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Leadership Knowledge and Skills: The Essentials for Effectiveness

In This Chapter

What is leadership? The survey responses of 100 practicing assistant principals indicate that most accepted the position with only a general knowledge of leadership theory and a rudimentary understanding of the traits of effective leaders. What these assistant principals believe they lacked when they entered the ranks of administrators is an ability to apply theory to practice and to use positional authority “to get things done.”

This chapter summarizes the research on effective leadership and the knowledge and skills essential to persuading and influencing subordinates to be effective in performing their tasks. Included is an exploration of the practical applications of theories of leadership and sources of power.

The Nature of Leadership

Leadership is an enigma. Researchers have studied it, philosophers have engaged in long discussions and written treatises about it, and practitioners have tried mightily to target exactly what is meant when we use the term *leadership*. These various perspectives on leadership have led us to examine variables such as the concept and use of power, traits of effective leaders, environmental and personal contingencies, leadership styles, and leadership theories and models. Yet in the 3,000+ empirical articles on the topic and the 350 definitions provided by a variety of experts (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996), no conclusive findings exist as to what constitutes effective leadership.

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Historically, definitions of leadership focused on behaviors of leaders. For example, in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, written in the first century of the current era, the behaviors, conduct, and values of famous ancient Romans and Greeks were described, and during this time, their behaviors were emulated as part of leadership training (Bonner, 1977). In the 16th century, Machiavelli's *The Prince* provided Lorenzo de Medici with political prescriptions on how to be a successful leader in an Italian city-state, and in the 20th century, James MacGregor Burns's *Leadership* (1978) examined the dynamics of the leader-follower relationship in the context of conflict and power.

Traits of leaders have been studied to identify the work and personal characteristics of leaders and the skill traits associated with leader effectiveness. *Work* traits include persistence, willingness to assume responsibility, decisiveness, dependability, and tolerance of stress; *personality* traits include dominance, decisiveness, cooperation, self-confidence, and energy; and *skill* traits include intelligence, creativity, diplomacy, persuasiveness, and organizational ability.

Historical theorists, such as Thomas Carlyle, have described the "Great Man" theory of leadership, which states that leaders are born, not made. Karl Marx and Georg Hegel maintained that leaders are a product of the social and economic forces of their time. Gardner (1990), combining these views of leadership, states that both historical and environmental forces create conditions that allow leaders to emerge. Gardner's example is the charismatic Martin Luther, who emerged in the early beginnings of the social and political upheaval of the Reformation, and whose 95 theses nailed to a church door made him a historical force.

In this historical and research-based context, definitions of leadership abound. However varied these definitions may be, what is clear and undisputed is that leaders have *loyal* and *committed* followers and that leaders do not exist in isolation. Leaders, as we argue elsewhere (Weller & Weller, 2000), are products of their times, their environments, their offices, their followers, their values, their personality traits, and their conceptualizations of leadership. Leaders are *prime movers* who allow others to achieve common goals and who unite others for a common purpose. They command yet they serve their followers. They allow their followers choices but provide direction on how ends should be achieved.

What is it then that these definitions and insights can provide the assistant principal? First, they suggest that one definition of leadership is as valid as another. There is no right or wrong answer to the question, "What is leadership?" Second, these definitions reflect fads, wishes, academic trends, political influences, and reality as known to those who have attempted to define the term. Third, existing definitions "provide a sliver of insight with each remaining an incomplete and wholly inadequate explanation" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 4) of the phenomenon called leadership.

On Leaders and Leadership

Every man of action has a strong dose of egotism, pride, hardness, and cunning. But all of these things will be forgiven him, indeed, they will be regarded as high qualities if he can make them the means to achieve great ends.

Charles de Gaulle

A leader is a dealer in hope.

Napoleon I

An automobile goes nowhere efficiently unless it has a quick, hot spark to ignite things, to set the cogs of the machine in motion. So I try to make every player on my team feel he's the spark keeping our machine in motion.

Knute Rockne

What a man dislikes in his superiors, let him not display in the treatment of his inferiors.

Tsang Sin

When Pack meets with Pack in the jungle,
and neither will go from the trail,
Lie down till the leaders have spoken
—it may be fair words shall prevail.

Rudyard Kipling

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

Abraham Lincoln

Never tell people *how* to do things. Tell them *what* to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.

George Smith Patton

The question, "Who ought to be boss?" is like asking, "Who ought to be tenor in the quartet?" Obviously the man who can sing tenor.

Henry Ford

If you don't know where you want to go, it doesn't matter how you get there.
paraphrased from Lewis Carroll

The man who commands efficiently must have obeyed others in the past and the man who obeys dutifully is worthy of being some day a commander.

Cicero

On Leaders and Leadership (*continued*)

The genius of a good leader is to leave behind him a situation which common sense, without the grace of genius, can deal with successfully.

Walter Lippman

I sit here all day trying to persuade people to do the things they ought to have sense enough to do without my persuading them.

Harry S. Truman

The Manager-Versus-Leader Debate

The manager-versus-leader debate is an ongoing discussion about which of the two roles effective leaders play. The terms *leader* and *manager* tend to be used interchangeably, but major differences exist. Managers, in general, are “nuts and bolts” oriented whereas leaders are visionaries, conceptualizers, and catalysts. Those who excel as leaders may excel as managers, but those who excel as managers infrequently excel as leaders. The best schools can hope for is having competent leaders *and* managers in the administrative ranks.

Leaders plan, delegate, coordinate, and motivate. They focus on developing human potential and on influencing and persuading others to accomplish organizational goals. Leaders seek to “bond” with subordinates and to align the goals of subordinates with those of the organization. Authority vested in leaders through the organization’s line staff chart is used only as a last resort when influence and persuasion fail.

The ability to influence and persuade others is a primary characteristic of leaders that sets them apart from managers, who achieve results by directing the work of others. Leaders inspire and motivate others to action. Leaders rely more on their cognitive and human relations skills to attain their objectives than on their authority to tell others what to do. Leaders have “mature wisdom,” according to Gardner (1990), which allows them to provide clear direction and purpose to their followers; know the needs, concerns, and expectations of their followers; and develop a “social compact” with their followers. When social compacts are formed, followers willingly entrust their future welfare to the leader, who in turn willingly entrusts the welfare of the organization to the followers.

