

# The Role of Leadership Style in Creating a Great School

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# The Role of Leadership Style in Creating a Great School

Bradley S. Smith

## Abstract

*School leadership is dynamic and ever-changing. The leadership style employed by school administrators is complex and plays an integral role in developing the culture in a school (Fullan, 2001). A modern way of looking at leadership is through a transformational lens. This leadership style requires dedication from the principal and plays an integral role in developing a great school culture (Balyer, 2012). Leaders must also have a foundation of transactional leadership skills before perfecting the art of transformational leadership (Bass, 1997). The principal must skillfully balance the management of the school with building relationships of trust and caring through an inspirational, people first approach. A strong vision, directly related to student learning, must be imbedded within these leadership approaches in order to take a mediocre school to greatness (Healy, 2009). An integrated leadership model that encompasses behaviors from transformational, transactional, inspirational, and instructional leadership styles can provide positive school based leadership. There is evidence that an integrated leadership approach has beneficial effects on both teacher job satisfaction and overall student achievement (Menon, 2014).*

Hoy and Smith (2007) theorized that, the single most important factor in school effectiveness is the principal. This statement depicts the need for leaders to recognize their leadership style and have an understanding of how vastly important it is to the overall effectiveness of their school. The leadership styles that are predominantly enacted by school administrators play an integral role in the functioning of all aspects of a school.

Leadership is a concept that has been widely studied and researched across a variety of domains including both the business and educational worlds. Cezmi Savas and Toprak (2014) stated, "Leadership is known as an effort that directs organizational activities to achieve a common goal" (p. 173). With the ever-changing educational landscape, principals must incorporate a wide range of leadership skills and styles in order to direct their school organization towards common goals and a well-directed vision.

In recent years the role of the principal has changed and there is a greater emphasis on shared decision making and professional learning communities (Dufour, 1998). The organizational structure has shifted to a more open and democratic model. As Valentine and Prater (2011) stated, "[t]he principal's role has become increasingly complex as the nature of society, political expectations, and schools as organizations have changed. The predominant role enacted by principals from the 1920s until the 1970s was one of administrative manager" (p. 5). Understanding the role of collaboration is essential in implementing change and transformational principals who are knowledgeable and skilled in this area are best equipped to address change (Marks & Nance, 2007). Kurland, Peretz, and Hertz-Lazarowitz (2010) found that high functioning schools were found to have transformational principals who shaped the school vision and established a collegial culture that fostered teacher empowerment. Shifting the emphasis from the supervisor being the sole decision maker to an increase in teacher involvement promoted reflection and positive change among teachers.

Commitment is one of the areas that leaders must focus on most because committed teachers demonstrate greater effort and involvement in their jobs and are less likely to leave their positions or display withdrawal behaviors (Hulpia & Devos, 2010). Teachers' job satisfaction and commitment to their work is directly related to the leadership style employed by their principal (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Developing a faculty in which teachers are whole heartedly committed to their work and the school vision has a definite impact on school effectiveness.

Transactional, transformational, inspirational, and instructional leadership styles are present in some way in most leaders, but rarely are they found to be exclusive. Bass and Avolio (1994) believed that transactional and transformational leadership are not dichotomous. They postulated that many of the managerial characteristics of transactional leadership must be present before transformational attributes can emerge. Bass (1997) proposed that elements of both transactional and transformational leadership were present in effective leaders.

The goal of all school leaders should be to lead in a manner that enables students, teachers, parents, and community to truly feel that they are an essential part of a great school culture. In order to achieve this goal, administrators must have an understanding of transformational, transactional, instructional, and inspirational leadership styles and how they can function together to create an integrated leadership model.

## Purpose

The purpose of this study was to analyze the role that the leadership style of school administration has on overall school effectiveness, including school culture, student learning, and teacher satisfaction. A review of these three critical components of educational effectiveness will support the development of a framework that will demonstrate the immense importance of the role of the principal.

## Research Questions

1. What role does the leadership style of school administration play in the creation of a positive school culture?
2. How does leadership style impact student learning and achievement?
3. How does leadership style affect the perceived job satisfaction and effectiveness of teachers?
4. How can transformational, transactional, inspirational, and instructional leadership models work together to form an effective integrated leadership model?

