Rethinking Instructional Leadership Roles of the School Principal: Challenges and Prospects

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ABSTRACT: In most schools, the individual charged with the responsibility for overseeing the general running of the programs and events is the principal. According to Lunenberg (1995), "the principal's job is to help the school achieve a high level of performance through utilization of its human and material resources. More simply, the principal's job is to get things done by working with and through other people" (p. 3). In this sense, he argued, principals are universal and are essential to schools of all types and sizes – wealthy, poor, rural, urban, large, and small.

This article argues that the principal's tasks, especially those associated with instructional leadership, in meeting the needs and concerns of ever-changing schools are numerous, complex, and challenging. In this argument, the principal's instructional leadership roles, the major constraints in the role of the principal as an instructional leader, and the strategies for alleviating the problems are examined.

RÉSUMÉ: Dans la plupart des écoles, l'individu qui est chargé de surveiller le déroulement des programmes et des événements, est le principal. Selon Lunenberg (1995), "le travail du principal est d'aider les élèves à atteindre d'excellents résultats grâce à l'utilisation des ressources matérielles et humaines de l'école. En bref, le travail du principal est d'avoir des résultats par le travail des et par les autres" (p. 3). Ainsi, les principaux sont universels et essentiels pour toutes sortes et toutes tailles d'écoles, riches ou pauvres, rurales ou urbaines, grandes ou petites.

Cet article soutient que les tâches du principal, particulièrement celles associées au chef de l'enseignement, répondant aux besoins et aux soucis d'écoles en perpétuel changement, sont nombreuses, complexes et compétitives. Dans ce point développé, les principales contraintes et les stratégies pour soulager les problèmes du principal dans son rôle de chef de l'enseignement, sont examinées.

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Background

Who is a school principal? According to Lunenburg (1995), "a principal is an individual in a school who is responsible for the work performance of one or more persons" (p. 3). Also, Drake and Roe (1999) explained that the term principal is applied because generally this person is considered "the best and most talented teacher or the principal teacher" (p. 23). Further, as McAdams (1998) put it, "the [principal] is ideally a teacher's teacher – a person long respected for his or her teaching ability" (p. 10). Other equivalent terms used in the literature to refer to the principal include headteacher (McAdams, 1998; Ministry of Education, 1994; Murumbasi, 1993), head of school, headmaster, headmistress (Murumbasi, 1993; Ochieng, 1984; Republic of Kenya, 1980, 1988). In this paper, the term principal and headteacher will be used interchangeably.

A review of the literature indicates many different roles performed by the principal. For example, according to Acheson (1985), the principal serves as the public relations director, the chief health officer, the head disciplinarian, the social director, and the curriculum director. Also, based on Lunenburg's (1995) work, the principal is responsible for securing and using inputs to the school, transforming them through the administrative functions of planning, organizing, leading, and monitoring to produce outputs. Further, the principal performs the following six major roles: (a) developing school curriculum and materials (Garubo & Rothstein, 1998; Ubben & Hughes, 1997); (b) managing school finances (Garubo & Rothstein, 1998; Ubben & Hughes, 1997); (c) facilitating public and human relations (Alvy & Robbins, 1998; Gorton & Schneider, 1991); (d) evaluating school staff and programs (Gorton & Schneider, 1991); (e) facilitating the selection of teachers and support staff (Garubo & Rothstein, 1998; Scriven, 1990); and (f) overseeing the utilization and maintenance of school building (Garubo & Rothstein, 1998). Additionally, the principal is responsible for providing the instructional leadership that enables teachers to grow professionally (e.g., Alvy & Robbins, 1998; Andrews, Basom & Basom, 1991; Drake & Roe, 1999; Rossow, 1990; Ubben & Hughes, 1997). The following section provides a functional definition of instructional leadership in the school context. Further, it will be argued that the definitions of instructional leadership presented in the literature are inadequate, vague, confusing, and problematic.

Defining Instructional Leadership

A literature search reveals a great deal of confusion regarding the meaning of the phrase "instructional leadership." According to

Ginsberg (1988), instructional leadership is a construct and, like the psychological constructs such as stress, anxiety, and intelligence, is not something concrete and easily observable, but gets its meaning from certain factors that constitute it. "In addition, it is hard to pinpoint the exact birth of the term instructional leadership (some refer to it as instructional management), but today it is widely discussed" (p. 277). Ginsberg further noted that the inadequacies in the definitions of instructional leadership for principals may be a stumbling block to implementing effective instructional plans and that existing definitions are vague and broad, consequently they allow school principals to base their behaviors on these definitions without considering whether or not they are actually instructional leaders. He concluded that,

> It seems safe to assume that we are in the infancy of our understanding of the principal as instructional leader. Time and further study will probably reduce the uncertainty in the definition ... as a construct the definition will never approach complete precision, but more specifics and agreement among scholars is a reasonable goal to pursue. (p. 281)

