not pay too much attention to it? When curricula are not evaluated and developed, instruction will start seeing darkness leading to its death. Hence, principals must focus as the instructional leader with curriculum evaluation and development as anchors to effective teaching and learning.

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