## Methods

I gathered data through an in-depth analysis of current scholarly articles. For this study, I searched a variety of education related databases to find relevant, peer-reviewed articles, journals, and books. This literature review focused on transformational, transactional, inspirational, and instructional leadership styles and the role that these styles play in the development of an integrated leadership model in order to create a positive school culture, enhance organizational effectiveness, and increase teacher satisfaction. The key terms that were searched in this study were transformational, transactional, inspirational, and instructional leadership, school culture, school effectiveness, and teacher satisfaction. As this project was a meta-synthesis of current scholarly articles, no further ethical considerations were required.

## Leadership Styles

There are a variety of philosophies and theories surrounding leadership styles in education. The four leadership styles that will be highlighted in this paper form the foundation for an integrated leadership

model that can potentially have an impact on the creation of a high performing school. These leadership styles are transformational, transactional, instructional, and inspirational.

### Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has been found to have positive effects on school and organizational conditions. Northouse (2001) defined transformational leadership as the ability to get people to want to change, improve, and be led. Though this is the simplest of definitions, it encompasses the idea that this style of leadership helps to assess individual motives, satisfy organizational members' needs, and value them. Burns (1978) described transformational leadership as a way to satisfy followers' needs and to support followers in moving toward a higher level of work performance; this type of leadership also promotes organizational involvement through a work environment where respect is displayed and participation is encouraged. The current emphasis on school change means that successful educational leaders need to develop a deeper understanding of working within a school environment (Whitaker, 2003a). This knowledge is essential because effective leaders are considered critical to the quality of teachers' work and student learning.

**Key considerations of transformational leadership.** There are several key considerations that form the foundation of transformational leadership. First, the leader does not seek to maintain existing systems and practices. Leaders are willing to take risks in order to provide a stimulus for change and innovation (Bass & Avolio, 1994). This approach underlies a principle understanding that change is a vital part of an organization and thus plays an integral role in successful leadership. As Fullan (2001) discussed, the more complex society becomes, the more sophisticated and ever-changing leadership must become.

Second, strong transformational leaders manage to motivate followers to achieve more than originally planned and create a supportive organizational climate where individual needs and differences are both acknowledged and respected (Bass, 1998). This respectful and motivational environment is a key factor in increasing productivity and in creating a sense of value and support amongst staff. Another important function of transformational leadership is that goals are shared, whereby both leaders and followers focus on the common good and commit to the organization's mission and values (Menon, 2014). This shared commitment leads to openness and trust in the organizational climate as members learn to transcend self-interest for the sake of the organization.

Transformational leaders have distinct traits that show a genuine respect and care for their followers. Transformational leaders pursue new ways of doing things and are less likely to support the status quo (Bass, 1998). They attempt to create and shape an environment and encourage their followers to be a part of the success. Transformational leaders have characteristics of charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass, 1998). By leading in this way, they ultimately increase organizational members' commitment, capacity, and engagement in meeting goals (Bass & Avolio, 1994). These fundamental character traits are common amongst transformational leaders.

**Basic functions of transformational leadership.** According to Balyer (2012), there are three basic functions of transformational leadership. First, this style of leader sincerely serves the needs of others and inspires and empowers followers to achieve great success. Second, they charismatically lead, set a vision, and instill trust, confidence, and pride in working with them. Third, they offer intellectual stimulation to their followers. This stimulation will cause the school to become collectively empowered. As a result, the school becomes less bureaucratic and it becomes its own agent for change. The school becomes empowered to act as a collective unit (Balyer, 2012).

If leadership is seen as a process of interaction between leaders and followers whereby a leader tries to influence followers' behaviors to accomplish organizational goals, then leaders must gain support for change by creating a compelling vision for the organization and motivating the school community to achieve this vision (Bass, 1997). Because of its complexity and dynamic nature, leadership plays an integral role in building a successful school culture through vision and openness to change. Transformational leaders are not intimidated by change and lead in a manner that supports organizational change and supports those who are willing to try new things.

