

## Transformational Leadership: A Model for School Principals

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This paper examines the role of transformational leadership in schools on the basis of leadership as conceptualized and reported in the educational leadership literature. An attempt has been made to suggest and understand the implications of such a form of school governance without overlooking the limitations that are inherent within its theoretical framework. The practical application of transformational leadership as it can impact the roles and responsibilities of a school principal has been discussed. The distinct characteristics of instructional leadership in relation to school functioning have been examined and compared to what transformational leadership has to offer in terms of improved educational outcomes. There is compelling evidence to support that the transformational model could prove to be effective in school settings but there are still certain empirical issues within the leadership model itself that need to be addressed by educational researchers.

**Keywords:** instructional leadership, transactional leadership, transformational leadership

### **Introduction**

In recent years, the concept of educational leadership has become more complex and elaborate. Considerable debate has been generated in an attempt to identify the most suitable model for principals. Because by virtue of their placements, they tend to significantly influence the beliefs and actions of others in the school, and are capable of controlling students' outcomes by way of not only contributing to the effectiveness of the school as a whole, but also by providing meaningful learning experiences to the teachers. Because no two schools are alike, there are no two schools that present the same challenge to a principal. Hence, the perspectives and models that are available in the field of school leadership are diverse and multifaceted. The menu for school leadership includes alternative leadership models such as instructional, transformational, moral, participative, managerial and contingent (Leithwood, Jantzi, Stienbach, 1999). However,

diverging patterns in this regard have been reported mostly reflecting reform movements of general societal patterns relevant to the times.

According to Hart and Bredeson (1996), principals were good managers when Management by Objectives (MBO) was the watch word of exemplary leadership. They were social engineers and guardians of public morals during the Progressive Era. Principals were instructional leaders when literature on effective schools was most prominent and principals were visionaries in the era of organizational culture. Presently, there is a revival of instructional leadership in the context of school, but the principal as a transformational leader is an equally competitive paradigm. While principals say that instruction and curriculum are the most important activities in the schools, they report only a small portion of their time spent on these activities (Leithwood, Steinbach & Begley, in press). The principal's list of role expectations includes such things as resource provider, communicator, and a manager. Also included is preparation of board reports, political leadership in the immediate community, and responding to multiplicity of demands by internal and external pressures (Cuban, 1998). Perhaps it is time to stop thinking of leadership as an action packed aggressive package and may be look at it as a way of thinking at the educational process itself. By doing so, the principal's leadership in schools would not be merely a case of who makes which decisions but how these decisions empower the entire school to be transformed into a learning community serving the best interests of all its stakeholders.

When the profiles of leadership published over the years are matched against each other, it has been observed that despite the radically different social contexts of each of the regions of the world, be it Canada (Begley, in press) or Hong Kong (Walker, Begley, & Dimmock, 2000) it is interesting to note that the common dimensions, or functions of the school leadership role, are shared in all of these countries. Instructional leadership and transformational leadership significantly surface as key dimensions of school leadership profiles along with organizational management, school-community relations and ethical leadership. However, if taken as two distinct models of school leadership (Heck & Hallinger, 1999), what distinguishes them from others is the focus on how administrators and teachers improve teaching and learning. Instructional leaders

focus on school goals, the curriculum, instruction and school environment. Transformational leaders focus on restructuring the school by improving school conditions. Schools like other organizations, function as complex social systems in which the social and behavioral structures, goals, technologies, participants and environments interact (Hart & Bredeson, 1996). Principals who are expected to lead face a unique environment in each one of the schools and, depending on their abilities and the profiles of leadership they are committed to, the school outcomes are shaped accordingly.

### **Statement of the Problem and Research Questions**

This paper explores various aspects of school principals' leadership from the perspective of the transformational model of leadership. The purpose is not to advocate transformational leadership as a panacea for all the problems encountered by the principals in their contextual domains. Rather, an attempt has been made to examine the concept of transformational leadership starting from its inception to its present day credentials and in the light of available literature encompassing both its strengths and limitations, suggest the practicability of the model as one of the possibilities for school administration. The research questions framed within the context of literature review spread over the past 25 years seek to address the following issues:-

- (a) What are the distinct features of transformational leadership as compared to the instructional leadership model?
- (b) Is there a dark side to transformational leadership?
- (c) Is a merger between transformational leadership and instructional leadership possible?

