



What you must know about...

Instructional LEADERSHIP

What does it take to be a true educational leader?

By Lourdes Yogore

Are school administrators educators, or are they managers? One might be quick to label them managers, as they spend more time at meetings, managing staff and allocating resources. However, it's also their duty (and probably the most important one at that) to improve the quality of the school program and to ensure that students learn—aspects that are closely related to being educators. School administrators, then, are *instructional leaders*.

What is Instructional Leadership?

It was in the 1990s that the “instructional leadership” trend took off in educational circles. Instructional leadership is defined by well-known educator William Greenfield as “those actions undertaken with the intention of developing a productive and satisfying working environment for teachers and desirable learning conditions and outcomes for children.”

Respected professor in educational leadership Philip Hallinger, on the other hand, adds that instructional leadership has three main dimensions, each of which has specific job functions that the instructional leader must carry out:

1 Providing a sense of purpose

Does your school have a mission statement? The mission statement provides a set of values that guides all the

activities and members of the school. Teachers, students, parents and other members of the community should identify with the mission statement and become motivated by it. In the end, the mission statement gives everyone a sense of purpose. The school principal plays a key role by communicating, implementing, and sustaining the mission.

2 Safeguarding learning

The second dimension of instructional leadership is the function of managing the educational program. This includes supervising and evaluating teachers and staff, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress. Instructional leaders must make sure that the students receive appropriate instruction in all areas. As monitors of student progress within classrooms and across the different grade levels, they need to be frequent visitors in the classroom.



DOES INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP APPLY ONLY TO PRINCIPALS?

Not at all! All teachers manage groups of people, whether these are students in the classroom or other teachers.

Setting a positive atmosphere

Instructional leaders must also set a positive school climate for student achievement and learning. This refers to the standards and attitudes of the faculty and students that influence learning. It also includes proper use of instructional time, the administrators' high visible presence around the school, teachers' incentives, professional development, and learning incentives. It is the instructional leader's job to set and clarify expectations for these things, make sure they remain consistent, and that they are translated into appropriate school policies and programs.

Four areas to manage

To effectively perform these roles, instructional leaders must competently manage four particular areas, identified by educational leaders and writers Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus.

- **Manage Meaning.** Similar to Hallinger's defining a school mission, school leaders must ensure that members of the educational community talk the same talk and walk the same walk. They must understand each other well.
- **Manage Attention.** This is the ability of the leader to get group members (whether faculty or students) to focus and expend their energy towards fulfilling the stated mission.
- **Manage Trust.** People in high places must be credible, respectable, and principled. By always adhering to a consistent set of values and rules, the instructional leader behaves beyond doubt and makes it easy for others to believe in his or her capacity to lead.
- **Manage Self.** Do you acknowledge your strengths and weaknesses? Do you try to improve on your limitations while sharing your strengths with others? •

Lourdes G. Yogore is a college professor at the Assumption College. She is currently taking her doctorate in Educational Management at the Philippine Normal University. She adapted this article from her Ateneo de Manila University Master's thesis entitled "The Instructional Leadership Behavior of Administrators as Perceived by Themselves and the Teachers of Assumption, San Lorenzo during the SY 1995-1996."

QUIZ FOR PRINCIPALS:

Are you an INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER?

In 1982, Philip Hallinger developed the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), an instrument for measuring the instructional leadership behavior of principals and administrators. It assesses how much instructional leadership he or she is providing. It provides a profile of principal performance on ten (10) instructional leadership job functions associated with leadership in effective schools. HOW MANY TRAITS AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES CAN YOU CHECK OFF?

1. Framing the school goals

- Do you develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals?
- Do you use needs assessment or other systematic methods to secure staff input when developing goals?
- Do you develop goals that are easily translated into classroom objectives by teachers?

2. Communicating the school goals

- Do all members of the school community know what your school goals are?
- Do you refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers?
- Do you refer to the school's goals in student and parent assemblies?

3. Supervising and evaluating instruction

- Do you check the classroom priorities of teachers to make sure they are consistent with school goals?
- Do you review student work when evaluating classroom instruction?
- Do you point out specific instructional strengths/weaknesses in teachers' post observation feedback?

4. Coordinating the curriculum

- Do you clarify who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels?
- Do you make sure the classroom curriculum covers the school's curricular objectives?

5. Monitoring student progress

- Do you meet individually with teachers to discuss student academic progress?
- Do you use test results to assess progress towards school goals?
- Do you inform students and parents of test results?

6. Protecting instructional time

- Announcements via public address system limit classroom time. Do you limit these?
- Do you encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts?
- Do you limit the intrusion of extra and co-curricular activities on instructional time?

Maintaining high visibility

- Do you make time to talk with students and teachers during breaks?
- Do you cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives? Do you tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes?

8. Providing incentives for teachers

- Do you compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance?
- Do you create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school?
- Do you acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personal files?

9. Promote Professional Development

- Do you ensure that training activities attended by the staff are consistent with the school's academic goals?
- Do you actively promote the use of skills acquired during training?
- Do you set aside time during faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information learned?

10. Provide Incentives for Learning

- Do you recognize students who do superior academic work with formal rewards such as an honor roll or awards?
- Do you use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishment, behavior, or citizenship?
- Do you support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions and accomplishment?