Another important aspect of transformational leadership is that it has characteristics of shared and distributed leadership. Offering followers genuine leadership opportunities to engage in the schools' leadership processes offers a sense of responsibility and a mutual respect that ultimately leads to an increase in job satisfaction (Balyer, 2012). Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) pointed out that transformational leadership does not assume that the principal will be the sole source of leadership in the organization, principal's share leadership with teachers and other stakeholders. According to Hoy and Smith (2007), transformational leadership enacted by a principal increases student efficacy because the principal encourages students to participate in decisions or provide feedback. Shared leadership has an empowering effect on both teachers and students.

### Transactional Leadership.

A transactional leader is one who operates within a defined system and follows its rules (Bass, 1997). Control is maintained through process. Transactional leadership appeals to an individual's self-interest and is mainly an exchange process. Transactional leaders try to maintain existing structure of organizations (Bass, 1997). They do this by giving contingent rewards and by rewarding or punishing based on performance or proficiencies. Followers are praised or punished in order to meet the organizational goals set out by the leader.

**Dimensions of transactional leadership.** Bass and Riggio (2006) defined the dimensions of transactional leadership. The first dimension is based on contingent reward. The primary aim of a transactional leader is to achieve organizational objectives. The leader gives various rewards to improve the performance and motivations of followers, who can get the award while fulfilling the mandate. The second dimension is defined as management-by-exception. This dimension can be applied in two ways, active or passive. In the case of active leaders, they will correct the mistakes of followers by tracking their performance. However, if the leader follows a more passive approach, they will wait for the emergence of errors before making corrections. Transactional leaders will follow performance and when problems arise, take actions to correct the problems.

### Instructional Leadership

A school vision that is concentrated on student learning is an important element of instructional leadership (Robinson, 2011). School based administrators must work directly with teachers to ensure continual improvement and best practice in their teaching. "Student-centered leadership requires direct involvement with teachers in the business of improving teaching and learning" (Robinson, 2011, p. 22). Through teacher assessments, informal conversations, and guided learning opportunities, principals can have great influence in leading instructional practices in their schools.

It is imperative that school leaders have a student-centered vision for their school. Instructional leaders place an emphasis on student learning in their daily work and they are guided by this vision. Revisiting the school vision should be a yearly task in which input from all stakeholders including teachers, students, parents and community members, is taken into account. As Healy (2009) stated, "taking a school from mediocre to great requires a leader who has a vision and is focused on that vision" (p. 30). Most importantly school vision must be directly related to student learning and the pursuit of finding ways to improve learning in the school. "Achieving the vision requires their work to be deeply informed by knowledge of how to improve learning and teaching. That is why we must put education back into educational leadership" (Robinson, 2011, p. 155). Too often the urgent issue takes priority over the important ones, which is why principals often feel that they spend too much time working on administration, budget, and other school problems and not enough time working with teachers on instructional issues (Southworth, 2003).

No matter the leadership style that administrators employ, they must put student learning and achievement at the forefront of any decision that they make. Lemoine and Greer (2014) stated that, "[w]ithout the involved direction of the principal, the faculty of schools will never accomplish the task of meeting the needs of students and helping them progress" (p. 20). These decisions may not always be the easiest ones, but maximizing student learning is essential.

The integration of leadership models will provide the most effective system in schools (Menon, 2014). Although transformational leadership has proven to be a dynamic and effective leadership style in schools, it is not enough to solely use this approach. Menon (2014) suggested that “transformational leadership practices are not sufficient for effectiveness unless they are combined with additional leadership behaviors such as those linked to instructional leadership” (p. 524). Becoming an instructional leader requires leaders who are competent, confident, and qualified to aid teachers in their journey to improve their instructional strategies. As Fink and Resnick (2001) stated, “[m]ost principals spend relatively little time in classrooms and even less analyzing instruction with teachers” (p. 1). Instructional leadership requires that principals spend time with teachers and find ways to improve their teaching practices.