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purposes of education in the schools are not the same as those of business organizations. Yet, there is a tendency to rely on corporate approaches because *outcomes based education* has led the researchers to borrow leadership concepts from non school literature and study their relationships and effects in the context of schools. Most of the school profiles have been portraying the process- product approach quite effectively

because instructional leadership directly influences classroom curriculum and instruction and offers a clear and concise approach to the school administrators to monitor teachers closely and ensure that school agenda is consistently implemented. It may be argued that an almost exclusive focus on first order changes (Leithwood et al., 1999) is an important part of the explanation for the failure of most change initiatives especially after their implementation because school leadership by definition in the instructional model is viewed as control based. In the emerging realities of today's world , schools also need to address vital issues as how to change their governance structures, open themselves to greater community influence, become more accountable, clarify their standards for content and performance and introduce related changes in their approaches to teaching and learning. To restructure such school concerns, commitment strategies for developing shared goals, supportive work culture, collaborative learning activities and distributive leadership are required. Advocates of transformational leadership seem to offer a set of expectations and possible outcomes. Is it so? The literature review builds on the available research studies and follows the transformational leadership pathway through the corridor of instructional leadership.

### **Instructional Leadership**

The instructional leadership model emerged in the early 1980s in the research on effective schools. The model focuses on the manner in which school leadership improves educational outcomes. Typically, it is assumed the critical focus for attention by leaders is the behaviors of the teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students (Leithwood, Jantzi, Steinbach, 1999). Lack of explicit descriptions, however, make it difficult to assess the extent to which such leadership means the same thing to all those writing about it. Typically, Hallinger's (2003) conceptualization of instructional leadership which has been most fully tested proposes three dimensions: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school-learning climate. Associated with these three broad categories of practice are 21 more specific functions (e.g. supervising instruction) and considerable evidence has accumulated in the support of these practices. Even then, essentially, the principal's role is to focus on the teachers as the teachers have to focus on helping students learn.

Leadership within this paradigm is based primarily on a strong technical knowledge of teaching and learning and, secondly, on curriculum design, development and evaluation. This type of structure supports the notion that when principals execute essential tasks, teaching and learning improve. Dimmock (1995) is of the view that instructional leadership is too prescriptive and states, “The traditional top down linear conceptions of leadership and management and their influence on teaching and learning have become inappropriate” (p. 295). One of the problems with this approach (Poplin, 1992) is that great administrators aren't always great classroom leaders and vice versa. Another difficulty is that many school principals are so deeply occupied in the managerial and administrative tasks of daily school life, that they rarely have time to lead others in the instructional areas.

### **Towards Transformational Leadership**

In the mid -1980s, there was an increasing demand on US school system to seek better student performance and accountability through management practices, professional standards, teacher commitment, democratic processes and parent choice. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (2002) refer to initiatives taken towards that end as large scale school reform which set a pace for an increasing number of research studies aimed at measuring the impact of school leadership. New terms that emerged in the educational leadership were shared leadership, teacher leadership, distributed leadership, transactional leadership and transformational leadership. The change in leadership role has been labeled as reflecting ‘second order changes’, (Leithwood et al. 1994) as it is aimed primarily at “changing the organization’s normative structure” (p.330) in terms of empowerment, shared leadership and organizational learning. The proponents of school reform have advocated altering power relationships in school leadership patterns. Generally, leadership has been considered as the capacity to take charge and get things done. This approach has proved to be restrictive in the sense that the importance of team work and comprehensive school improvement has been undermined. An emerging perception of school leadership is that it is a way of thinking about ‘all of us together’ of what lies ahead of us, and how to manage it collectively. The central focus of leadership ought to be the commitments and capacities of organizational members. According to Leithwood and Jantzi, (1997), transformational leadership comes closer to providing such

an approach and has the potential of building high levels of commitment (in teachers) to the complex and uncertain nature of the school reform agenda and for fostering growth in the capacities teachers must develop to respond positively to this agenda.