Despite the confusion regarding the meaning of instructional leadership, several writers agree that instructional leadership: (a) is directly related to the processes of instruction whereby teachers, learners, and the curriculum interact (Acheson, 1985); (b) includes those activities undertaken by the principal with the object of developing a productive and satisfying working environment for teachers and desirable learning conditions and outcomes for students (Greenfield, 1985); (c) consists of those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others to promote growth in student learning (De Devoise, 1984); and (d) consists of "the principal's role in providing direction, resources, and support for the improvement of teaching and learning in the school" (Keefe & Jenkins, 1984, cited in Wright, 1991, p. 114). Also, Marsh (1992), whose definition of instructional leadership is based on research focusing on the use of innovative administrative training by site administrators, identified two views of principal instructional leadership: a process-oriented view, in which the principal views instructional leadership only as a means of involving teachers in decision making or improvement; and a comprehensive view, in which the principal has a broad view of instruction and uses direct (e.g., developmental supervision) and indirect (e.g., school culture) influences on instruction. Further, as explained by Gorton and Schneider (1991), the instructional program in this form of leadership includes the factors and conditions within a school that affect student learning, such as class size, quantity and quality of curricular materials, and educational

and sociological characteristics of the students. According to them, the ultimate goal of instructional leadership "should be to improve student learning, but its more immediate objective is to improve the instructional program" (p. 330). Therefore, instructional leadership focuses on activities and strategies geared toward the improvement of teaching and learning for the benefit of students. Instructional leadership involves the principal's attempts to improve instructional programs, teaching and learning, and student performance by developing a conducive working environment; providing direction, needed resources, and desired administrative support; and involving teachers in decision-making processes in the school.

With instructional leadership thus defined, the following section examines the principal's instructional leadership roles.

The Principal as Instructional Leader

The principal is the chief instructional leader in the school (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1997; Pfeiffer & Dunlap, 1982; Sergiovanni, 1995). According to Njeri (1984), "the principal is traditionally recognized as the instructional leader of the [school] and is expected to assist teachers with instructional problems" (p. 10). Similarly, Acheson (1985), concurring with Gorton and Schneider (1991), noted that even the principals themselves regard instructional leadership as their primary responsibility. Further, as concluded by Ginsberg (1988), the principal is an instructional leader and a potential source for school improvement. Additionally, according to Carter and Klotz (1990), effective and high-achieving schools depend most on capable instructional leadership from school principals. The ideal of the principal as an instructional leader has been highlighted in the work of several other writers (e.g., Corbett, 1982; Kasim, 1995; Koger, 1987; Magnus-Brown, 1983; McElwain, 1989; Raphael & Michael, 1990, cited in Boyd, 1996; Wacowich, 1983).

The Principal's Instructional Leadership Roles

What are the roles of the principal as an instructional leader? According to Bergh and der Linde (1996), the principal is expected to fulfill a variety of different roles. In presenting a role definition of the principal's instructional leadership, the majority of writers agree that the principal should fulfill the following 38 major roles:

1. Create a visible presence in the school (Smith & Andrews, 1989);
2. Supervise and evaluate instructional activities of teachers through observation of classroom teaching and conferment with

teachers about their teaching (Acheson, 1985; Acheson & Smith, 1986; Alvy & Robbins, 1998; Drake & Roe, 1999; Findley & Findley, 1992; Ginsberg, 1988; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Lovell & Wiles, 1983; McAdams, 1998; Parker & Day, 1997; Wildy & Dimmock, 1993); Heck, 1992; Lee, 1991). This is by monitoring and encouraging peer observation, ensuring that better schemes of work and lesson plans are made, demonstrating effective teaching techniques, supporting and encouraging teachers throughout curriculum implementation, communicating instructional goals to teachers, and promoting discussions of instructional issues among teachers (Acheson & Gall, 1997; Heck, 1992; McAdams, 1998; Ondengero, 1985; Parker & Day, 1997);

3. Making teaching possible by stimulating desirable changes in the professional behavior of teachers through provision of inservice training enabling teachers to develop the necessary skills to become effective teachers (Blase & Blase, 1998; Acheson & Gall, 1997; Lunenburg, 1995; Ondengero, 1985; Sergiovanni, 1987);
4. Develop, improve, monitor, and select the types, amounts, and uses of instructional materials and insuring that these materials are adequate and readily available to teachers (Acheson & Smith, 1986; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Lovell & Wiles, 1983; Ondengero, 1985; Olembo, Wanga & Karagu, 1988; Smith & Andrews, 1989; Wildy & Dimmock, 1993);
5. Develop, co-ordinate, improve, and promote school curriculum and instruction (Blase & Blase, 1998; Findley & Findley, 1992; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; McAdams, 1998; Murphy, Hallinger, Weil, & Mitman, 1983; Ondengero, 1985; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1984, cited in Short & Spencer, 1990; Parker & Day, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1995);
6. Plan, co-ordinate, implement, evaluate, and reexamine the school's instructional program to identify "invisible" problems thereby achieving school goals, and improving teaching and learning (Cooper, 1989; Lovell & Wiles, 1983; Sweeney, 1982; Olembo et al., 1988);
7. Maximize and protect academic learning time by enforcing school policies that minimize interruptions of scheduled classes (Blase & Blase, 1998; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Lunenburg, 1995; Murphy et al., 1983; Heck, 1992);
8. Establish and promote a work environment and an academic learning climate (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1984, cited in Short & Spencer, 1990; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Mitchell & Cunningham, 1986; Parker & Day, 1997). This is achieved by maintaining high visibility in order to communicate

priorities and model expectations, creating reward system that reinforces academic achievement and productive efforts, establishing clear, explicit standards that embody the school's expectations of students, protecting instructional time, and selecting and participating in high quality staff development programs consistent with the school mission and by creating collegial relationships with and among teachers (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Wildy & Dimmock, 1993);