### Inspirational Leadership.

Inspirational leadership is a relatively new leadership model that places the leader in a position to accept and encourage chaos through a one-soul at a time inspirational approach. Inspirational leaders continually reinvent, adapt, and are ever-changing (Secretan, 1999). The difference between “old style” leadership and “new style” inspirational leadership is similar to the difference between order and chaos. Old style leadership looked to create system wide motivation to create system wide behavior. Old style leaders gained control by creating order, establishing rules, and defining goals and outcomes. The organization was viewed as a machine that could be influenced by group motivation and the individual was not recognized (Secretan, 1999).

Secretan (1999) acknowledged the need for a systemic change in which leaders dealt with their followers. He acknowledged that a change was necessary and that old style leadership caused several negative attitudes that had a negative effect on the efficiencies of an organization and workplace. Secretan established that, in organizations led by old style leaders, there was a lack of trust among co-workers, no spiritual nourishment being found at work, excessive bureaucracy at all levels of leadership, unhappy relationships between workers and management, and lack of sufficient information to do work. Additionally, over half of all workers did not look forward to going to work on Monday morning. The effect of this style of leadership was a lack of positive staff perceptions of their leaders, thus promoting a negative overall climate in the workplace.

Employees desire leaders who genuinely care and are committed to their well-being. Kouzes and Posner (2007) stated “[l]eaders who recognize and celebrate significant accomplishments who encourage the heart show inspiration and positive energy, which increases their constituents understanding of the commitment to the vision and values” (p. 31). Employees crave to know if management cares, if they have a secure job, how they can achieve greater meaning and fulfillment from their work, if they are being told the truth, if their leaders are compassionate and respectful, and if their contribution matters (Secretan, 1999). Inspirational leaders are able to provide answers to these questions by inspiring people one soul at a time.

**Attributes of inspirational leadership.** Secretan (1999) hypothesized that there are four essential attributes that are necessary for practicing inspirational leadership. The first attribute is courage. This attribute is essential because with inspirational leadership there are so many perceived risks in the first steps. Taking the journey into this leadership style makes individuals afraid of how they will be judged and that their personalities might be muted. Inspirational leaders must have courage in order to overcome their ego and find the way into their soul. They need to listen to their soul in order to get the will to change and make positive steps. It is courage that gives inspirational leaders the will to do what is necessary for change to take place in their leadership style (Secretan, 1999).

The second essential attribute is love. It is important for inspirational leaders to check on how people are doing. Leaders need to genuinely care about those around them and to care as much about the employees’ spiritual and emotional well-being as they do about them professionally. An essential skill is to not just check up on tasks, but to have a genuine love for an employee as a whole being (Secretan, 1999).



The third attribute that is critical for inspirational leaders is authenticity. It is important to be real and speak the truth. This type of leadership requires alignment of the heart with the mouth and the mind. Teachers must feel that they have a true meaning and purpose in life. Leaders who communicate genuinely in their words and the way they act will help employees find this meaning and purpose (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). It is important to share both fears and successes. Inspirational leaders are people with high integrity who say and do what they mean. In order to be successful in their calling, inspirational leaders must commit to being consistent, dependable, transparent, steady, loyal, and reliable (Secretan, 1999).

Last, Secretan (1999) believed that grace was an essential component of inspirational leadership. Simply stated, having grace means to love and to be loved. Inspirational leaders must be able to love those around them and be loved back. This attribute seems like a common trait among human beings, but it is completely necessary for those striving to truly inspire those around them.

Effective leadership functions as a two-way street. What leaders put into their avocation is what they will get back. Many leaders become focused on their own needs and become blind to the needs of others (Secretan, 1999). Self-focused leaders spend time motivating others in order to meet their goals. Selfish behavior does not inspire. It causes people to feel used, alienated, and ignored. Self-focused leaders send signals that the needs of others are secondary to theirs, which causes resentment (Secretan, as cited by Smith, n.d.<sup>1</sup>). The role of the leader is to engage people in what is important to them and to serve them. A leader is a therapist, mentor, teacher, guide, friend, role-model, and counsellor all rolled into one (Secretan, as cited by Smith, n.d.<sup>1</sup>). Leaders need to remove the mask and be real human beings who relate to other human beings at a level that really matters (Secretan, as cited by Smith, n.d.<sup>1</sup>). Inspirational leaders become involved in the personal lives of their employees.