The scholars most closely associated with transformational leadership are: James MacGregor Burns, Bernard M. Bass, Bruce J. Avolio, and Kenneth Leithwood. In 1978, Burns first proposed the idea of transformational leadership that was later expanded by Bernard Bass. Although both of them had not studied schools and they based their work on business executives, army officers and political leaders, the principles of transformational leadership have been extended to schools. One of the first instances of transformational leadership is the stakeholder theory that views business firms as being composed of various constituencies of workers, managers, customers, suppliers, etc. all of whom have a legitimate, strategic and moral stake in the organization and must come together and cooperate on the basis of values, interests and social choice (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1998). In schools, it deals with finding a way to become successful in collaboratively defining the essential purpose of teaching and learning and then empowering the entire school community to become energized and focused (Liontos, 1992).

### **Burns Model of Transforming Leadership**

According to Burns (1978, p.20), transforming leadership is a process in which “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation”. For Burns, as reported by Yuhl (1994), such leadership may be exhibited by anyone in the organization in any type of position. It may involve people influencing peers and superiors as well as subordinates. It can occur in the day to day acts of ordinary people. But it is not ordinary or common. Burns contrasted transforming leadership with transactional leadership. Transactional leaders approach followers with the intent to exchange one thing for another, for example, the principal may reward the hard-working teacher with an increase in budget allowance. It occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with other for the purpose of an exchange of valued things. Both parties acknowledge the power relationships of the other and together they continue to pursue their respective purposes. Transactional leadership involves values, but they are

values relevant to the exchange process, such as honesty, fairness, responsibility and reciprocity.

On the other hand, “the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (Burns, 1978, p. 4). The power base, in this instance, mutually supports a common purpose. This form of leadership seeks to “raise the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both” (Burns, 1978, p.20). Transformational leadership encompasses a change to benefit both the relationship and the resources of those involved. The result is a change in the level of commitment and the increased capacity for achieving the mutual purposes. It can be viewed both as a micro level influence process between individuals and as a macro level process of mobilizing power to change social systems and reform institutions. At macro level, it involves shaping, expressing, and mediating conflict among groups of people in addition to motivating individuals.

### **Transformational Leadership Model by Bass**

The work by Bass (1998) was a response to some of the limitations and omissions evident in Burns’ work, in particular, the lack of empirical evidence to support Burns’ theory. He believes that transformational leaders did more than set up exchanges and agreements. Bass believes that leaders behave in certain ways in order to raise the level of commitment from followers. Transformational leadership is classified as the Full Range of Leadership (FRL) and this permits further exploration into the effects of its application to specific conditions. Bass and his colleagues identified components of transformational leadership which were further measured with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). A total of 141 statements were classified by trained judges as either transformational or transactional leadership. The questionnaire was then administered to U.S. Army officers and they were told to rate their superior officers on a scale from 0 (not observed) to 4 (behavior observed frequently). The following four components of transformational leadership were developed:

1. *Charismatic Leadership or Idealized Influence*: Transformational leaders are role models; they are admired by their followers who identify with them and want to

emulate them.

2. *Inspirational Motivation*: Transformational leaders clearly communicate expectations, generate enthusiasm among people and demonstrate a commitment to goals and a shared vision.

3. *Intellectual Stimulation*: Transformational leaders actively solicit new ideas of doing things. They stimulate others to be creative and never publicly correct or criticize others.

4. *Individualized Consideration*: Transformational leaders pay attention to the needs and the potential for developing others. These leaders establish a supportive climate where individual differences are respected. Interactions with followers are encouraged and the leaders are aware of individual concerns.

The transformational model of leadership by Bass (1998) also includes three dimensions of transactional leadership: contingent reward; management-by-exception; and laissez-faire, or non-leadership behavior. Contingent reward relates back to earlier work conducted by Burns (1978) where the leader assigns work and then rewards the follower for carrying out the assignment. Management-by-exception (MBE) is when the leader monitors the follower, and then corrects him/her if necessary. MBE can be either passive (MBE-P) or active (MBE-A). MBE-P includes waiting passively for errors to occur and then taking corrective action. MBE-A may be necessary when safety is an issue. For example, a leader may need to supervise a group of workers. Laissez-faire leadership is virtually an avoidance of leadership behaviors. Leadership behaviors are ignored and no transactions are carried out.

