AAP - Leader perspectives

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Description:

The leadership approach I took was firstly to talk with my staff to see if they would be on board with it. I spoke to parents and let them know that it was something we were thinking about doing.
My leadership approach for the implementation of age appropriate pedagogies is very much a be there approach. So from the beginning I was very actively involved in the preparation of the lessons and the lessons especially just to role model and to be part of it at the beginning.
My leadership approach, really, revolves around the notion of trusting teachers. Empowering teachers to actually know what's best for students of this age. Fundamentally I believe that we're about handing the profession back to the people who own it and that's the teachers. The people who have the knowledge base, they are playing a role in the conversations that determine how we're going to teach, what we're going to teach and what it looks like in classrooms.
My leadership approach in implementing this project has really been about building capacity and collaboration and also about really building the knowledge around evidence based innovation and action research.
We had a very strong team in the lower part of the school. So the approach was to actually use all the members of the team, not just our prep teacher to work within the age appropriate pedagogies, to support each other, to mentor and to walk the journey together.
In implementing the age appropriate pedagogies in our school my involvement as the literacy coach here has been to work with [Leanne], to go down and provide her with some coaching, to observe her practice and talk with her about which characteristics were already evident in her practice. She has a lot of narrative in her practice and she - just looking at how she could develop some of the other areas, be more collaborative, allowing some more child initiated learning into her practice as well.
There are challenges. The first challenge is about a mindset change so working with the teachers to see that this is not on top of what they're doing and it's not in place of what they're doing, it's actually part of what they're doing. The challenges are to have teachers that know the curriculum really well, that have confidence in their teaching and so they're able to then see how this enhances that curriculum. The other challenge is to show that having play-based activities with purpose, works for all children. It is so important for the imagination and that really leads into more creativity in their writing, in their reading.
One thing, I think, is really important for schools to realise, that are undertaking this project is that this isn't something new. That this isn't something that - the latest thing that is: the latest program, the latest fad, this is highly evidence based, highly researched and it varies. It's going to look different in every school. I'd say that the real power in this - this isn't a top-down approach. This is really leadership from the middle and it really is an opportunity to really improve the outcomes for your prep students for their whole lifetime. This is really important work. But also it's going to build up the social capital of your school, that it's going to improve your culture. It's going to improve the amount of pride that people take in their work because they're being treated as professionals and they're developing those skills.
That's important. That it's not this trickle down model where you have one expert. As leaders we need to be the ones to ask the questions rather than provide the answers and sometimes that means asking a question that people haven't thought of or that takes the conversation a bit deeper level.
I think the recommendations are that you really need a team approach. I think it needs to be a start of a whole school philosophy so even if people are teaching Year 6 for them to actually be listening to, involved and being part of that change, of pedagogical change.