In schools, principals often assume the role of leader, whereas assistant principals—due to the types of job responsibilities generally delegated by the principal, such as discipline and student supervision—are more often viewed as managers. One of the purposes of this book is to help those in the assistant principalship

acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to transition to the leadership role of the principalship. Even if the principalship is not the assistant principal's ultimate goal, leadership knowledge and skills can give the assistant principal the edge that is needed to move to other leadership positions. If the *assistant* principalship is the goal, the application of such knowledge and skills while aspiring to or holding the position of assistant principal can elevate the person, and whatever position the person holds, to a much higher plateau in the organization. In other words, a person does not have to be in a leadership position to be a leader, as will be discussed in other sections throughout this book. Such a person should not be surprised, however, when he or she is approached and recruited by those in formal leadership positions. A more accurate way of placing the manager-versus-leader debate in perspective, then, is to understand that a leader can have managerial responsibilities—in other words, a person doesn't have to be one or the other. Rather, it may help to distinguish between leaders and nonleaders.

Some factors help differentiate leaders from nonleaders. Newstrom and Davis (1997) found that a high level of personal drive, the desire to lead, personal integrity, self-confidence, flexibility, analytical ability, creativity, and personal warmth are the attributes of leaders in the most current research findings. Caution should be taken, because these leadership characteristics do not *guarantee* successful leadership. They can best be viewed as *competencies* to be developed.

It seems clear that leadership is more personally demanding than managership because leadership requires a voluntary commitment to promote one's goals through influence and persuasion; to be fair, trustworthy, and honest; and to use authority and power wisely and sparingly. Leaders who are successful and who do rely on their power and authority to accomplish their goals are students of power. That is, they study the various power sources, presented in the next section, and then use these sources when situations exist that require the exercise of power and authority.

Sources of Formal and Informal Power

Power in organizations can be accrued and used by individuals and groups. Leaders have power to *influence* the behavior of others both through their personal attributes and as legitimate representatives of the organization. *Formal* power is defined as that power that is legally vested in a position and sanctioned by the organization; *informal* power stems from personal attributes, outside of formal power, that attract allegiance and support from peers. French and Raven (1968), who pioneered the analysis of power in organizations, identified five major sources of power leaders use to influence the behavior of individuals:

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1. *Reward Power*: Rewards are provided by virtue of the leader's position or influence over others. Reward power depends on the kind of reward the leader can provide and on the attractiveness of the reward to others. Examples of extrinsic rewards include salary increases, promotions, and good work assignments; intrinsic rewards include praise.

2. *Expert Power*: Expert power is derived from special abilities or knowledge possessed by the leader and desired by the followers. Examples are education, experience, and special training.

3. *Referent Power*: Referent power stems from the ability of the leader to acquire a following through charisma. The leader's personality traits command respect and attract others to the leader's presence. Referent power may also be derived from a leader's association with powerful people, with the leader influencing the behavior of others through actual or perceived contacts with others.

4. *Legitimate Power*: Legitimate power, or formal authority, is vested in the leader by the position held in the organization. Legitimate power allows the leader to direct others to achieve organizational goals. Power also comes from followers' belief that legitimate power will be used rationally and in the followers' best interests.

5. *Coercive Power*: Coercive power is used to threaten and punish, to make people conform, and to achieve the leader's goals. Coercive power is the opposite of reward power. Examples of coercive power include demotions, threats of punishment, undesirable work assignments, and a lack of pay increases.

Legitimate, reward, and coercive power are organization based and are part of an assistant principal's power derived through the position. *Expert* and *referent* power are personal powers and come from the personality of the leader. We have stated (Weller & Weller, 2000) that early school administrators relied on coercive and legitimate power whereas their contemporary counterparts tend to use reward, referent, and expert power. The decline of coercive power is attributed to changing social norms, court rulings, teacher unions, and research on effective leader-follower relations. Coercive behavior is discouraged because it violates the concept of empowerment and can lead to hostility, aggression, covert action, and high absenteeism on the part of subordinates. Research has shown expert and referent power to be positively correlated with subordinates' job satisfaction and work performance; legitimate, reward, and coercive power have not been shown to be so correlated.

The results of using legitimate power are mixed. Legitimate power is effective when requests are reasonable, when the requested tasks are part of the job assignment, and when compliance is desired. Legitimate power alone does not correlate with task commitment, but work commitment increases when expert or reward power is coupled with legitimate power. Hoy and Miskel (1996) note that school

leaders who use the threat of coercive power and then reward teachers for performance produce a positive effect on work commitment. We have found (Weller, 1999; Weller & Weller, 2000) that principals and assistant principals who are authoritarian and who use coercive power or legitimate power as a means to control teachers end up reducing teacher loyalty and work performance and lowering morale.

Using Too Much or Too Little Power: Is There a Balance?

Lord Acton's famous statement "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" certainly seems to be an accurate assessment of the way power influences many people. But some power is needed to promote effective and efficient organizational outcomes. The question is, how much power should one use? For leaders, the answer depends on their personal attributes and their knowledge and skill levels. Most research agrees that a balance in the application of the power sources (excluding coercive power) is best. Following are some guidelines that can help a leader find that balance.

Less legitimate power is needed when leaders personally know the needs, dispositions, and aspirations of their followers and can apply other power sources. The key to applying legitimate power is to maintain favorable relationships so followers retain respect and goodwill toward the leader. When other sources of power such as expert, reward, and referent are lacking, however, the greater exercise of legitimate power is a better alternative than coercive power. On the other hand, too little use of legitimate power may be perceived as weakness and can result in poor outcomes, confusion, and frustration, leading to chaos among subordinates.