9. Define and communicate the mission of the school to teachers, students, and to parents (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Murphy, 1988; Parker & Day, 1997; Smith & Andrews, 1989; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1984, cited in Short & Spencer, 1990);
10. Define and develop school goals, objectives, and standards (Lunenburg, 1995; Mitchell & Cunningham, 1986; Wildy & Dimmock, 1993; Murphy, 1988; Murphy et al., 1983);
11. Timetable classes and other activities to ensure a sense of order in the school and classrooms (Olembo et al., 1988; Lunenburg, 1995);
12. Evaluate and monitor student progress by overseeing their work and test scores, and by being informed about students aptitudes, motivations, attitudes, interests, and values ((Blase & Blase, 1998; Heck, 1992; Murphy et al., 1983; Olembo et al., 1988; Parker & Day, 1997; Acheson & Smith, 1986);
13. Initiate contact with business partners that will assist students and staff to attain quality instructional standards (National Association for Schools of Excellence & Northwest Regional Laboratory, 1999);
14. Communicate frequently with business managers on matters regarding school development and how they can be involved (Whale, 2000);
15. Encourage business and industrial partners to define competency levels necessary for specific and professional occupations that will impact students when they enter the world of work (National Association for Schools of Excellence & Northwest Regional Laboratory, 1999);
16. Encourage business managers to provide resources for teaching basic entry-level workforce skills and for awards and incentives for schools (National Association for Schools of Excellence & Northwest Regional Laboratory, 1999);
17. Provide technology training to teachers (Dempsey, 1999; Farnham, 2000; Hoffman, 1996; Mac Neil & Delafield, 1998, citing Weiss, 1994; Ritchie, 1996);

18. Provide the necessary resources, such as funds and equipment, for technology implementation (Farnham, 2000; Meltzer & Sherman, 1997; Ritchie, 1996);
19. Encourage teachers to be creative and to apply technology in their programs (Anderson, 1998; Farnham, 2000; Hoffman, 1996; Meltzer & Sherman, 1997);
20. Create an environment conducive to maximizing technology integration into school curricula (Dempsey, 1999; Mac Neil & Delafield, 1998);
21. Deal with teacher resistance to integrating technology into school curricula (Mac Neil & Delafield, 1998);
22. Learn the capabilities and limitations of technology and how to use it to energize and improve instruction (Cooley & Reitz, 1997);
23. Foster technology development of teachers by providing academic time for technology-based training and recognize efforts and accomplishments by providing incentives (Dempsey, 1999; Drake & Roe, 1999; Hadley & Sheingold, 1993; Hoffman, 1996; Meltzer & Sherman, 1997);
24. Find ways to integrate technology development through school-based workshops (Dempsey, 1999);
25. Provide teachers with opportunities to network about what they are doing to enhance their pedagogy with the Internet (Drake & Roe, 1999);
26. When possible, seek information-based computer-literate, hypermedia-oriented staff as opportunities arise to add or replace teachers (Drake & Roe, 1999);
27. Develop and discuss a school vision and philosophy for technology implementation in the school (Meltzer & Sherman, 1997);
28. Ensure that technology infrastructure is integrated into the school by making technology use a priority (Dempsey, 1999);
29. Provide technology expert resource staff to assist teachers (Meltzer & Sherman, 1997; Ritchie, 1996);
30. Provide teaching staff and other colleagues with concrete examples of technology implementation in real-world contexts (Ritchie & Wiburg, 1994);
31. Examine and implement alternative evaluation measures that assess growth by considering the quality and quantity technology learning (Ritchie, 1996);
32. Use traditional means of communication, as well as emerging forms of communication, such as e-mail, web pages, and the

Internet to communicate with teachers, parents, and the larger school community (National Association for Schools of Excellence & Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1999);

33. Build alliances with communities by involving community members in school reform programs, having an open door to the community, inviting members of the community into the school to expose them to the school's accomplishments (King, 2000);
34. Communicate regularly with parents, students, and the community to receive input into student performance, to seek and to share expectations, and to celebrate students' successes (Giba, 1999; Lewellen, 1990; National Association for Schools of Excellence & Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1999);
35. Articulate a vision for community involvement (Giba, 1999);
36. Work with parents in meaningful ways to strengthen the parent-teacher partnerships (Giba, 1999);
37. Build alliances with the media to enable the media news to promote school reform (King, 2000); and,
38. Ensure that international education is a strong component of the school curriculum (Collins, 1990). This can be achieved by: (a) being current on world affairs, (b) involving staff members in curriculum development, (c) utilizing the myriad of school and community resources, (d) encouraging staff members to join professional organizations in their own particular disciplines to take advantage of those resources, (e) ensuring inclusion of representative materials about international education (e.g., photographs, great works of art, great thoughts from different cultures, are displayed in the school, surveying international resources – both existing and potential – in the surrounding community), (f) analyzing the total school curriculum to determine what world areas and international topics are being taught and how much time is devoted to the areas, and (g) involving foreign exchange students in the school to gain cross-cultural learning experiences.