Another important aspect of leadership is the physical environment in which we work. It must be more than just functional; it must be fun, playful, and entertaining. We must give the message that the school is a safe and caring place (Secretan, 1999).

The journey of leadership and life is a collection of moments. Secretan (1999), commented that effective leaders always enjoy the journey as much as the arrival. Leadership is about human experiences, not processes. It is not a formula or a program. It is a human activity that comes from the heart and considers the heart of others. It is an attitude, not a routine (Secretan, as cited by Smith, n.d.<sup>1</sup>).

Inspirational leaders inspire others sometimes by doing, but more often by refraining from doing. They encourage their followers to fully utilize the power that lies within them. Kouzes and Posner (2007) stated, "[t]o get extraordinary things done in extraordinary times, leaders must inspire optimal performance and that can only be fueled with positive emotions" (p. 35). The real job of the leader is to make it easy for the follower to develop and implement a brilliant strategy. One of the most important tasks of the inspirational leader is to get out of the way. Inspirational leaders empower and enable. They help release the music that lies within (Secretan, as cited by Smith, n.d.<sup>1</sup>).

## Comparing Transformational and Transactional Leadership Styles

A comparative study by Hauserman and Stick (2013) analyzed the difference in teachers' feelings and perceptions when governed by a transformational versus a transactional leader. They found that teachers who worked in schools with highly transformational principals could not report enough positives about their principals. Teachers with low transformational, high transactional principals had the greatest difficulty responding with examples or comments in the category of intellectual stimulation.

In their research, Hauserman and Stick (2013) found that principals in the lower end of the transformational leadership scale put a small amount of focus on leadership development and staff were excluded from participation in leadership. They also found that highly transformational principals were more open to shared leadership and collaboration. "Highly transformational principals helped to develop the leadership capacity of all staff members, and teachers were given opportunities to share their leadership

skills” (Hauserman & Stick, 2013, p. 193). These principals worked collaboratively with staff to increase the level of personal and school support and to create a constant vision. When policy or progress questions arose, they sought to involve the persons affected. It was evident through the research that personal growth was deemed a priority for these leaders.

In contrast, Hauserman and Stick (2013) found that principals on the lower end of the transformational spectrum and higher end of the transactional spectrum sought teacher input at times, but overall staff consultation was limited. This lack of consultation created difficulties as staff were often viewed as having little influence when it came to student issues. The lack of involvement from the teachers contributed to negative feelings toward the school and principal. Low transformative principals had limited accountability for staff members and were often hesitant to change. They did not make problem solving a priority leaving this area often neglected. Teachers who worked with low transformational principals became frustrated with the behaviors and had negative feelings about the organizational structure of the school.

Another critical viewpoint from Hauserman and Stick (2013) was that highly transformative principals helped teachers with problems and encouraged reflection. It was apparent that collaboration was the norm and seen as important. Teachers directly impacted by decisions were involved in the decision making process and could give a genuine opinion on the topic. A key finding in this research was the principals were viewed as colleagues and not bosses. They continually dealt with matters in an ethical manner and inspired a high level of trust in their co-workers. Those in the high end of transformational leadership emphasized teamwork and collegiality. Controversial issues were dealt with in an open atmosphere. They were an inspiration to teachers. They served as good role models and focused on doing the right things for the right reasons (Hauserman & Stick, 2013).

Hauserman and Stick (2013) found that transformational leaders developed reflective practitioners on their staff. They made it a consistent part of their work to ask questions and encourage reflection on a daily basis. They were seen by their staff as being extremely visionary (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). The majority of problem solving took place through a collaborative approach. It was because of these “people first” approaches that the majority of teachers enjoyed working with them. They were viewed as effective disciplinarians who made students responsible for their actions. This approach promoted a sense of accountability amongst students in their schools (Hauserman & Stick, 2013).