Bass believes that every leader displays each of the aforementioned styles to some extent; he calls this the “Full Range of Leadership Model” (Bass, 1998, p. 7). An optimal leader would practice the transformational components more frequently and the transactional components less frequently. Bass and Avolio (1988) embrace this “two-factor theory” of leadership and believe that the two build on one another. The transactional components deal with the basic needs of the organization, whereas the



transformational practices encourage commitment and foster change. Although Bass believes that transformational and transactional leadership are at opposite ends of the leadership continuum (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000), but he maintains that the two can be complementary.

### **Transformational Leadership Model by Liethwood**

Leithwood and his colleagues have been instrumental in bridging the work of Burns and Bass into the field of educational administration. Leithwood (1992) defines transformational leadership as a leadership that facilitates the redefinition of a people's mission and vision, a renewal of their commitment and the restructuring of their systems for goal accomplishment (p. 9). His conceptual model has yielded extensive empirical studies and investigation over the past decade. The knowledge base for school leadership has risen exponentially and has contributed significantly in understanding how leadership affects the school environment. According to Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (1994), the term transformational leadership implies to major changes in the form, nature, function and/or potential of some phenomenon. Applied to leadership, it specifies general ends to be pursued although it is largely mute with respect to means. From this beginning, we consider the central purpose of transformational leadership to be the enhancement of the individual and collective problem-solving capacities of organizational members; such capacities are exercised in the identification of goals to be achieved and practices to be used in their achievement" (p. 7).

In this model of leadership, the seven dimensions used to describe transformational leadership are : "building school vision and establishing school goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualized support; modeling best practices and important organizational values; demonstrating high performance expectations; creating a productive school culture; and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions" (Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood et al., cited in Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000 p. 114). Each dimension is further described using more specific leadership practices. Leithwood believes that former models of transformational leadership neglected to include necessary transactional components which were fundamental to the stability of the organization. He further adds the following

management dimensions: staffing, instructional support, monitoring school activities, and community focus. Leithwood's model assumes that the principal shares leadership with teachers and the model is grounded not on controlling or coordinating others, but instead on providing individual support, intellectual stimulation, and personal vision.

Leithwood et al. (1999) provides a synthesis of 34 published and unpublished empirical and formal case studies conducted in elementary and secondary schools up to about 1995. Twenty-one of the 34 studies relate to specific dimensions of transformational leadership in schools; six of these are qualitative and 15 are quantitative studies. Evidence about the effects of leadership are provided by 20 of the 34 studies and include the effects on students; effects on perceptions of leaders; effects on behavior of followers; effects on followers' psychological states; and organization-level effects. Based on data from school principals, it was observed that transformational leaders are in a continuous pursuit of three goals: helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative; professional school culture; fostering teacher development; and helping teachers solve problems together more effectively. Transformational leadership influenced four psychological states of those who experienced such leadership, the states being: commitment; developmental press (changes in teachers' attitudes and/or behavior); control press (the tendency for teachers to feel that they must adhere to central demands for orderliness and structure); and satisfaction" (p.34). Leithwood et al. (1999) concludes that "transformational leadership practices were helpful in fostering organizational learning; in particular, vision building, individual support, intellectual stimulation, modelling, culture building and holding high performance expectations" (p. 37).

### **Transformational Leadership Model by Liethwood: A Critique**

Despite the abundance of research conducted by Leithwood and his colleagues, there remain many unanswered questions and undeveloped ideas. While the studies are relevant and useful, there is little evidence that these studies actually affect the practices of school leaders, or influence how we prepare our future school leaders. Evers & Lakomski (1996) argue that leadership, as it is conceptualized in the literature, is not helpful in meeting the challenges of the current educational system. They suggest that

Leithwood's components of effective leadership fall short of their promise. Evers and Lakomski agree that, "Schools can be thought of as being made up of intricate nets of complex interrelationships that criss-cross formal positions of authority and power and carry knowledge and expertise in all directions, not just downwards as suggested by [TF] leadership" (p. 72). They suggest that transformational (TF) models rely too heavily on the transformational skills of the leader; instead, the organization should develop feedback loops to learn from its mistakes. Evers and Lakomski add, "If there is no principled way of telling one leader behavior from another, then any claim to have empirically identified transformational leadership effects is not justified. In the absence of justification, however, claims to leadership are nothing more than personal belief or opinion, which does not carry any empirical status, no matter how many empirical studies are conducted" (p. 79).