Coercive power, always an option, is discouraged due to its numerous negative effects. Using coercive power is appropriate, states Yukl (1994), when discipline is required to deter behavior detrimental to other individuals or the organization. For example, when leaders must thwart potential rebellion or deal with people who refuse to obey directives, coercive power is appropriate. But the excessive use of coercive power diminishes the effectiveness of informal authority and referent power, and leads to hostility, alienation, and covert action. Coercive power is most effective when subordinates have a clear understanding of the rules and policies of the organization and when coercive power is administered swiftly, fairly, and consistently. The need for coercive power can be reduced when *requests*, not orders, are given to obey directives; when the requests are clearly stated; and when reasons for the requests are provided.

Relying on rewards as a source of power defines the leader-follower relationship in purely economic terms and may make subordinates feel manipulated. Regardless of the value placed on them by leaders, rewards may result in low

subordinate compliance if they are not personally valued or deemed sufficient for the task. Likewise, depending on too much expert power may breed contempt for the leader or create a feeling of “nonworth” among subordinates. Subordinates may feel intimidated and refrain from expressing their views or ideas to one in authority. Leaders who depend on referent power to influence subordinates’ behavior have the loyalty and trust of their subordinates, and they lead by example. Not all subordinates, however, will have equal trust in and loyalty to the leader, and some subordinates may find little or no personal affiliation or appeal in the leader’s personal characteristics.

In the final analysis, any source of power used by assistant principals will meet with varying degrees of resistance by teachers. To maximize task commitment, the use of referent and expert power is preferred over legitimate power. To attain teacher compliance, legitimate and reward power are preferred. Use of coercive power ensures compliance, but results in many negative side effects. Therefore, to maintain informal power, a leader should apply legitimate power judiciously, pick fights carefully, act politically, pay off past obligations, and back down on issues that do not impact the leader or the organization negatively.

Practical Sources of Power for Assistant Principals

Assistant principals can and do use all five sources of power in several contexts. First, assistant principals schedule teaching and class assignments. Some teachers prefer to teach only one subject per semester or year. Others thrive on diversification. Some teachers prefer to teach slower learners whereas others prefer advanced placement or honors students. Assigning teachers to certain courses and ability levels may involve the use of reward and coercive power when rewards are given for performance and compliance and when the threat of not granting requested assignments is used as coercion.

Second, many assistant principals have budgeting power and can reward department heads and teachers with the acquisition of requested materials or with the permission and funds to attend professional conferences. Making certain teachers’ requests a low priority can be viewed as exercising legitimate or coercive power, depending on the assistant principal’s rationale.

Third, the process of evaluating classroom performance, perhaps the most important instructional task of the assistant principal, can be stressful for many teachers. Professionally and ethically, fair and objective assessments should be made. But the evaluation process is one in which reward, coercive, legitimate, and expert power can be used. Rewarding compliance in areas outside of teaching by providing positive evaluations should not be practiced. Likewise, using classroom evaluations as a means to exact conformity or gain favors is a form of coercive power that should be avoided. By using both legitimate and expert power in

the teacher evaluation process, assistant principals can make objective, unbiased evaluations of teacher performance through the utilization of their superior knowledge and skills.

Fourth, assistant principals who have a major voice in hiring new personnel can use their expert power to evaluate and select the best candidates. When candidates are hired, the use of coercive power to maintain loyalty may be tempting, but the temptation should be resisted. In addition, assistant principals should not try to influence new teachers' behavior based on the role the assistant principal played in awarding the job.

Fifth, assistant principals can use referent power to attain goals or change teacher behaviors through their own personality traits and through their association with influential people. When there are openings in administrative positions, or other avenues for personal or professional advancement for teachers, assistant principals can exercise referent power by providing recommendations for advancement. Of course, the assistant principal has the option of applying coercive and legitimate power in the same situation.

Finally, assistant principals can exercise their expert power by recommending teachers for tenure or for annual employment contracts prior to tenure. In most cases, teachers' anxiety is high over the tenure issue because coercive power or legitimate power can be applied in these situations. The assistant principal's actual or perceived influence with the principal or central office administration can be viewed as referent power, but such an association also provides the opportunity to apply coercive power.

As can be seen from these examples, the assistant principal has many opportunities to abuse power. Assistant principals who want to use power for the good of both the organization and the people in it, will choose to enhance their leadership skills and knowledge through continued professional growth and a constant evaluation of their own motives. In this way, they will become true leaders who understand the long-term effects of their own actions.

Leadership Through Influence and Persuasion

The ability to lead through influence and persuasion is an effective leader behavior. Effective principals and their assistants rely more on influencing and persuading teachers to achieve their goals than they do on their positional authority. These leaders establish a leader-follower *covenant* rooted in mutual trust, respect, and loyalty, and nourished through shared beliefs, values, and goals. This "all for one and one for all" attitude is "custodial" in nature and is characterized by the mutual desire to safeguard one another's welfare and to promote one another's interests. Central to this relationship is the leader's ability to *personally*

know followers' needs, goals, and aspirations, and then to carefully consider these personal variables when making decisions. It is this personal knowledge that allows leaders to influence or persuade their followers to do their bidding.

Influence

According to Yukl (1994), "Influence is the essence of leadership" (p. 223). There are many different forms of influence. Influence can come as a *simple request*, which is successful when the task is part of the follower's assigned duties and within the follower's capabilities. Another form of influence is the *legitimized request*. Here the request is based on precedent or policy; although the follower is influenced to follow through on the legitimized request, task commitment is low. An *inspirational appeal* results in high task commitment and arouses enthusiasm by linking the follower's needs, values, or aspirations to the request.

Consultation, another form of influence, includes the follower in the decision-making process. Yukl (1994) relates that "this process illustrates the apparent paradox that you can gain more influence by giving up some influence" (p. 226). Here task commitment is high. *Exchange* involves the explicit or implicit offer of a reward for completing a task. This form of influence is most beneficial when the follower is indifferent or reluctant about completing a task. Task commitment is moderate. *Personal appeal* is a form of influence whereby a leader resorts to friendship or loyalty in getting another to accomplish a task. The stronger the relationship, the greater the probability this form of influence will work. We call this *blue chipping*, that is, calling in past personal favors; a leader can ask for only so many blue chips before the other begins to sense manipulation. Here task commitment is moderate.