Although the literature suggests that principals have many instructional leadership roles, numerous barriers exist which present difficulties to principals as they attempt full execution of these roles. The next section considers the major barriers to successful instructional leadership.

Constraints in the Principal's Instructional Leadership Roles

Several constraints exist in the area of the role of the principal as an instructional leader. As Reitzug (1997) noted, "in practice, principal instructional leadership with respect to supervision has been problematic for several reasons" (p. 325).

Role Complexity and Ambiguity

According to Leithwood and Montgomery (1982) and Beach and Reinhartz (2000), the principal's instructional leadership role relative to supervision of instruction is complex and ambiguous. Also, Wright (1991), in reviewing the reality of instructional leadership through schoolhouse windows, explained that "instructional leadership ... is difficult to perform because it calls for people to change – change their ways of thinking, organizing, and behaving" (p. 116). Contributing to this debate, Leithwood and Montgomery commented that considerable data support the assumption that: (a) the principal's role is inherently ambiguous and complex; (b) this ambiguity manifests itself as a lack of clear expectations for the role and conflict about responsibilities; (c) often there is no viable rationale for duties assigned to the role; (d) that no defensible criteria for evaluating the principal's performance are available; (e) the complexity in the principal's role is a function of different people with whom the principal interacts, each potentially the bearer of problems; and (f) the school principal has a limited and, sometimes, incorrect view of the larger educational systems – what it will tolerate, the extent of his or her own influence with the system, a lack of specific knowledge about the change process, and how to assess student needs. Further, Manasse (1982), in reporting the 1978 National Association of Secondary School Principals' survey, noted that the principals studied considered ambiguity about role expectations to be a major source of frustration in their instructional leadership roles. In addition, Tsui (1995), commenting about the complexity in supervision of instruction, concluded that sometimes instructional problems put to supervisors by teachers are so complex that no ready answers exist, thus making supervisors feel inadequate.

Time Fragmentation

A second problem associated with the role of the principal as an instructional leader is the fragmentation of the principal's time devoted to his or her varied roles. In a study designed to examine

role behavior of five high school principals in their actual job settings, Martin and Willower (1981) reported that the principals they studied spent only 17.4 percent of their time in instructional matters such as advising teachers on teaching strategies and evaluating teachers. In another related study, Mulumba (1988), who attempted to determine how secondary school headteachers in Machakos District, Kenya, spend their time in administrative tasks, reported that headteachers studied spend between "considerable" and "a lot" of time on curriculum and instruction.

Findings from these studies show that, in general, the school principal's time spent on the various tasks, including instructional responsibilities, are highly fragmented. On this point, Wright (1991), in reflecting on similar studies tracking what principals actually do during the work day, concluded that "time spent on the performance of instructional leadership is fragmented along with the rest of [the] principals' leadership tasks. Instructional leadership is only one of many tasks demanding their time" (p. 115). He further noted that the problem regarding the fragmentation of the principal's time has no immediate solution.

Poor Preparation of Principals as Instructional Leaders

A lack of specific training and exercise in the techniques of instructional supervision presents a further constraint to the principal's role as instructional leader (Acheson & Smith, 1986; Ginsberg, 1988; Murphy, 1987). As explained by Ginsberg and Murphy, the formal training programs at colleges and universities have tended to concentrate on non-instructional content areas and rarely include courses on instructional leadership or even the development of skills in more than one content area. Also, Hallinger and Murphy (1987) observed that

> Unfortunately, preparation as a teacher does not ensure that a prospective principal is capable of analyzing another's teaching, helping teachers improve classroom instruction, or developing, coordinating, and implementing curriculum. University-based administrative certification programs generally de-emphasize curriculum and instruction, and there is a paucity of skill-oriented staff development programs for principals. (p. 55)

Consequently, there is a lack of clear knowledge about how student learning and other outcomes are produced as worked against emphasis on instructional leadership behavior in the principalship. In addition, as noted by Hallinger and Murphy (1987), Leithwood and Montgomery (1982), and Tsui (1995), a clear definition is not available for the of instructional leadership role. Therefore, "it is

difficult to assess principals on role behaviors if these behaviors have not been defined" (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987, p. 57).

Insufficient Incentives for Instructional Leadership Role

Another constraint in carrying out the principals' instructional leadership roles is the lack of sufficient incentives for the principal to function as an instructional leader (Ginsberg, 1988; Gorton & Schneider, 1991; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). Stressing this point, Hallinger and Murphy specifically noted that traditionally "principals have been offered few incentives and have encountered many hazards for venturing into the school leadership domain" (1987, p. 55). Also, as observed by Ginsberg, "often the principals work under standard salary schedules, where instructional leadership is in no way related to the salary formulated" (1988, p. 287). Further, Ginsberg posed the question: "If school districts do not offer specific rewards and incentives for behaviors defined as instructional leadership, why would anyone expect principals to behave in the prescribed way?" (p. 289).

