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Instructional Leadership, Supervision and Teacher Development

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Abstract:

Leadership is a discussion in every issue and everybody recognize how essential and valuable leadership is. Why some companies, teams, and schools do well while others fails? The credit or fault generally goes to the manager, coach, or principal. In school' scenario the principal has to accept these consequences, as he occupies a distinct and key responsibility that has an effect on the quality of schooling. The questions about school scenario are (i) what is the main purpose of school (ii) How their students learn in the school (iii) How he coordinates all the activities i.e. students, teachers and curriculum. The focus of this article was on the theoretical basis of the instructional leadership and to review the model to build up the understanding of instructional leadership.

Keywords: Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Teacher Development,

Objectives:

Following were the major objectives of the study

- To explain the concept of instructional leadership
- To review the James Weber Instructional leadership model

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What is leadership?

Leadership is defined differently by different authors Terry, called it “the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group goals”.¹ In the context of this definition the knowledge, values, structure, and skills are necessary for a principal as a leader to inspire all members of the school community to work together toward the goal of an excellent education for all students. According to Thomson, Leadership is best defined as “getting the job done through people”.² This definition means that two things are necessary for effective leadership: accomplishment (getting the job done) and influencing the others (through people).

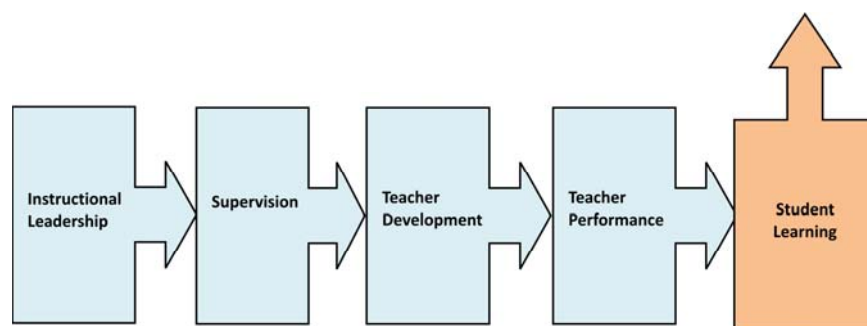
According to Weber, leadership is described as power granted with the will of the followers. It is authority readily invested in a trusted person and thus qualifies as a kind of moral and transformational power over the organization.³

In most definitions of leadership the two functions are generally considered indispensable to its meaning: setting directions and exercising influence. Each of these functions can be carried out in different ways, with such differences distinguishing the many models of leadership from one another. Yukl comments, leadership influences “the interpretation of events for followers, the choice of objectives for the group or organization, the organization of work activities accomplish objectives, the motivation of followers to achieve the objectives, the maintenance of cooperative relationships and teamwork, and the enlistment support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization”.⁴ He further explained the popular distinction between “doing things right” (management) and “doing right things” (leadership) as largely meaningless: accomplishing success as a leader, requires “doing right things right.”⁵

What is Instructional Leadership?

Debevoise, encompasses Instructional leadership as those measures that a principal takes, or assigns to others, to raise growth in student learning and consists of following tasks: describing the purpose of schooling; setting school-wide goals; providing the resources needed for learning to occur; supervising and evaluating teachers; coordinating staff development programs; and creating collegial relationships with and among teachers.⁶

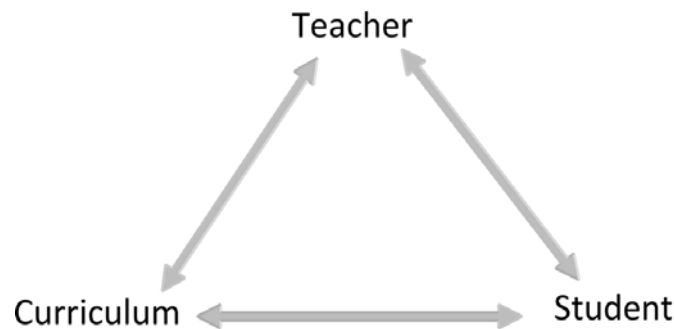
Figure – A



The above figure depicts that Instructional leadership consists of principal behaviors that set high expectations and clear goals for student and teacher performance, monitor and provide feedback regarding the technical core (teaching and learning) of schools, provide and promote professional growth for all staff members, and help create and maintain a school climate of high academic press. Hoy & Hoy, explained that “the principal must communicate a clear vision on instructional excellence and continuous professional development consistent with the goal of the improvement of teaching and learning”.⁷ The instructional leaders are listeners as well as talkers; they are collaborators with teachers and students, whose needs present the most important demands in an instructional role. The leadership process is interpersonal as well as

dynamics. Particularly it becomes dynamics when the principals are accountable for whole instructional program. As instructional leader the principal is the pivotal within the school who affects the quality of individual teacher instruction, the height of student achievement, and the degree of efficiency in school functioning. According to Mendez, there are three major forces that serve to shape and describe a school the public, the staff and the students and that these forces interact through curriculum. The role of the principal is to manipulate these forces in order to maximize the quality of instruction.⁸