Ingratiation is a form of influence whereby the leader gains favor with the subordinate through deliberate efforts to do so. Yukl and Tracy (1992) warn that such tactics can be viewed as manipulation, but when the comments and actions are sincere and merited, ingratiation can be effective. Task commitment is moderate. *Pressure* includes warnings and close supervision of the subordinate's work. Pressure may be initially effective with those who are lazy or indifferent, but, in general, pressure should be used only as a last resort. Task commitment is low. In addition, pressure undermines working relationships and may lead to covert behavior. *Coalition* as a form of influence involves several people acting together to trigger the compliance of another. Task commitment is low.

Applying these different forms of influence allows leaders to "energize" others without using legitimate authority. Using influence is more likely to be successful when a follower believes that the request is *intrinsically* desirable, that

it is the *correct* or *proper* thing to do, and that it coincides with the follower's *value system*.

Persuasion

Persuasion is defined as a leader's ability to change behavior, initiate action, and gain consensus through facts and logic, or through the discrediting of facts and logic. Successful persuasion depends on the degree of *trust* and *respect* the parties have for one another, and on the way in which the persuasive appeal is presented. Nonthreatening appeals promote interest and openness, and followers are more likely to be swayed by them (Weller, 1999).

When leaders apply *rational* persuasion, they use an effective and powerful skill to change another's behavior. Rational persuasion is most effective when the appeal is carefully made to another by using facts and logical reasoning to point out the *direct benefits* to the follower of the requested behavior. The degree of respect the follower has for the leader, the amount of credibility the leader has with the follower, and the degree to which emotional influences can be suppressed by the follower, is the degree to which rational persuasion is effective. Generally, rational persuasion is moderately successful in changing behavior, especially when compliance rather than commitment is sought. When rational persuasion is used in conjunction with some form of influence, it becomes a highly effective leadership skill (Yukl, 1994).

Roles and Responsibilities of Assistant Principals: Survey Results

To find out what assistant principals do in their jobs and how they feel on a variety of topics, we surveyed 100 assistant principals from urban, suburban, and rural schools and found, in general agreement with the existing literature, that the primary responsibilities for assistant principals continue to be discipline and attendance counting. Approximately 77% of the respondents identified discipline and attendance as their major job assignments, whereas 13% indicated discipline or attendance were secondary to their primary responsibilities of improving instruction or overseeing the vocational education program. Schools with more than one assistant principal generally had one assistant principal primarily responsible for curriculum, instruction, or vocational education, and one assistant principal primarily responsible for student discipline and attendance.

What Assistant Principals Do in Their "Spare Time"

- Supervise students (98%)
- Complete routine reports, enforce policy, and write grant proposals (92%)
- Participate in the selection of teachers, department heads, and assistant principals (87%)
- Evaluate teacher and staff personnel performance and provide remedial assistance (78%)
- Coordinate and/or conduct staff development programs and mentoring or peer tutoring programs (62%)
- Develop the school's master schedule (57%)
- Coordinate and place student teachers and paraprofessionals (52%)
- Prepare the school's budget (7%)
- Act as the school's liaison to community and civic organizations (5%)

SOURCE: 2000 Survey of 100 Practicing Assistant Principals From Urban, Rural, and Suburban Schools

The assistant principals were asked to list other duties or responsibilities assigned by the principal or contained in their job descriptions. The 68% who responded to this question listed a variety of additional assignments, which ranged from supervising students (98%) to acting as the school's liaison to community and civic organizations (5%).

A few respondents, approximately 30%, commented on their additional duties. Typical of these comments is the following:

While my title is Assistant Principal for Discipline, I'm expected to evaluate teachers, coordinate extracurricular programs, coordinate school-community relations, write grants, and represent the principal at meetings he does not want to attend. I'm spread too thin but I can't let discipline "go to pot."

A number of respondents indicated that many assigned responsibilities required new knowledge or skills. Twenty-five percent, for example, felt they lacked the necessary leadership skills essential for some of their assigned duties. One commented, "My basic course in educational leadership theory is most valuable, but I need more." Approximately 65% of the respondents indicated that in addition to other skills, they needed skills in working with teams, improving instruction, and developing curriculum. One comment perhaps best captures the frustration and demands associated with the position of assistant principal:

Comments by Assistant Principals on the Variety of Roles They Play

“An assistant principal is essentially a ‘jack-of-all trades and master of none.’”

“I’ve thought about trying to write down every thing I do in a day’s time as I do it, but I can’t justify the time loss. Let’s just say I stay *very* busy.”

“I wish that I could spend more time with students other than those in trouble. That’s why I went into the educational field to begin with, and I really miss that interaction.”

“At the end of some days, I feel like I’ve been pecked to death by ducks. Somebody is always in my face wanting something.”

“I see the variety of tasks I’m asked to perform as a way of getting to know the total school program. I want to be a principal and I want to be exposed to as much as I can in my role as an assistant.”

“I like the job because I never know what will come up in a day’s time. I never get bored.”

SOURCE: 2000 Survey of 100 Practicing Assistant Principals From Rural, Suburban, and Urban Schools

My primary job is student discipline, but I’m asked to help teachers improve, place student teachers, develop the master schedule, strengthen the curriculum, attend meetings for the principal, work on the budget, evaluate personnel, and complete reports. Sometimes I’m flying by the seat of my pants and my day starts at 6:30 a.m. and ends at 7:00 p.m.