According to Hauserman and Stick (2013) transformational leaders were role models who stressed collaboration. They encouraged leadership in staff through distributed leadership. They supported teacher instruction by providing resources. They prided themselves on being respectful and considerate of staff and thus were trusted and viewed as professionals. However, the traits of transactional leadership styles help to create an important leadership framework. Bass (1997) claimed that transactional leadership styles were foundational to the development of transformational leadership skills. Smith and Bell (2011) found that principals use both transactional and transformational leadership, but it was the transformational leadership that brought about the greatest school improvements. Hauserman and Stick (2013) found that transactional leadership has limited potential for success, while transformational leadership is deemed to lead to favorable long-term performance. Transformative leaders had a huge impact on the positive organizational culture of their school.

### The Effect of Leadership Style on School Culture

Leadership plays an integral role in building positive school culture. When you step into a school, the culture of the school is immediately evident and is a major indicator of the efficiency of the school. “Organizational culture is the culture that exists in an organization, something akin to a societal culture. It is composed of many intangible phenomena, such as values, beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, behavioral norms, artifacts, and patterns of behavior” (Schein as cited in Shafritz, Ott, & Yang, 2011, p. 338). School leaders are critical in guiding these values, beliefs and behaviors of their school.

Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) believed that there are seven dimensions of leadership in schools that contribute to the overall culture and effectiveness of the school. These include the construction of a school vision and establishing school goals, providing intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support, modeling best practice and organizational values, setting high academic standard expectations, creating a productive school culture, and fostering participation in decisions. Each of these dimensions has traits rooted directly to transformational, transactional, inspirational, and instructional leadership. By implementing an integrated leadership model each of these dimensions would be addressed and overall school culture improvement would become a priority.

### Importance of Student Learning on School Culture

It has become increasingly apparent that great schools are built upon a philosophy and vision that puts students at the forefront. "In schools where students achieve at higher than expected levels, leaders are much more focused on improvement of teaching and learning than in similar schools where students perform at lower than expected levels" (Robinson, 2011, p. 18). Leaders must place high levels of expectation upon both the students and staff in their schools.

Quality leadership sees the inherent value in instructional time and ensures that teachers understand that this is their main concern. "Great schools know that their teachers and students are too important to be an experiment. Mediocre schools allow outsiders to work out the problems and frustrations of new programs on their school community" (Healey, 2009, p. 33). It is the job of school administrators to support and protect their staff. Staff perception of job satisfaction and the feeling of support is increased when leaders show a genuine concern for teacher time and workload.

### The Importance of Change on School Culture

Constant timely change is vital to the survival of any modern day organization. In education, we are constantly looking for better ways to do things and to meet the needs of our students. A positive school culture and an openness to change contribute greatly to the organizational effectiveness of a school (Fullan, 2001). An essential attribute of effective leadership is the ability to lead through a culture of change (Fullan, 2001). One of the major issues facing our schools today is that of educational reform. In order to find better ways to do things, transformational leaders continually challenge their staff to look at the way things have been done and try to find a better way to do things.

One of the methods that many transformational leaders implement in this regard is to increase the diversity of the workforce and allow for more of a collaborative approach to education, which will in turn empower those within the walls of the institution (Martin, 2002). Educational reform is changing the culture in our school in a positive manner as seen in the ideals of professional learning communities and the focus on formative assessment.

Functionalist studies of culture offer the promise to the delight of many managers that a 'strong' culture (one that generates much consensus among employees of an organization) will lead to outcomes most top executives desire to maximize, such as greater productivity and profitability. (Martin, 2002, p. 361)

This statement identifies the significant role that leaders play in ensuring a positive school culture. Creating a strong culture that embraces change will ultimately lead to an improvement in the overall goal of all educational institutions, an increase in student engagement and learning.

### Relationships and School Culture

Another important aspect with regard to the relationship between leadership style and building a great school culture is the enthusiasm, energy, and charisma that a principal brings to the school. As Lemoine and Greer (2014) stated, "[w]hen principals are enthused and excited about their schools, generally, they are helping students, faculty, and staff become more involved in translating the vision and goals" (p. 20). School faculty often respond to the positive energy of the leader and are more likely to contribute to the positive culture in the school.