Principal's Role Diversity

Due to the nature of the principal's job unexpected interruptions, non-instructional needs of teachers, and discipline problems often arise posing further constraints on the principal's leadership role (Ginsberg, 1988; Gorton & Schneider, 1991; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). As explained by Hallinger and Murphy, the principal's workload comprises many brief, fragmented interactions with different actors, consequently, it is difficult for the principal to schedule the interrupted blocks of time necessary for planning lessons and conferencing with teachers. Because teachers, parents, and central office staff hold varying expectations of the principal, the multiplicity of roles and expectations tend to fragment whatever vision the principal may attempt to foster in the school. In short, as concluded by Minsky, Wideman, and Dilling (1984), the principal's overall job involves too many different work activities.

Principal's Personal Factors

According to Marsh (1992), personal factors of the principal which refer to how the principal understands, internalizes, reflects on, and uses instructional skills, may inhibit instructional leadership roles. Also, as explained by Olembo et al. (1988), personal constraints may either be physical, such as age, sex, stamina, and general physical condition, or psychological, including aspects such as the level of education attainment, personality, personal ethics, and values.

Teachers' Views of Instructional Programs and the Principal's Instructional Leadership Roles

Constraints in the principal's instructional leadership roles may be associated with teachers' views about the role of the principal as an instructional leader and about supervisory programs in the school (Hoy & Forsyth, 1986; Lipham, Rankin, Robb, & Hoch, 1985; Sergiovanni, 1995). On this point, Lovell and Wiles (1983) observed, "teachers' feelings about supervision differ because of the various ways in which [principals] the teachers have known have interpreted the supervision role" (p. 1). Similarly, Hoy and Forsyth noted that most supervisory programs are piecemeal, eventually degenerating into meaningless rituals. Further, Sergiovanni noted, "most teachers consider supervision to be a nonevent – a ritual they participate in according to well-established scripts without much consequence" (1995, p. 203). In addition, Lipham et al. also claimed that the way in which teachers perceive the principal's distribution of his or her goods and services relevant to instruction to individual teachers and their departments may frustrate instructional roles. Elaborating on this point,it was specifically noted that:

> [Teachers] often resent what they perceive as the inequitable sharing of [instructional] resources among departments, grade levels, or specific programs because they do not fully appreciate the magnitude of the differences in equipment, supplies and materials required for different programs. These differences must be recognized and dealt with openly, otherwise. (Lipham, et al., 1985, p. 240)

Other Intra-Organizational Constraints

The principal's instructional leadership roles may be constrained by several other factors that originate from within the institution in which the principal is based. These include: (a) a lack of resources such as finances, physical facilities, or human resources (Gorton & Schneider, 1991; Olembo et al., 1988; Ondengero, 1985); (b) a lack of preparation of artifacts of teaching such as lesson plans and schemes of work by teachers (Ondengero, 1985); (c) a shortage of time available for instructional roles (Acheson, 1985; Minsky et al., 1984; Olembo et al., 1988); (d) the nature of communication patterns (Olembo et al., 1988); (e) the nature of students (Olembo et al., 1988); (f) the changing role of the school (Minsky et al., 1984); (g) tension caused by the fact that the principal is usually the evaluator as well as the supervisor of teachers (Acheson & Smith, 1986); (h) the nature of the school curriculum (Murphy, 1987); (i) the difficulty of providing assistance to the marginal teachers who need to be on assistance plans because of their resistance to the best

efforts given to them by the principal and teaching colleagues (Alvy & Robbins, 1998); and (j) the weak technology of teaching – that is, the weak cause-and-effect understanding – confuses the question of instructional leadership (Ginsberg, 1988).

Extra-Organizational Constraints

Certain extra-organizational constraints, originating from outside the school, may block the principal from executing his or her instructional leadership roles. According to Olembo et al. (1988) and Leithwood and Montgomery (1982), such factors may be political (e.g., government policies), legal (e.g., national laws, code of conduct for teachers), traditional (e.g., religious beliefs), or economic (e.g., human, material, and financial resources).

To summarize, although the principal performs many instructional leadership roles many constraints often force the principal's role into the background. Commenting about the problems affecting the principal's instructional leadership roles, Hoerr (1996), concluded that "while we administrators can identify the constraints and the roadblocks that keep us from exercising instructional leadership, we cannot let those obstacles stop us. Our task is to find ways to remove or go around them" (p. 380).

In the next section, several strategies toward productive instructional leadership of the principal are suggested.

Reducing Constraints to Successful Instructional Leadership of the Principal

Several strategies may be employed to address the constraints associated with instructional leadership roles of the principal. On this point, Olembo et al. (1988) advised the headteacher to remove or reduce such constraints in order to: (a) reduce the areas of conflicts, (b) bring the constraints into conflict with each other, and (c) to establish long-term policies in specific problem areas. Suggestions are offered relevant to successful instructional leadership.