Areas in Which Educational Leadership Courses Did Not Adequately Prepare Assistant Principals

- Motivating teachers
- Resolving conflict
- Developing curriculum for the “real world”
- Working effectively with teams
- Improving instruction
- Dealing with the “politics” of the job

SOURCE: 2000 Survey of 100 Practicing Assistant Principals From Rural, Suburban, and Urban Schools

Table 1.1 Job Description for Assistant Principal

Callaway City School System Job Description Assistant Principal	
Qualifications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master’s Degree • Valid Leadership Certificate • Minimum of three years successful classroom teaching experience • Alternatives to the above qualifications deemed appropriate by the Board of Education
Primary Duties and Responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in all matters assigned by the principal • Be responsible for student discipline and campus supervision • Supervise student and staff attendance • Supervise the In-School Suspension program and serve as hearing officer
Secondary Duties and Responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with teacher observations and evaluations • Assist with school staff meetings • Coordinate public information for the school • Contribute to school improvement plans • Assist with planning staff development programs • Develop teacher and student handbook • Coordinate field trips • Evaluate department heads and clerical staff • Counsel with parents, students, and staff when necessary • Assist in developing the master schedule • Supervise extracurricular activities and athletic events • Assist in the selection of instructional materials • Assist in evaluating all school programs when necessary • Supervise lunchroom and transportation programs • Assist in supervising school physical facilities

Table 1.1 Continued

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in evaluating the instructional programs • Stay current on effective teaching practices and ways to improve student achievement • Assist in preparing the school budget • Serve as the one in charge during absence of the principal
Terms of Employment:	Ten-, eleven-, or twelve-month year depending on needs of principal. Salary set by the Board of Education.
Evaluation:	Evaluation conducted yearly by the principal and/or superintendent. Criteria for performance evaluation will be those on the job description and others assigned.

Table 1.1 presents a typical job description of a solitary assistant principal in a high school of approximately 600 students. As seen in the table, the *primary* responsibilities of this assistant principal are student discipline and attendance. The *secondary* responsibilities listed on the job description include many of the responsibilities associated with the leadership and managerial functions attributed to effective leaders. It is apparent that a cadre of knowledge and skills is essential to effectively perform the array of responsibilities associated with the assistant principalship, but the majority of assistant principals responding to the survey indicated they lacked the necessary training to perform many of these responsibilities.

The job description of an assistant principal who is primarily responsible for instruction and curriculum is presented in Table 1.2. This job description is for an assistant principal in a high school of approximately 2,000 students who serves with two other assistant principals, one being primarily responsible for student discipline and attendance. As seen in Table 1.2, the primary responsibilities fall within the expectations of leaders focusing on the improvement of instruction and curriculum. Many of the duties are identified as those associated with providing effective instructional leadership and also require tasks associated with effective managers.

Developing Leadership Competencies

How can one best develop leadership competencies? Certain aspects of leadership can be acquired by participating in training, observing role models, engaging in work experience, reading research and theory, and practicing self-leadership. Manz (1991) found that practicing self-leadership provides a testing ground for learning and developing leadership competencies. That is, one must first want to be a leader and then make a conscious effort to change one's current behavior patterns. Second, one must make a personal commitment to perform leadership tasks daily and with the knowledge that official rewards or incentives will not be forthcoming. Third, one must create "mental activities" for practicing leader behaviors by planning leadership activities in advance, rehearsing leadership activities through "mental imagery," building in "natural" rewards for success, and then practicing self-criticism and reflection on task completion.

Observing effective leaders is an excellent way to develop leadership competencies. Following or "shadowing" respected leaders over time allows one to witness firsthand how leaders apply their skills in various situations. Allowing time for after-the-fact reflection and discussion is important. Apprenticeship or administrative assistantship is still another way to develop leadership competencies. Here leaders identify and then place potential leaders in positions as apprentices or administrative assistants. Leaders guide and model while the apprentice actually performs leadership tasks and gains practical experience. In this role, leaders encourage, inspire, tutor, and mold their charges into future leaders.

Reading theory and research-oriented journals is a time-honored way to gain knowledge about leadership. Less appealing to most practitioner-oriented students of leadership, theories and research provide the essential foundation on which good practice is derived. Those ignorant of theory and research are akin to those who are ignorant of history: doomed to repeat the mistakes of their predecessors.

Leadership Theories: Building a Theoretical Base for Practical Applications

The leadership theories discussed here are not meant to be exhaustive, but do represent those that have had a major impact on the thinking and behavior of others. The selected theories presented below are grouped according to their associated characteristics and intended to serve as references for leadership preparation.

Behavioral Theories. Behavioral theories investigate what effective leaders *do* or how effective leaders *behave*. Behavioral theories seek to identify which behavior patterns make leaders more effective. Three common descriptions of leader behaviors are *autocratic*, *democratic*, and *laissez-faire*. The autocrat expects compliance

Table 1.2 Job Description for Assistant Principal of Instruction and Curriculum

<p>Lamar County School System Job Description Assistant Principal of Instruction and Curriculum</p>	
<p>Duties and Responsibilities</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop the master schedule. 2. Evaluate teachers and department heads. 3. Coordinate staff development programs. 4. Coordinate peer coaching and mentoring programs. 5. Coordinate the placement of student teachers. 6. Evaluate student test scores and improve instruction and the curriculum as needed. 7. Assist the principal in conducting meetings of the School Governance Council. 8. Coordinate the Parent Teacher Association program. 9. Coordinate the business partnership programs. 10. Assist in maintaining a school culture emphasizing academics, student achievement, and teaching excellence. 11. Keep current on the recent research on improving instruction, student learning, and curriculum trends which promote student achievement. 12. Perform all other duties assigned by the principal. 	
<p>Supervisor:</p>	<p>Principal of the school</p>
<p>Terms of Employment:</p>	<p>Eleven-month contract with salary based on highest degree and years of teaching experience</p>
<p>Evaluation:</p>	<p>The principal will evaluate job performance based on the job description and any other duties he/she assigns.</p>

without questions and uses threats and punishments to achieve goals; decision making and power are centralized. Democratic leaders delegate authority and share power; teams are an integral part of the decision-making process and organizational goals and objectives are jointly developed. Laissez-faire leaders grant complete freedom of action to subordinates. They see their primary role as providing resources and moral support.

Another behavioral theory is the two-dimensional theory of *initiating structure* and *consideration for subordinates*. Researchers sought to identify leadership behavior “patterns” that yielded effective performance. Leaders who emphasized

initiating structure focused on achieving performance goals, defining and organizing tasks, establishing communication channels, setting work deadlines, and pushing subordinates to work to capacity. Those leaders who emphasized consideration for subordinates exhibited trust, respect, warmth, and concern for subordinates' welfare. They were friendly and fair and listened to subordinates' ideas and concerns. The most effective leader is one who can provide a balance of these two aspects of leadership.