The three key elements of learning: Teacher, students and curriculum



Instructional leadership is a complex task, it means that becoming a leader of leaders- learning and working with others i.e. teachers, students and parents to improve the instructional quality and curriculum.

A Model of Instructional Leadership

This is a model presented by James Weber which is based on two assumptions.

- i). The principal is the main instructional leader.
- ii). The principal works with the leadership functions that are sometime shared and sometime not sheared.⁹

The functions of the Weber's model are as under

i). *Setting Academic Objectives*

A principal who is an instructional leader provides guidance for the school program, and describe the objectives to the general understanding.

- Vision for success

Leithwood, Doris, & Alicia, and his colleagues found in a study ¹⁰ that teachers' commitment to change in instructional programs was affected the most by leadership that gave direction, purpose, and meaning to their work, e.g. the purpose of the school is to educate all students to high levels of academic performance. The principal's responsibility is to ensure that the school has a clear academic mission and communicates it to the staff, which is focused on the academic progress of the students.

ii). *Organizing the Instructional Program*

After setting the goals for the school, the next step by instructional leader is to develop the strategies for bringing that goals into reality by allocating the staff, student grouping, and organizing the curriculum. These also involve the collaborative planning between instructional leader, students and parents. e.g. decision to place a student in one class or another. Certainly, the decision to place a student in one or another classroom, study group, or program is a decision that involves teachers, principals and the parents. The following are the some principal's behavior that proved generally effective.

- Listen actively to staff and faculty ideas and produces opportunities for staff to implement innovative coaching arrangements.
- Make available resources and an encouraging environment for collaborative planning.
- Organize planning sessions to discuss grouping and scheduling arrangements with staff.
- Utilize staff recommendations.
- Keeps staff informed of policy changes.
- Expands options by varying periods in school day and days in cycle.

iii). *Supervision and Evaluation*

The most important task of principals' instructional leadership is teachers' supervision and evaluation. Instructional leadership means very little unless leaders are willing and able to observe teachers, offer advice about problems, and make formative evaluations that support and pinpoint areas to improve. Supervisors must have the knowledge of curriculum and instruction to know what to look for. According to Gardner, "To help others believe in themselves is one of a leader's highest duties".¹¹ Following are some tips that are effective for supervision.

- Classroom observations will be used to observe what is actually going on in the class rooms.
- What is the performance of the teacher and how are the students performing.
- Meets with teachers after each visit to discuss what was observed.

- Encourages teacher to express feelings and opinions about observational data and class activities.
- Offers teacher alternatives teaching techniques and explanations of class room events.
- Give praise for specific development of teacher's skill if observed.
- Recommends resources and training programs in areas in which teacher need to improve.

iv). *Protecting Instructional Time and Program*

A study by Cusick, found that 200 minutes of a student's normal school day were spending on routine or maintenance tasks. He noted that "the time spent actively engaged with some teacher over a matter of cognitive importance may not exceed twenty minutes a period for five periods a day. This is a high estimate. I would say that if an average student spent an hour to one and half hours involved on subject matter that was a good day".¹²

Teachers use instructional time for taking attendance, distributing materials entering and leaving the classroom, late start or early ending or such non classroom activities as field trips etc. grouping practices, instructional strategies, and the size of the class can all determine how time is spent in classrooms. Finally, achievement and instructional time both suffer when students are not in school or find it hard to concentrate because of disciplinary problems in the environment. Truancy and absenteeism can arise from a great variety of social and personal conditions, ranging from poverty and peer group influence to boredom and poor academic background. Discipline problems often emerge from conflicts, misunderstanding about rules, or

the absence of clear boundaries for behaviors. Following are some of the behaviors associated in the research with increasing academic learning time (that is, time spent learning). The list focuses on two crucial dimensions for learning time: ensuring class attendance and allocated time for instruction.