Sharing Instructional Leadership Responsibilities

A major strategy in dealing with constraints associated with the principal's instructional leadership role involves sharing responsibilities with other teachers in the school. In a study designed to identify the extent to which the principal is perceived as instructional leader in primary and secondary schools in Western Australia, Wildy and Dimmock (1993), reported that "instructional

leadership appears to be a shared responsibility involving staff at all levels" (p. 57). This confirms findings of earlier studies (e.g., Dwyer, 1984; Rallis & Highsmith, 1986). Similarly, Hoerr (1996) emphasized this point when he stated that:

> Although the principal bears ultimate responsibility for the quality of his or her school, it is both necessary and appropriate that teachers take on some of the responsibilities for instructional leadership. This means that the principal will share power. It means leadership teams. It means that teachers will play a part in determining school procedures. It means that teachers will view their roles from a school-wide, not just a classroom, perspective. It means that teachers, working together, will take responsibility for helping their peers learn and grow. (p. 380)

The principal can share instructional leadership roles with various personnel in the school. According to Acheson and Smith (1986), the principal can delegate instructional responsibilities to the following individuals within the school:

1. Department heads. A major advantage of involving department heads in instructional responsibilities, as noted by Acheson and Smith, is that heads of departments, being subject matter specialists in their respective fields, tend to avoid skepticism school principals often experience. Departmental heads are concerned about, and in immediate contact with, the curriculum in their own departments.
2. Colleague teachers. Acheson and Smith (1986) observed that the involvement of teaching colleagues in instructional roles has the following advantages: (a) teachers are the most available source of power and expertise, (b) teachers can analyze their own teaching on the basis of objective data, (c) teachers can observe in one another's classrooms and record data they cannot record for themselves, and (d) teachers can help one another analyze their own observation data and make decisions about alternative strategies.
3. Vice principal. The delegation of instructional responsibilities to the vice-principal is widely supported in the literature. For example, commenting on deputy headship as delegation, Lawley (1988) observed the"deputy headship is the first point at which the [principal's] responsibilities are delegated" (p. 20). Also, Marshall (1992) noted that the principal has considerable autonomy in assigning tasks to the assistant principal. Further, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (1991) commented that, because of the increasing emphasis in instructional leadership, the assistant principal, being an

important and dynamic resource in the improvement of education for the youth, should assist school administrators to enhance teaching and learning in the school.

There are several advantages regarding the delegation of instructional roles to the vice-principal, namely: (a) the deputy principal contributes suggestions and data which take into account the effects of the principal and solutions to problems as they affect the whole school (Lawley, 1988), (b) the assistant principal encounters daily the fundamental dilemmas of the school system (Marshall, 1992), and (c) the assistant principal maintains the norms and rules of the school culture (Marshall, 1992). However, a major concern regarding the vice-principal's involvement in instructional responsibilities, as pointed out by Marshall, is that depending on school traditions and structures, "the assistant principal can be an instructional leader only in rare instances" (p. 14).

The delegation on instructional responsibilities to other school personnel, in the main, offers several advantages. According to Richardson, Short, and Prickett (1993), this sharing has the following four advantages, it: (a) provides opportunities for the principal to build greater school involvement by permitting decision making by other faculty; (b) allows for the division of labor and responsibility among participants; (c) provides opportunities to develop the capacity of teachers to clarify problems, to frame alternative solutions, and to assume responsibility for outcomes; and (d) fosters commitment to and ownership of the school. Also, in Hughes and Ubben's (1984, cited in Richardson et al., 1993) view, delegation can broaden teacher roles and provide job enrichment and satisfaction.

However, delegation of instructional tasks, especially to teachers, has the following pitfalls: (a) teachers may feel overworked, stressed, or burned-out (Richardson et al., 1993); (b) teachers may feel that they lack the time and resources to take on additional roles (Yukl, 1990, cited in Richardson et al., 1993); and (c) teachers may feel less competent than the principal to make instructional decisions (Richardson et al., 1993).

Several conditions may be necessary for successful assignment of instructional roles to other individuals in the school. According to Acheson and Smith (1986), the assignment of instructional leadership responsibilities to additional personnel in the school by the principal requires that: (a) necessary support at the policy level exist; (b) administrative cooperation exist within the school; (c) the individuals involved receive adequate training; and (d) individuals who are assigned new roles expend some hard work.

Becoming a Teacher Model

Another strategy for reducing constraints relative to the principal's instructional leadership roles is for the principal to devote time to teach classes so as to strengthen his or her credibility in instructional matters (Boyer, 1983, cited in Boyd, 1996). As Boyer explained, "principals cannot exercise leadership without classroom experience ... without a thorough grounding in the realities of the classroom, principals will continue to feel uncomfortable and inadequate in educational leadership roles" (p. 67).