Trait Theories. Trait theory holds that leaders are different from other people, with research focusing on those personal characteristics and traits that promote leadership effectiveness. Trait research initially identified five general categories impacting effective leadership: (a) capacity (intelligences and verbal facility), (b) achievement (scholarship and knowledge), (c) responsibility (initiative, persistence, integrity, honesty, and self-confidence), (d) participation (sociability, flexibility, cooperation, and humor), and (e) status (socioeconomic position and popularity). Later trait research reconfirmed the presence of many of these traits, but findings concluded that the traits of *intelligences, dominance, self-confidence, and high energy levels* were most prevalent in effective leaders. Most recently, effective leadership traits have been classified into three groups—*personality, motivation, and skill*. Personality traits include self-confidence, stress tolerance, emotional maturity, empathy, and integrity. Motivation traits include being task oriented, and holding high values and expectations. Skill traits include technical administrative expertise, ability to conceptualize, and interpersonal relations. These traits do not necessarily guarantee successful leadership, but can best be viewed as competencies to be developed or acquired.

Contingency Theories. Efforts to determine the one best set of leader traits and the one best set of leader behaviors in *all* situations provided inconclusive results due to the complex nature of leadership. The theory that effective leadership is *contingent* on the situation(s) in which leadership occurs is more prevalent today. Contingency theories state that the most effective type of leadership depends on the leader's ability to analyze the nature of the situation and then apply the leadership style that would be most effective in that situation.

Fiedler's contingency theory (1967) holds that leader effectiveness results when leadership style is matched with the leader-follower situation *and* with the individual(s) involved. Two leadership styles promote effective results: (a) *task motivated*, which is effective when structure is needed and efficiency in performance is required, and (b) *relationship motivated*, which is effective when building a positive interpersonal relationship is required. Three factors determine leadership style: (a) the degree to which the leader is accepted by the follower (the degree of confidence, trust, and respect the follower has for the leader); (b) the degree to

Readings on Behavioral Theories of Leadership

- *A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness*, by F. E. Fiedler (1967). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- "Patterns of Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created Social Climates," by H. Lewin, R. Lippit, and R. K. White (1939), in *Journal of Social Psychology*, 10, 271-299.
- *The Management of Organizational Behavior* (5th edition), by P. Hersey and K. H. Blanchard (1988). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- *Leadership and Supervision in Industry*, by E. A. Fleishman, E. F. Harris, and R. D. Burt (1955). Columbus, OH: State University Press.

which the task is understood by the follower; and (c) the extent to which the leader possesses the ability to influence the follower through legitimate, reward, and coercive powers. Effective leadership results when the "right mix" occurs among these multiple variables.

Hersey and Blanchard (1988) relate that effective leaders accurately assess the maturity level of their followers (their competence and motivation to perform) and then apply one of four leadership styles—telling, selling, participating, or delegating. The leader's style must vary with the situation and the follower's personal attributes to achieve the desired outcomes. There is no single "best" leadership style for all situations.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership Theories. Transformational theory maintains that leadership is a *process* by which leaders and followers raise each other to higher levels of morality and motivation. Leaders appeal to followers' higher ideals and moral values and stimulate higher-order needs in followers. Followers have trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect for the leader. Leaders transform and motivate followers by (a) making followers aware of the importance of their jobs and of the quality of their job performance; (b) motivating followers to place their self-interests behind those of the organization; (c) articulating a

Readings on Trait Theories of Leadership

- "Personal Factors Associated With Leadership: A Survey of the Literature," by R. M. Stogdill (1948), in *Journal of Psychology*, 25, 35-71.
- *Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership* (3rd edition), by B. M. Bass and R. M. Stogdill (1990). New York: Free Press.

vision, promoting it vigorously, and modeling expected behaviors; (d) individualizing consideration of followers' needs and goals; and (e) stimulating followers' intellectual interests.

Transactional leadership involves the daily exchanges of incentives and rewards for compliance. This is a quid pro quo type of leadership in which job security, tenure, good evaluations, and raises are provided for subordinates' support, cooperation, and compliance. Research findings on transformational and transactional leadership are mixed, but seem to indicate that effective leaders use a combination of transformational and transactional behaviors.

The Effective Schools Research and the Implications for Effective Leadership

One of the most intriguing aspects of the effective schools movement is the lack of a clear and universally accepted definition of school effectiveness. The literature on school effectiveness generally agrees that effective schools are those that make a *difference* in student performance on standardized tests of achievement. Edmonds (1982) provides a general definition that embraces the gestalt of the effective schools movement. He defines effective schools as those in which students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds perform as well on basic skills tests as do students from mid-level socioeconomic backgrounds. As the research on effective schools expanded, a wider array of assumptions about schools in general accumulated. These assumptions are (a) schools are responsible for the academic success or failure of their students; (b) students are capable of learning regardless of their ethnicity or home or cultural background; (c) students from low socioeconomic status families do not need a different curriculum, and poverty does not excuse failure; and (d) differences between schools impact student achievement, and those differences can be controlled by the school.

These assumptions resulted from a new line of research that focused on processes of schooling, unlike previous research, which focused on the quantities of *resources available* to schools and individual *student characteristics*. Researchers believed that success on standardized tests was not restricted to basic skills mastery, and that test performance was not an accurate reflection of the overall mission of education. Effective schools are now defined as those that can meet the social, emotional, physical, and academic needs of students. Interest in the social and emotional development of students began to take on greater importance as educators reexamined their value to the overall mission of education and the implications for their impacting student test performance. As a result, defining school effectiveness based on student performance on standardized tests alone began to be seen as inadequate. Effective schools are now defined as those having

Readings on Contingency Theories of Leadership

- *A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness*, by R. E. Fiedler (1967). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- *The Management of Organizational Behavior* (5th edition), by P. Hersey and K. H. Blanchard (1988). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

programs that positively impact student attitudes, self-esteem, social responsibility, higher-order thinking skills, and test performance (Stedman, 1987). Effectiveness results from a combination of many policies, programs, behaviors, and attitudes within the school itself.