Central to their argument is the fact that Leithwood and Bass relied too heavily on the use of questionnaires in their research. These measures, Evers and Lakomski (2000) argue, are inappropriate because substantive knowledge of transformational leadership does not exist. Furthermore, the questionnaire measures reveal the respondents implicitly held theories, not their cognitive structure. They further note that the instruments are artifacts of methodology, instead of scientific accounts of empirical phenomena and that, "the application of quantitative methodology to measure transformational leadership is inappropriate" (p. 80). They suggest that the unpredictable nature of transformational leadership makes it impossible to generate a cause and effect relationship. Furthermore, different times and situations elicit different forms of leadership and different responses which cannot be picked out by surveys and questionnaires. Evers and Lakomski (2003) also point towards the subjectivity of people's interpretations of surveys. The model supports the construct (e.g., transformational leadership) in terms of observable behaviors gathered by MLQ. In turn, the data is analyzed in terms of correlations, regularities and patterns that further confirm and support the original model. Evers and Lakomski suggest this is a "false sense of theory which guides our observations in the theory's terminology although we know it to be false" (p. 68).

### **Is there a dark side to Transformational Leadership?**

The morality of transformational leadership too has come under sharp criticism. Gronn (1995) charges transformational leadership with being paternalistic, gender exclusive, exaggerated, having aristocratic pretensions and social-class bias, as well as having an eccentric conception of human agency and causality. Gronn outlines numerous shortcomings of transformational leadership: a lack of empirically documented case examples of transformational leaders; a narrow methodological base; no causal connection between leadership and desired organizational outcomes; and the unresolved question as to whether leadership is learnable. The critics have suggested five arguments against its ethicalness. First of all, they believe that because transformational leadership uses impression management, it lends itself to amoral ‘puffery’ (Synder, 1987). Secondly, they consider it as antagonistic to organizational learning and development that involves shared leadership, equality, consensus and decision-making (Mc Kendall, 1993). Thirdly, they believe that it encourages followers to go beyond their own self-interests for the good of the organization, and therefore, engage them irrationally in pursuits of evil ends contrary to the followers’ best interests (Stevens, D’ Intino, & Victor, 1996). Fourthly, they regard it as a leadership that manipulates followers and in effect, causes them to lose more than they gain (White & Wooten, 1986). Finally, they suggest that transformational leadership lacks the checks and balances of countervailing interests, influences and power in order to avoid dictatorship and oppression of a minority by a majority (Keeley, 1995).

Bass and Steidlmeier (1998), however, maintain that these critics fail to see the positive aspects of transformational leadership. Rather than being unethical, authentic transformational leaders identify the core values and unifying purposes of the organization and its members, liberate their potential and foster a pluralistic leadership and satisfied followers (p.18).

In a collaborative school environment the staff members often talk, observe, critique, and plan together. The norms of collective responsibility and continuous improvement encourage staff to teach one another and, as a result, learn how to teach better. Some of the strategies used by leaders to build and maintain collaborative school

cultures include involving the staff members with setting goals and reducing teachers' isolation. In order to support cultural changes, they use bureaucratic mechanisms such as selecting new staff members who are already committed to the school's mission and priorities (Leithwood, 1992). The school leaders are therefore, responsible for actively communicating the school's cultural values, norms and beliefs and sharing leadership with others by delegating power to specific school improvement teams (Liontos, 1992).