The principal's involvement in classroom teaching, based on Boyd's (1996) work, offers many advantages relevant to instructional leadership roles. These advantages include: (a) giving the principal a continuous feel of what it is like to be a teacher – experiencing both the negative and positive aspects of this role; (b) offering the principal opportunities to test out the effects of policy decisions and administrative rulings; (c) offering the principal useful information for administrative purposes; (d) giving the principal new insights into how different curricula are interrelated, insights that could be used to establish or revise an interdisciplinary curriculum; (e) giving the principal direct access to students enabling him or her to obtain input directly from students; (f) offering the principal a way to remain active in and stimulated by an academic discipline; (g) providing the principal with a constructive and refreshing diversion from the usual administrative duties; (h) giving the principal opportunities to select teaching and learning as among the most important activities of the school; and (i) facilitates effective symbolism by enabling the principal to give personal and special attention to the teacher-student transaction. Involving the principal in classroom instruction helps the principal to be a better role model and enables him or her to communicate the core values of the school and to fully exercise instructional leadership. Further, according to McAdams (1998), by teaching classes on a regular bases, a headteacher reinforces his or her ties to the teaching profession. Additionally, in Smith and Andrew's view (1989, cited in Boyd, 1996), the principal as teacher model enhances the principal's symbolic efforts by giving the principal a "visible presence."

Developing Problem-Solving Habits

According to Alvy and Robbin (1998) another strategy for promoting the principal's instructional leadership role is the development of the following problem-solving habits that enable the principal to make productive decisions. First, principals should take a proactive approach toward problems by keeping "eyes open" about potential

difficulties before they become major problems. Second, principals should identify problems and consider their sources. Third, principals should consider potential negative consequences of the decisions they make when solving problems. Fourth, principals should consider alternative solutions to problems and implement the best solution. And, fifth, principals should reflect on the process of problem solving.

Gathering Information From Multiple Sources

Promoting the role of the principal as instructional leader concerns the use of information from a variety of sources. As suggested by Acheson and Smith (1986), the principal can take advantage of many sources of information to improve instructional leadership, for example: (a) survey students through the use of questionnaires and interviews; (b) self-analysis of videotapes to help teachers to reflect on and to change their instructional behavior; (c) establishing support groups to help teachers "trapped" in their classrooms in addressing their isolation and loneliness; (d) referrals to help teachers placed on "intensive evaluation" to grow professionally and to remedy their shortcomings; and (e) making use of plans for professional assistance, for example the creation of a committee to monitor teachers' progress.

Conducting Research on Effective Teaching and Instructional Leadership

Hudgins and Birdsell (1990) suggest a strategy to promote the principal's instructional leadership role concerns research addressing selected elements of effective teaching, such as classroom climate, questioning, set induction, stimulus variation, reinforcement, and closure. In their view, the principal, when conferring with teachers about instructional improvement, may use findings from relevant studies. Adding to this point, Mitchell and Cunningham (1986) suggested that local education authorities should support the principal by disseminating relevant information on what constitutes productive instructional leadership.

Providing Moral and Material Support

Providing moral and material support by encouraging and comforting teachers enhances the principal's instructional leadership role (Alvy & Robbins, 1998). Moral and material support can be achieved by: (a) monitoring and fostering peer supervision (Acheson & Smith, 1986), (b) acquiring adequate instructional facilities and materials

(Herman & Stephens, 1989; Smith & Andrews, 1989), and (c) encouraging teachers to use a variety of instructional materials and teaching strategies (Smith & Andrews, 1989).

Fostering Collegiality and Collaboration

A further strategy for reducing constraints in the principal's instructional leadership role concerns the development, in the school, of a sense of collegiality and collaboration by developing a strong positive relationship with teachers. A collaborative culture is best established by providing a school-wide forum for communication by knowing the teachers the principal works with professionally and personally to understand their needs and concerns, by being accessible, and by establishing an open climate and a collaborative supervision (Alvy & Robbins, 1998' Bergh & der Linde, 1996; Hoerr, 1996)..

Successful promotion of collegial and collaborative relationships in the school depends on several factors. According to Binkley (1995), "collegiality is possible only within the context of a school culture that encourages and nurtures it" (p. 223). This culture, as described by Grimmett and Crehan (1991, cited in Binkley, 1995) is "one which sustains those collaborative practices which lead teachers to raise fundamental questions about the nature of teaching and student learning. In short, it represents the intellectual ferment within which ideas for educational change can flourish and expand" (p. 223). Commenting about the importance of collaboration in teacher education, Ovando and Harris (1993), concluded that collaboration is critical in promoting teacher development based on formative feedback. They argued that teachers generally support an open, collaborative relationship for the purpose of achieving quality teaching for successful learning.

Managing Time

Enhancing the principal's instructional leadership role is the successful management of time. This is best addressed by establishing a long-range plan that provides for classroom observation, for student visits, for parent meetings, for teacher professional development activities, for curriculum meetings, and for other important activities (Alvy & Robbins, 1998).

Focusing on the Classroom

According to Alvy and Robbins (1998), a strategy for enabling the principal in his or her instructional leadership role is to focus on the

classroom as the "heart" of the school. The principal should focus on the classroom by circulating in classrooms, hallways, laboratories, and playgrounds to send the message that the principal does not "camp out" in the office but rather spends times in the various centers of the school that are critical to an effective organization.