An essential theory in modern day educational organizations is that of Human Resource Theory. Transformational leaders tend to lead with this theory in mind. "Those who see organizations through the 'lenses' of the organizational behavior perspective focus on people, groups, and the relationships among them and the organizational environment" (Shafritz et al., 2011, p. 149). Today's educational organization landscape relies heavily on these theories. It is important for leaders to have a general understanding in Human Resource Theory in order to take into account of the needs of those whom they employ. A lack of understanding in this area can cause much dissension and strain on the organization. Building strong relationships with all members of the learning community takes time. "The best administrators spend an intense amount of time developing, improving, and investing in relationships" (Rieg & Marcoline, 2008, p. 3). Leaders who understand the importance of relationship building within the Human Resource Theory will be able to contribute to a great school culture with ease.

## Effect of Leadership Style on Teacher's Job Satisfaction

Leadership is critical in creating a school culture in which teachers are satisfied with their job. Followers who are led by transformational leaders have been known to be more driven, motivated, and find more joy in their work (Menon, 2014). As Hauserman and Stick (2013) discussed, teacher perception of highly transformational principals resulted in teachers being happier with the school leadership and more willing to put greater effort into their jobs.

### Communication with Teachers

An essential leadership trait that is integral for leader success is communication. It is critical to have an open line of communication so that teachers feel supported and that their voice is heard. When teachers are not listened to there is a feeling of dissatisfaction, frustration and tension that in turn causes a toxic atmosphere (Healey, 2009). Highly effective leaders make effective communication a priority and ensure that teachers are comfortable in having courageous conversations about their practice. Transformational leaders place communication at the forefront of their leadership practices, thus making their teachers comfortable with courageous conversations.

### Leading Change

As noted previously, the ability to effectively instill change is another fundamental role of transformational leadership. Leaders must have the ability to collaboratively work with their staff in order to develop a culture of reflective practitioners who embrace change through a purposeful and meaningful lens. Healy (2009) stated:

In mediocre schools, change comes as a knee-jerk reaction or in a top down approach that is forced upon the faculty. In great schools, change is a grassroots effort that is started by faculty members who want to make a difference. (p. 33)

Empowering staff to be change agents has a powerful effect on school culture. A shared leadership approach in which teachers have a genuine say in the change that occurs is a critical component of great school cultures.

Transformational leaders encourage their followers to innovate and try new things. They support the efforts of teachers to think outside of the box. "Mediocre schools find ways to stifle creative new ideas. Great schools find avenues to promote innovation in student learning" (Healey, 2009, p. 32). Leaders promote creative thinking and give their teachers fruitful opportunities to grow and change, that ultimately translate into increased student learning and achievement.

Menon (2014) hypothesized that transformational leadership will result in perceived effectiveness and satisfaction on the part of the followers. Transformational leadership is most likely to have a direct impact on organizational processes that are associated with employee practices, motivation, and satisfaction, which in turn are linked to the quality of service offered and the overall performance of the organization. Menon (2014) found that there is a significant link between job satisfaction and school leadership

and that in situations of high overall job satisfaction, teachers are able to identify both transformational and transactional qualities in their principals.

Appreciative inquiry is a revolutionary idea that should be regarded by leaders as an integral method in their leadership repertoire. Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) defined appreciative inquiry with the following: "a radically affirmative approach to change that completely lets go of problem-based management and in so doing vitally transforms strategic planning, survey methods, culture change, merger integration method" (p. 397). By implementing this approach, leaders will increase the use of inquiry, imagination, and innovation in their school, which will ultimately lead to their staff continually questioning their practices and finding ways to do things better. The increased commitment of employees and an improved morale are just a few of the positive results that leaders will gain by taking an appreciative inquiry approach when they are striving for cultural change within their organization.

Searching for ways to improve is a job that all principals will tackle on a daily basis. Fullan (2001) noted that when a successful initiative has been implemented, there will be a marked improvement in relationships. Teacher satisfaction will increase if relationships improve and if they get worse, ground is ultimately lost. "Leaders must be consummate relationship builders with diverse people and groups – especially with people different from themselves. Effective leaders constantly foster purposeful interaction and problem solving, and are wary of easy consensus" (Fullan, 2001, p. 5).