**Is a merger between instructional and transformational models possible?**

Lately, a broad reading of literature (Hallinger, 2001; Southworth, 2002) suggest that there is a more discernable emphasis on instructional leadership in the schools. The principals are increasingly accepting more responsibility for instructional leadership regardless of whether or not they feel competent to perform it .When the principal takes on the challenges of going beyond the basic demands of the job, the burden becomes even heavier. This point was captured by Lambert (2000) who contends that, 'the days of the lone instructional leader are over. We no longer believe that one administrative leader can serve as the instructional leader for the entire school without the substantial participation of other educators (p. 37). While several of the researchers have deliberated on the possibility of a merger between these two approaches of leadership models, the study by Marks and Printy (2003) suggests that strong transformational leadership by the principal is essential in supporting the commitment of the teachers. Because teachers themselves can be barriers to the development of teacher leadership, transformational principals are needed to invite teachers to share leadership functions. When teachers perceive the principals' instructional leadership behaviors to be appropriate, they grow in commitment, professional involvement, and willingness to innovate (Sheppard, 1996). Thus instructional leadership can itself be transformational. For long term sustained improvement in a school, the

**Table 1: Comparison of Instructional and transformational Leadership Models**

Adapted from Hallinger & Murphy, 1985 and Leithwood, et al., 1998

Instructional leadership	Transformational leadership	Remarks
Articulate and communicate clear school goals	Clear vision Shared school goals	IL model emphasizes clarity and shared nature of organizational goals set by the principal with community. TL model emphasizes linkage between personal goals and shared goals.
Coordinate curriculum Supervise and evaluate instruction Monitor students program Protect instructional time		No equivalent elements for these coordination and control functions are found in the TL model. TL model assumes “others” will carry these out as functions of their roles.
High expectations	High expectations	
Provide incentives for learners Provide incentives for teachers	Rewards	Similar focus on ensuring that rewards are aligned with the mission of the school.
Provide professional development for teachers	Intellectual stimulation	IL model focuses on training and development aligned to school mission. TL model views personal and professional growth broadly. Need not be tightly linked to school goals.
High visibility	Modeling	Essentially the same purposes. Principal maintains high visibility in order to model school values and priorities
	Culture building	IL model also focuses on culture building but subsumed within the school climate dimension

teaching staff has to assume increasing levels of ownership and distributive leadership has to be a norm rather than an exception in the school context.

The question whether the findings by Marks and Printy (2003) can be replicated by others is a different issue but what can be assumed is that the points of connection between the models as shown in Table 1 are sufficient enough to allow development of an integrated model of educational leadership. Based on this table the substantive similarities between the models are more significant than the differences. Both the models expect the school principal to focus on creating a shared sense of purpose in the school and developing a school culture based on innovation and improvement of teaching and learning. It is expected of the principal to shape the reward structure of the school, organize and provide a wide range of activities for intellectual stimulation and reflect the school's mission and goals set for staff and students. Also, the principal in both the models is seen as a visible presence in school who models the desired values of the school's culture. The apparent difference, however, lies in the emphasis that a transformational leader gives to individualized support for staff and to build organizational goals from the ground up as compared to the instructional leadership model. At the heart of instructional model too, the final practice of the principal is centered around promoting a positive school learning climate, which includes "protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for learning" (Liethwood, 2005, pp. 8-9). Therefore, the strengths of both the models seem to offer a promising alliance between the two constructs.

The "balanced leadership framework" (Waters, Marzano, and McNulty, 2003) is yet another possibility to be explored in the area of principals' leadership roles. It is based on results of a meta-analysis of the 70 research studies that examine the effects of principal leadership on student achievement. The meta-analysis identified 21 essential leadership responsibilities and 66 associated practices that have a statistically significant effect on student achievement. These responsibilities fall under Leithwood's broad categories of setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization. The underlying concept of the balanced leadership framework is that effective principals need to know "when, how, and why to create learning environments that support people,

connect them with one another, and provide the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to succeed" (Waters, et al., p.2). For instance, hiring experienced and qualified teachers is not what makes a difference in student achievement; it is the collaborative system that the principal, depending on his/her leadership preferences, that he/she structures and nurtures in the school that facilitates the success of such approach. Thus, a principal can balance the equation of instructional and transformational model in his /her actual school practice. The possibilities cannot be refuted.

