

# Reflections on the Practice of Instructional and Transformational Leadership

## Leadership for Learning: Reflections on the Practice of Instructional and Transformational Leadership

Presented at:  
Doctoral Seminar  
East Asia University  
by  
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What have we learned in the past 25 years from research & practice about . . .

- ❖ leadership for learning?
- ❖ the instructional leadership role of school leaders?
- ❖ the transformational leadership role of school leaders?
- ❖ the practice of shared instructional leadership in schools?



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## A Retrospective View of School Leadership 1980 - 2007

- ❖ In the 1980's forces from policy and practice converged with findings from research to create a policy focus on the instructional leadership role of school principals
- ❖ In the 1990's as School Leaders continued to be viewed as key players in school improvement but with greater interest in transformational leadership
- ❖ Since the late 1990's both distributed leadership and instructional leadership have gained leverage
- ❖ Three key leadership models emerged that have been subject to sustained empirical research:
  - 1980's Instructional Leadership
  - 1990's Transformational Leadership
  - 2000+ Shared Instructional Leadership

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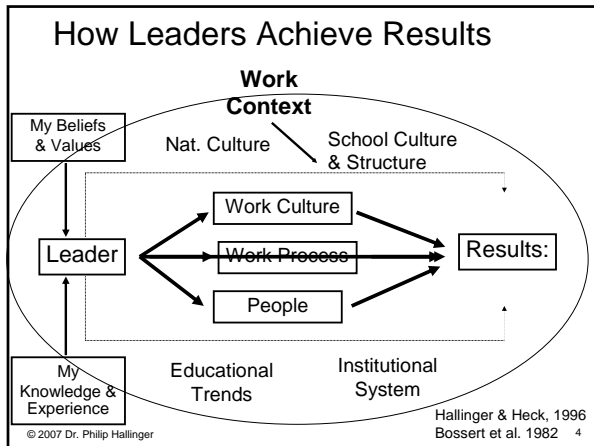
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# Reflections on the Practice of Instructional and Transformational Leadership




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### Leader values and beliefs

#### Leadership for what?

**Terminal Values**

- ❖ Learning
- ❖ Test results
- ❖ Social growth
- ❖ Political awareness
- ❖ Self-discipline
- ❖ Freedom
- ❖ Happiness
- ❖ Virtue & ethical behavior
- ❖ Social harmony
- ❖ Cultural transmission
- ❖ Social contribution
- ❖ Social justice
- ❖ Excellence, quality



What do we want from our schools and our students  
how will we get it?

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### Leader values and beliefs:

#### How do I/We work to achieve results?

**Instrumental Values**

- ❖ Ambition, results
- ❖ Self-discipline, hard work
- ❖ Mutual respect
- ❖ Honesty, integrity
- ❖ Sincerity, feeling
- ❖ Logic, knowledge
- ❖ Obedience
- ❖ Harmony, relationship
- ❖ Risk-taking, innovation
- ❖ Cleanliness, neatness
- ❖ Imagination, creativity
- ❖ Fairness, justice

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# Reflections on the Practice of Instructional and Transformational Leadership

**Your Values and Beliefs Impact Leadership for Learning**

- ❖ “You can’t teach logarithms to illiterates.”
- ❖ “If you want higher test scores, start by changing the economic level of the community.”
- ❖ All you need is “ganes” desire



Ronald Edmonds  
"Father of Effective Schools Movement"

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**1980: Instructional Leadership emerged from effective schools studies**

1. Directive approach by principal
2. Emphasized “the leader’s” vision
3. Often evident in turn-around situations where major change was needed quickly
4. Principal is “hip-deep” in curriculum and teaching
5. Focused on 1<sup>st</sup> Order Change – direct effects of the leader on teaching and learning in classrooms



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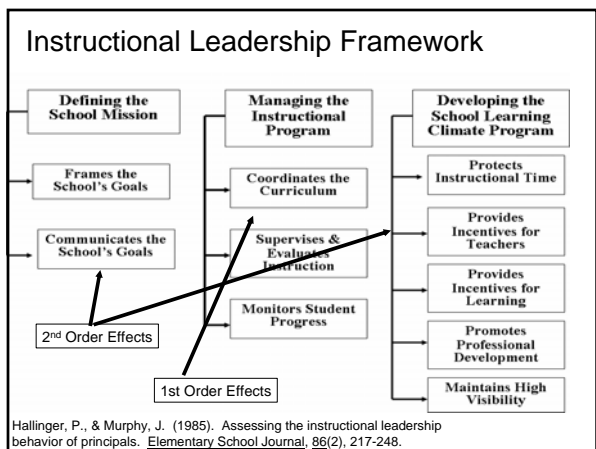
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# Reflections on the Practice of Instructional and Transformational Leadership

## Limitations of Instructional Leadership Model

- ❖ Not applicable in all schools
- ❖ Perceived by some as undemocratic
- ❖ May not incorporate views and values of all stakeholders
- ❖ Makes unrealistic demands on expertise of the principal
- ❖ Creates dependency on the leader
- ❖ Focus on a single leader makes it difficult to sustain



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## 1990: Move to Transformational Leadership

The restructuring movement's preoccupation with redistribution of power and responsibility fostered greater interest in empowerment of teachers and community members including shared leadership. A different image of the ideal school emerged -- flatter, more problem than task- focused, with highly permeable boundaries, less in need of control, more in need of support and capacity development.