The Research on Effective Schools

Early research on inner-city high schools yielded the following effective school variables:

- Strong leadership by the principal, especially in instructional programs and activities
- High expectations by teachers for student success on achievement measures and in classroom performance
- Emphasis on developing basic skills and increasing the time spent on teaching and learning
- A safe and orderly environment in which to teach and learn
- Frequent and systematic evaluation of student learning (Stedman, 1987)

As effective schools research intensified, it expanded to middle and elementary schools. As a result, an expanded set of effective school variables emerged. Cuban (1990) notes that effective schools have the following characteristics:

Readings on Transformational and Transactional Leadership Theories

- *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*, by B. M. Bass (1985). New York: Free Press.
- *Leadership*, by J. M. Burns (1978). New York: Harper & Row.

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- Instructional leadership by a principal who understands and applies the theories and practices of effective instruction
- A climate in which all staff members hold high expectations for student success and mastery of the basic skills
- A clear school mission that encompasses school goals and assessment procedures and a commitment to student learning by all staff members
- A safe and orderly learning environment that allows students to learn and teachers to teach in an oppression-free atmosphere
- Classrooms where time on task is emphasized by spending the maximum amount of time on planned activities to master basic skills
- Frequent monitoring of student performance and use of evaluation results to improve teaching and learning
- Positive home-school relations that foster parents' support for the school's mission, involvement in school programs, and active participation in their children's learning

Research by Levine and Lezotte (1989) identified characteristics of effective schools that are tangential to the actual teaching and learning process:

- Schools with site-based management that practice teacher empowerment and allow teachers the latitude to solve site-based problems
- Central office support for making decisions and solving school problems that impact instruction
- Strong leadership at the school level
- A planned and well-coordinated curriculum that is scoped and sequenced and focused on the holistic needs of students
- Staff stability which provides a strong, cohesive work unit
- Comprehensive staff development programs that are teacher led and address the specific needs of teachers
- Parent programs designed to help parents help their children with homework, attendance, and discipline
- Schoolwide recognition of student academic success and teaching excellence
- Collaborative teacher planning to promote the sharing of knowledge and ideas and provide continuity in the curriculum and in student learning experiences
- Shared vision, mission, and goals to promote collegiality and to foster a sense of community

The effective schools movement has its critics. In an analysis of the research on effective schools, Grady, Wayson, and Zirkel (1989) found that the results were primarily based on studies conducted in urban elementary schools. The results, they reported, are unclear and some are spurious. In addition, they noted the use of weak research methods, the fact that subjects such as art and music received less attention than did academic subjects, and the fact that the information that the shared governance variable associated with effective schools has increased the conflict between teachers and administrators over how much control teachers should have in the area of instructional leadership.

Implications for Leadership

Research results on the principals of effective schools are also mixed. Bossert (1988) relates that four primary variables contribute to principal effectiveness: (a) setting instructional goals and requiring effective instructional practices, (b) exercising leadership to accomplish goals, (c) using effective management practices, and (d) exhibiting excellent human relations skills. Some research on effective school principals has tried to link principals' effectiveness to the bureaucratic model by stating that strong principals must be highly structured to implement effective school characteristics, but no conclusive findings exist as to what type of structure is needed or what processes must be structured. What has evolved from the research is the following: (a) Leadership is important for promoting effective schools, (b) no single leadership behavior or set of leadership behaviors has been identified as enhancing academic achievement for all schools, and (c) effectiveness seems to be linked to appropriately matching situational variables, such as the curricular and instructional programs, with the leadership style of the principal. That is, principals who are effective tend to delegate authority, jointly establish school goals, "guide" the instructional process, and allow teachers to make certain decisions about the teaching and learning process.

Current Research on Student Learning and the Implications for Effective Leadership

Researchers have long suspected that some instructional practices promote student learning more effectively than others. Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1993) analyzed approximately 11,000 statistical studies and interviewed 61 educational researchers and arrived at a "reasonable consensus" on the most significant influences impacting student learning. They found that *direct* influences, the amount of time teachers spend on instruction and the quality of "social interaction" they have with their students, have greater impact on learning than *indirect* influences,

such as school and state-level policies and organizational structures such as site-based management.

Variables having the most impact on student learning were psychological, instructional, and contextual. The current emphasis on improving curriculum, restructuring school governance, developing school culture, and reforming education is focused on variables that have less direct impact on student learning.

Moreover, the research shows no strong, direct link between student performance and a principal's leadership behaviors. At best, the principal's influence on student learning is indirect and situation specific. Principals' effectiveness or ineffectiveness may result from congruence or incongruence between leadership style and follower-situational factors, personality characteristics, student and community demographic factors, and turnover rate of teachers and teacher teams.

Leadership Effectiveness Indicators

Determining leader effectiveness is a multifaceted and complicated task. Leadership effectiveness indicators are many and varied throughout the literature. There seems, however, to be a general agreement that effectiveness is best determined by the *outcomes* resulting from certain leadership activities. These outcomes are as follows:

- *Personal perceptions and personal judgments of others.* Followers' perceptions of the leader—and whether or not those followers are able to be effective under that leader—form an indicator of leader effectiveness.
- *Subordinates' satisfaction.* The degree to which subordinates' needs and aspirations are met contributes greatly to their opinion of leader effectiveness.
- *Goal attainment.* The level to which organizational goals are achieved provides an objective criterion for assessing leader effectiveness.
- *Preparedness to address challenges or crises.* Does the leader successfully handle unexpected challengers or crises that, if handled differently, would leave a major negative impact on the organization or the followership?
- *Types of decisions.* Decisions made by leaders impact the loyalty and commitment of their followers and their work lives in general. Decisions have both direct and indirect effects. Direct effects have an immediate, personal impact on followers, whereas indirect effects take time to assess, are less personal in nature, and often cause a chain reaction. Whether a decision has direct or indirect effects on the followership, the leader's decisions allow subordinates to rise in glory or go down in flames.

- *Implementation of change.* Leaders who successfully implement change are able to motivate, build self-confidence, assist their followers in gaining new knowledge and skills, maintain harmony and cooperation, and use resources wisely and efficiently. When the desired result of change is realized and accomplished in a timely and “hassle-free” manner, leaders are judged to be effective.