For improving attendance

- Identify problems in enforcing rules on attendance and discipline observe that policies are clearly communicated to the staff members
- Put together community support particularly with parents
- Help teachers to set up a reward system for good attendance
- Distribute duty with teachers in informing parents of class absence.

Allocated time for instruction

- Holds staff meeting to discuss common problems in instructional planning and offer solutions
- Protects classroom instructional time from interruption
- Insists on observing schedule
- Expects teachers to start and end classes on time, using the full allocated time for instruction
- Streamlines clerical tasks so that teachers can perform them more quickly.
- Visits classrooms to observe teachers and students

v). *Creating a Climate for Learning*

All the important factors that appear to affect students' learning possibly having the greatest influence is the set of beliefs, values,

and attitudes that administrators, teachers, and students hold about learning. When a staff commits to support specific values, the concept of school improvement moves from the future to the present, and from the abstract to the concrete.

So important is learning climate that it has been defined as the standard, viewpoint, and attitudes reflected in institutional patterns and behavior routine that improve student learning. The attitude that students shape about academic learning come, at least in part, from the adults in the school. It is clear that the norms for learning come from the staff's requirement of students: the amount of time needed for studying, the amount of work assigned, the degree of independent work that students can do, the degree of attentiveness students feel about the work given to them. High expectations are the fulcrum point that instructional leaders can use to get involved teachers, students and parents away from unhelpful un-encouraging attitudes.

Following are elements which are used to raise or lower the expectations

- Amount and quality of praise for correct answers
- Actual amount of teaching that students receive
- Content covered
- Teacher encouragement and support
- Teacher assistance and willingness to help
- Wait time
- Response opportunity factor (No of times students are called on)

vi). *Monitoring Achievement and evaluating programs*

It is a primary task of instructional leaders to assess and revise the instructional programs in schools. As in the case of supervising and evaluating teachers, whole programs can be reviewed for planning, objectives, success in reaching the objectives, and particular successes and problems. Ultimately the success of any educational program comes down to the performance of the students. Are they reaching the objectives proposed? Where are they failing and why? The more specifically that problems can be identified, the more successfully the learning problems can be remedied or traced to particular objectives, units, or course activities.

Supervision and Teacher Development:

Ernest Boyer observed that when you talk about school progress, you are talking about people development. That's the only aspect to improve schools unless you mean painting the buildings and fixing the floors. But that's not the school, that's the shell. The school is people, so when we talk about excellence or improvement or progress, we're really talking about the people who make up the building.¹³

Focusing on people is the most useful way to change any organization. In fact, it can be claimed that organizations do not change, only persons change. It is only when a sufficient number of people within an organization change that the organization can be transformed. So, supervision means helping workers by offering professional advice and technical support in speed up efficiency and improving effectiveness of the process of production and product itself. Support and evaluation are the two major function of the instructional supervision. Support provides the support to improve the teaching process in terms of effective use of text books helping materials and methodologies needed

for the individual needs of the students. Evaluation is the process of collecting the information for improvement in instruction and analyzing the data which then be used to improve the quality.

If this assumption that people are the key to school improvement is correct, then it follows that the fundamental role of the principal is to help create the conditions which enable a staff to develop so that the school can achieve its goals more effectively. In short, a key to school improvement is the willingness and ability of principals to assume the role of staff developers who make it their mission to "alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understandings of school personnel toward an articulated end". Supervision and teacher development go hand in hand. Supervision provides support and help to teachers. Principals have a responsibility to help teachers, improve their practice and to hold them accountable for meeting their commitments to teaching and learning. These responsibilities are usually referred to as supervision. Supervision enhances teacher development. The principal should keep in mind that what actions should be taken to bring about greater understanding of teaching and learning?

Principals must encourage teachers to acquire new skills, support them during the inevitable frustrations, and recognize their efforts. Procedures must be in place to gather data on the impact of staff development initiatives, and principals must publicly celebrate indicators of improvement in order to help sustain those initiatives.

Supervision is primarily formative and collegial, being concerned with improving teaching effectiveness. It is also important that principals be committed to continuous improvement. Schools can become learning organizations capable of significant change only if those within them recognize that school improvement is a complex, ongoing process rather

than a task to be completed. While it is important that principals celebrate the attainment of improvement goals, it is even more important that such celebrations serve as motivators for staying the course rather than signal that the improvement process has ended. Most importantly, principals must not mistake congeniality with collegiality. They must strive to create a culture in which teachers talk about teaching and learning; observe each other teach; plan, design, research, and evaluate the curriculum, and teach each other what they have learned about their craft.

End Notes:

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