Defining Instructional Leadership and Becoming Educated About Curriculum and Instruction

Another strategy for facilitating the principal's instructional leadership role is for the principal to develop and to articulate an instructional vision of the school that leads everyone in the same direction. This vision needs to be communicated accurately, sensitively, and reliably. The principal needs to define instructional leadership in terms of observable practices and behaviors that he or she can implement. The principal also needs to develop supervision and evaluation skills and to become educated regarding curriculum theory, development, implementation, and issues through professional reading, inservice, and other professional development activities (Acheson & Smith, 1986; Alvy & Robbins, 1998; Hallinger & Muphy, 1987; Smith & Andrews, 1989; Bergh & der Linde, 1996; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). Further, in Fitzgerald and Muth's (1984) view, the supervisor, such as the principal, must demonstrate a high level of expertise in subject matter and instructional techniques. On this point, Mitchell and Cunningham (1986) added that in the pre-service principal preparation, a great deal of attention should be given to pertinent issues of teaching and learning, adult development, and organizational change and innovation.

Being Involved in Shadowing and Networking

A strategy which can promote the principal as instructional leader is shadowing other principals to gain various perspectives on "getting the job done." Shadowing also serves to develop, for the principal, networking relations with other professionals (Alvy & Robbins, 1998).

Providing Incentives

Another strategy in alleviating constraints associated with principals' instructional leadership roles, according to Mitchell and Cunningham (1986), is to provide the principals with "clear incentives for developing their instructional leadership skills" (p. 213).

Empowering the Principal

A final strategy in addressing the roadblocks to successful instructional leadership roles of the principal relates to the empowerment of the principal. Contributing to this point, Herman and Stephens (1989) suggested that to be an effective instructional leader, the principal must be granted the following five conditions: (a) sufficient authority, within the guidelines of legal and constitutional requirements, to utilize the resources available for instructional program in the school – predominantly staff, money, and time; (b) a high degree of authority, within the prevailing legal requirements and mandates, to bring about school improvement; (c) responsibility to operate his or her school; (d) sufficient support from the local education office and the school board; and (e) the right to make instructional decisions. Also, in their view, the principal should be provided with the resources necessary for productive execution of instructional leadership roles.

Summary

This paper, has presented the principal's instructional leadership roles and the major challenges associated with those roles. It is clear that the principal performs many different functions relevant to the role of an instructional leader. For example, according to Petrie (1992, cited in Oliva & Pawlas, 2001), the principal, as instructional leader, performs the following roles: (a) orienting new teachers to the needed instructional skills; (b) observing instruction; (c) providing information about the instructional repertoire; (d) arranging opportunities to improve performance; and (e) evaluating teachers. According to Cooper (1989), the principal, as instructional leader, is not simply a problem-solver; he or she is also a problem-definer who grows and develops professionally by being actively and constantly engaged in improving his or her school, "a process that requires reaching out, exploring new ideas, and participating in training activities that will challenge current ways of thinking" (p. 16).

However, numerous constraints exist relative to the principal's instructional leadership roles. As Olembo et al. (1988) put it:

> While the headteacher may attempt to counteract role constraints, the headteacher's role carries with it a lot of strain. The nature of his job requires that he interacts with people, big and small, will see him as a solution giver to their numerous problems. He cannot, therefore, avoid these constraints in their totality. (p. 227)

The major problems are those associated with the following areas: (a) the nature of the principal's work and the numerous conflicting demands in the principal's time, (b) the training and selection of the principal, (c) the weak technology of teaching, (d) the lack of adequate incentives relevant to the role of instructional leader, (e) the principal's personal factors, and (f) the confounding confusion in defining instructional leadership.

Successful instructional leadership, based on Heck's (1992) work, depends on the principal's own beliefs and value preferences, organizational and political variables associated with the school, and community context (e.g., level of schooling, students, socioeconomic and language backgrounds, and pressure from the local education office, community, and staff). Also, in Cooper's (1989) view, a successful instructional leader must: (a) not be interested or engaged in a turf battle with teachers over leadership; (b) have his or her instructional leadership providing for learning and working with others – teachers, students, and parents – to improve instructional quality; (c) know that it is his or her responsibility to create a strong school culture which enables teachers to collaborate with him or her in redesigning instructional programs so that all students can learn; (d) know from his or her own on-the-job experience that instructional leadership must be a shared responsibility; and (e) constantly define himself or herself as an instructional leader. Further, as Lovell and Wiles (1983) specifically suggested, the principal, as an instructional leader, "must have the competence and personal skills to do the job without creating faculty alienation, poor motivation, and inferior performance" (pp. 239-240). Additionally, from the teachers' viewpoint,

> Teachers want an instructional leader who will meet with them individually, discuss their concerns, help select appropriate ways to collect data from observation and other means, and consider alternatives. They want a colleague who is skilled at observation, knowledgeable about teaching, and supportive. (Acheson & Smith, 1986. p. 7)

Therefore, to promote the instructional leadership role, the principal should strive to be knowledgeable about teaching and learning, be skillful in working with and through people, be committed to academic goals, and have a strong sense of vision. These qualities will pay dividends in the school as a working environment, in teacher morale and professional growth, in students' academic achievement, and in parent and community satisfaction and support.

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