Skills and Knowledge for Effective Assistant Principals: Survey Results

Approximately 70% of the 100 assistant principals surveyed indicated that “people skills,” “good communication skills,” “knowledge of leadership theory,” “techniques for improving curriculum and instruction,” and “working with teams” were the most essential skill and knowledge areas for effective assistant principals. Other skills, listed by less than 40% of the respondents, included the ability to work with “community, civic, and business leaders,” “knowing the informal leaders and networks in the school,” “curriculum development,” and “conducting effective meetings and managing one’s time.” One respondent commented, “Many ‘survival’ skills are not taught in degree programs. Being diplomatic, dealing with different personalities, and being flexible and patient are essential to this job.” Another respondent commented, “Your time is ‘eaten alive’ by the demands, conflict, and controversy caused by others. I have to be ‘political’ in dealing with teachers, parents, and my principal to be effective. I didn’t get these skills in graduate school.”

Let’s Review

Leadership effectiveness can be viewed as competencies to be developed, and begins with practicing self-leadership, which includes nurturing the desire to improve, to change one’s behavior, and to model the behaviors of recognized leaders. Leadership development is supplemented through apprenticeships and the study and understanding of leadership theory and research. Effective leadership indicators vary, but generally include the quality of work life leaders provide; the type of decisions they make and the goals they achieve; their ability to plan, organize, and coordinate; the degree of subordinates’ satisfaction with the leader; and the leader’s ability to motivate others and introduce change and innovation. A key leadership behavior is the ability to persuade and influence others to achieve the leader’s goals without applying formal authority or resorting to manipulation or bartering.

Exercises

Exercise 1: Power Source Profiles

Reread the section on formal and informal power sources; then think about *superiors* with whom you have had recent experiences (depending on your current position, these superiors may be principals, assistant principals, or department heads). Select one you deem to be effective and another you deem to be ineffective. Answer the following questions in the context of situation, task, and personalities involved:

- Provide specific examples of the power sources most often used by the two superiors.
- Were these power sources effective? Why? Why not?
- What sources of power would *you* have used to be more effective? Why did you choose these power sources? Provide specific examples.

Exercise 2: Leadership Knowledge and Skills

Your superintendent has asked that a group of prospective teacher-leaders, of whom you are one, develop a list of knowledge areas and skills necessary to be an effective assistant principal. To acquire this information, you decide to *interview* certain leaders to gather data-based information. Interview your principal, assistant principal, and a department head to complete this task. Compare your results with those found in this chapter.

Exercise 3: Effective School Plan

Your superintendent has appointed you to a committee to develop a plan to make your school an “effective school” within 3 years. As chair of the committee, you decide to set priorities for meeting this objective for each of the 3 years. As you open the first meeting, you quote from the superintendent’s letter:

The committee has the following goals:

1. Develop a program to train effective *leaders*. Most lack the essential skills. You fix it!
2. Develop a program to train *teachers* to be effective in the classroom. Many are not. You fix it!

**Skills and Knowledge Needed to Be Effective
As an Assistant Principal (in priority order)**

1. People skills
2. Good communication skills
3. Knowledge of leadership theory
4. Techniques for improving curriculum and instruction
5. Ability to work with teams
6. Ability to work with community, civic, and business leaders
7. Knowing the “politics” and networks within the schools
8. Ability to conduct effective meetings
9. Ability to manage one’s time
10. Flexibility
11. Knowing how to be “diplomatic”
12. Patience and empathy
13. Common sense
14. Ability to maintain a good rapport and working relationship with colleagues

SOURCE: 2000 Survey of 100 Practicing Assistant Principals From Rural, Suburban, and Urban Schools

3. Develop a comprehensive plan to *evaluate* the effectiveness of your committee’s improvement plan. Be thorough.

Explain the steps you would take with committee members to set priorities and develop an improvement plan.

Case Study: Improving Classroom Instruction

Sally Lonering was in her office, door closed, working on the school’s budget. As principal, Sally was responsible for the total operation of the school. Money and attention to detail were the most important factors to the superintendent, bar none. Sally knew she should spend more time on improving instruction, but delegated this responsibility to Harry Tinker, her assistant principal. Harry was capable, she thought, even if he jumped from interest area to interest area. Besides, she had sent Harry to a recent daylong workshop on how to improve classroom instruction.

Harry was delighted when Sally proposed that he draft a 3-year plan to improve teacher classroom performance. This allowed him the opportunity to dele-

gate more responsibility for student discipline to department heads. Harry didn't like dealing with discipline. Harry's award as Teacher of the Year when he was a classroom teacher gave him the confidence he needed to develop a comprehensive staff development program for making teachers more effective in their classrooms. Harry felt a bit uncomfortable when he tried to present the completed plan to Sally because every time he attempted to see her, she was busy with reports, talking to custodians and cafeteria personnel, improving office efficiency, or engaging in public relations activities. Her stock response was, "See me tomorrow, I'm keeping this school above water."

Harry never did get to discuss his plan with Sally, but his big day came when he presented it to faculty members at their first teacher workday. Sally was there to make room arrangements, attend to refreshments, and oversee all the AV equipment needed by Harry for his first presentation. Harry was proud of his work. He had colored graphs, sample training materials, and complete agendas for all the staff development sessions. "Yes," Harry thought, "this is going to be my ticket to a principalship."

After the meeting, Harry and Sally reflected on the outcomes. Both thought the presentation went very well. In fact, Sally commented on the quality of the graphs and the organization of the presentation. But both began to recall certain particulars about the presentation, and Sally asked Harry to make a list for further reflection. They noted that the teachers were less than enthusiastic about the prospects of self-improvement. No teacher volunteered to either chair or serve on the staff development programs evaluation committee, and both were surprised that not one teacher had asked either Harry or Sally any questions after the presentation concluded. Sally then said, "Note Ms. Thwartall's remark: 'The fluff was great.'"

If you were asked to provide advice to Sally and Harry about what they should be concerned about, what advice would you give? Be specific in your answers by providing information presented in this chapter.