Prof. Ken Leithwood, 1996



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## Transformational Leadership

- ❖ Targets **2<sup>nd</sup> order changes**
- ❖ Leadership focused on "capacity building" rather than "leading, directing, coordinating and controlling" learning
- ❖ Leader focuses on understanding individual needs and empowering others



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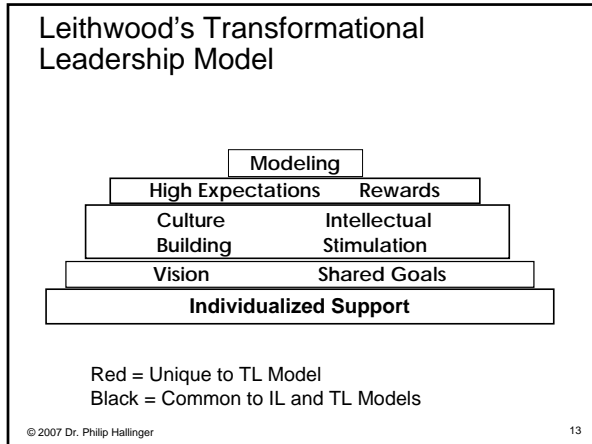
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**Leadership Style Must be Sensitive to the School's Context**

There are stages of school development requiring different leadership approaches:

- ❖ Initial stage – things are irrational and the leader needs to be directive and task oriented
- ❖ Improving stage – some improvement has been made and the leader needs to be more participative
- ❖ Succeeding stage – when school has demonstrated some success and the principals needs to build and support more distributed leadership

Perspectives from the inside – M. Nicolaidou and M. Ainscow (2005)  
seven strong claims about school leadership  
Ken Leithwood, 2006

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**Effective Leadership must be Sustainable**

Donaldson (2001) claimed that any successful model of school leadership must meet two functional tests:

- Promote school improvement
- Be sustainable for the leaders themselves

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# Reflections on the Practice of Instructional and Transformational Leadership

## Shared Instructional Leadership

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## 2000: Shared Instructional Leadership

- ❖ Emerged at turn of century in recognition that:
  - Schools are communities of learners with Principal as Head Learner (Barth, Seashore-Louis)
  - “Principals can’t do it alone” (Hall, Spillane, Donaldson)
  - Evidence that both instructional and transformational leadership contribute to school improvement (Hallinger & Heck, Leithwood, Marks & Printy, Mulford & Silins, Day, Cheng, Jackson)
- ❖ Conceptualizes key leadership functions of principal, other administrators and teacher leaders

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## Assumptions Behind Shared Instructional Leadership

- ❖ Distributed expertise
- ❖ Implementation effect
- ❖ Decision-making
- ❖ Career development
- ❖ Adult learners
- ❖ 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> order leadership effects



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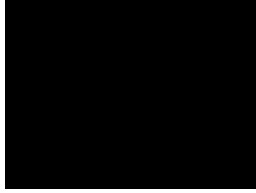
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# Reflections on the Practice of Instructional and Transformational Leadership

## Create a School Mission

- ❖ Frame School Mission and Goals
- ❖ Communicate Mission and Goals
- ❖ Use personal values and vision to add value to school mission



Dennis "Doc" Littky

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## Inspire a Shared Vision

- ❖ Build "shared vision"
- ❖ Enable others to act and organize for success
- ❖ Give moral support



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## Modeling the way: Be the change you want to see in the world

- ❖ Set high expectations and standards
- ❖ Talk openly about personal & shared values
- ❖ Model key values and behaviors
- ❖ Measure important things



Each of us has our own sphere of influence.

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# Reflections on the Practice of Instructional and Transformational Leadership

## Managing the Instructional Program

- ❖ "Direct" Instructional Leadership Role
- ❖ Three Functions
  - Supervise and Develop Instruction
  - Coordinate Curriculum
  - Monitor Student Progress
- ❖ Principal delegates responsibility for **parts** of these functions to middle managers and teacher leaders



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## Intellectual Stimulation

- ❖ Leaders foster a climate in which people question "how and we do things around here"
- ❖ Be open to new ideas
- ❖ Model risk-taking
- ❖ Debrief failure & success



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## "Individualized Support"

- ❖ Focus on motivation through meeting individual needs and inspiring interest in the school's vision
- ❖ Inspire commitment rather than demanding compliance
- ❖ Build capacity through coaching
- ❖ Provide moral support



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# Reflections on the Practice of Instructional and Transformational Leadership

## Support Teacher Development

- ❖ Set high expectations
- ❖ Leaders coach others
- ❖ Organize and enable others to coach
- ❖ Provide a climate for collaboration and team learning



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## Provide Incentives for Students & Teachers

- ❖ Create a set of meaningful incentives to reward what's important in your school
- ❖ Reward both individual as well as collective effort



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## *I come into a world of iron, to make a world of gold.*

You spoke of the dream and of the quest,  
How you must fight, and how it doesn't matter if you win or lose, if only you follow the quest. What is the **quest**?

To dream the impossible dream,  
To fight the unbeatable foe,  
To bear with unbearable sorrow,  
To run where the brave dare not go.

To right the unrightable wrong,  
To love pure and chaste from afar,  
To try when your arms are too weary,  
To reach the unreachable star.

To try though you're wayworn and weary,  
Though you know it's impossibly high,  
To live with your heart climbing upward,  
To reach the unreachable star.



From the Movie – The Man of La Mancha

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