### **DISCUSSION /IMPLICATIONS**

In the light of the literature review, it may be stated that the instructional leadership model attempts to draw principals' attention back to teaching and learning, and away from the administrative and managerial tasks that continue to consume most principals' time. Yet, the instructional leadership is a foundation and meta-value or key organizer for effective i.e. goal-oriented leadership. Focusing on "transformational leadership" as an end of education may run the risk of pulling the principals away from their priorities as educational leaders fully committed to students' learning outcomes. However, it may also be noted here, that while in small schools, the principal could mentor one on one to build capacity; the large organizations require more indirect ways to have an impact as a leader. For a principal of a secondary or a higher secondary school, the "transformational leadership" processes can be quite appealing as a leadership strategy to coordinate and bring about change and build capacity within individuals. The model is engaging in the sense that it promotes capacity building among individuals and helps coordinate the direction and flow of energy within large groups of professionals as a process oriented organizational development model. Although the concepts and procedures associated with transformational leadership put a premium on identifying and accommodating the needs of individual members, its fundamental aim is the attainment of organizational objectives, not the self-fulfillment of the individual except to the extent that personal self-fulfillment will contribute to better organizational performance.

Based on the findings of research literature reviewed above, it could be assumed that principals, who would take on transformational leadership roles, will work together with teachers, students, parents and the community to raise each other to higher levels of



morality and motivation and successfully achieve educational reform. The implication for the school principals is to increase interdisciplinary interaction within the schools by encouraging input on the part of the faculty members as to how the school might achieve the desired goals. The principals need to build collaborative groups enabling teachers to think in terms of shared problems. The teacher's focus being *my* classroom and *my* students or *my* subject needs to be transformed into *our* school and *our* students and *our* efforts. Demanding greater achievement from students and expecting greater performance from teachers is strongly correlated with demanding more leadership from the principal. The transformational mould allows a lot of experimentation and versatility within the construct to allow a principal to be innovative, progressive and futuristic.

The principal who is a transformational leader would tend to view school improvement through the lenses' of a facilitator who cultivates communication among the community while maintaining focus on students' achievements and providing professional support for the teaching faculty. My understanding of being such a principal myself is to first built up greater expectations amongst teachers regarding their placements, second to oversee that those expectations are translated into students outcomes in the classrooms and third to ensure that educational quality of learning outside the classroom is equally congruent to the school's mission. In either case, a clear vision for the whole school is quintessential followed by the ways and means to realize it. Thus, being transformational would mean having a new vision and translating it into a group vision, building strengths, expecting results, and developing efficient means through the knowledge and opinions of others to achieve it.

Some of the strategies that school principals can adopt based on the findings (Leithwood, Jantzi & Stienbach, 2002; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty; 2005)) could be to involve the teaching faculty in the school to identify school goals, determine key beliefs and set desired targets at the beginning of the academic year, and enable teachers to perform their tasks collaboratively in an environment where there are ample opportunities for self-directed learning and sharing of new ideas. Sharing power or distributive leadership could mean giving everyone responsibilities and involving staff in administrative functions and school improvement programs. Sharing also may be viewed as sharing talent by encouraging teachers to visit one another classes and instead of

calling experts for workshops, make the school self-sufficient by asking experienced teachers to share their teaching experiences with relatively novice teachers. It may also mean being receptive to teachers' attitudes, understanding their perspectives and rewarding their professional development efforts with random acts of kindness like writing small personal notes of appreciations. Having high expectations from the teachers and keeping them focused by reminding them consistently of how much more they are capable of doing is like infecting and reinfecting them with a high level of commitment to the school vision.

### **Conclusion**

In the forthcoming years, it is expected that eclecticism would markedly influence the practical aspects of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership, like any other theoretical paradigm, is a moving target and would continue to be so if it is accompanied by diversity in terms of research methodologies that are adopted to verify its credentials as a valuable and deliverable construct for school improvement. Presently, the principals who are in the process of mapping their leadership strategies and restructuring their school images may find transformational leadership as having a definite advantage for all the stakeholders. It offers an opportunity for principals and teachers of working together, showing each other cooperation and understanding, and enabling them to develop and strengthen their instructional capabilities that have a direct bearing on students' classroom performances. It is also imperative that educational researchers support their theories on transformational leadership with empirical evidence that is grounded in the realities of intact schools instead of business organizations. The future research in this area should also be attuned to the difficulties in measurement of those constructs as outlined in this paper. Moreover, it is equally important to deliberate on the type of school structures we plan for our children in future and to envision how successfully we can apply the tenants of transformational leadership in the context specific settings of such schools.

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