### Leading by Example

School administrators must lead by example and gain respect from their staff in order to gain optimal performance within their schools. Teachers desire leaders who have a proven track record and have demonstrated proficiency and accomplishments. "When employees perceive their manager as influential upward and outward, their status is enhanced by association and they generally have high morale and feel less critical or resistant to their boss" (Moss Kanter, 1979, p. 320). School systems are much more effective when leaders are viewed as being personable.

Leaders who are positive, collaborative, flexible, adaptive, and creative are more highly regarded than those who try and take on all of the power themselves. "By empowering others, a leader does not decrease his power; instead he may increase it-especially if the whole organization performs better" (Moss Kanter, 1979, p. 328). It is evident in all levels of education that leaders who take the structured policies or strategic plans and allow their staff to have a say in the decision making process and take ownership, will gain a great deal of respect, thus increasing the positive culture in their schools.

"Effective leaders make people feel that even the most difficult problems can be tackled productively. They are always hopeful, conveying a sense of optimism and an attitude of never giving up in the pursuit of highly valued goals" (Fullan, 2001, p. 7). It is this attitude that is contagious and will ultimately assist in developing a culture of greatness. The principal plays a major role in the daily interactions within their school and the culture that they desire to create. "When the principal sneezes, the whole school catches a cold. If we have great credibility and good relationships, people work to please us" (Whitaker, 2003b, p. 30).

## Effect of Leadership Style on Student Learning

Leadership style has been found to have direct effect on school, program and instruction, and student outcomes (Menon, 2014). Great schools are built on the premise that student learning and success are the foundational basis for each decision. However, often in the busy daily happenings in a school it is easy to fall back on what is most convenient. It can be easy for administrators and teachers to fall into a pattern of finding the easiest and quickest ways to do things. "Mediocre schools make decisions based on what is convenient for secretaries and administrators. Great schools make decisions that maximize and guard instructional time" (Healey, 2009, p. 31). When things get hectic in a school it can be easy to defer to what has worked in the past or what is comfortable to the leader. It is critical that leaders make a conscious effort to not operate under the motto of this is how we have always done it. Instead they must

strive to make decisions that are best for student achievement (Healey, 2009). Students embrace leaders who genuinely care about them and their education.

There has been found to be a direct link between transformational leadership style and the learning of students. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2003) determined that many aspects of transformational leadership positively correlated with improved student achievement. Leadership style is affected by teacher motivation, which has been a major contributor to this improvement. Eval and Roth (2011) established that leadership style is a significant factor in the motivation of teachers. Hauserman and Stick (2013) shared that increased student learning and more committed teachers were associated with principals who demonstrated traits congruent to transformational leadership.

Leaders need to make time to allow teachers to engage in a concerted effort to improve their instructional strategies and leaders should support them through this process. "To address constraints imposed by time, successful leaders begin to focus on building the capacity of their teachers through the use of staff development, in order to create more favorable conditions for learning" (Jacobsen, 2010, p. 35). Lack of time has been identified as a barrier to improving instructional practices. Ensuring that teachers see the importance of instructional focus through time allocated at staff meetings and professional development days is necessary.

## Recommendations and Implications

This analysis of the literature surrounding four pertinent leadership styles has indicated that leadership is most effective when it is implemented in a people first approach. Relationships form the basis of strong leadership and by implementing characteristics of transformational, transactional, inspirational, and instructional leadership styles, school leaders will be able to successfully utilize an integrated model rather than a single model.

There has been immense research on the impact that leadership has on student achievement, school culture, and perceived job satisfaction of teachers. Although this may place additional pressure on administrators, it also places pressure on school divisions to ensure that their leaders are selected appropriately and prepared for the challenges that are presented in school based leadership. Professional development opportunities should be offered for leaders to increase their knowledge and understanding of their role. This could be done explicitly or through collaboration time with colleagues. As leaders feel supported, they will be more willing to step out of their comfort zone and commit to continually improving their practice.

Several implications surfaced with regard to this study. The first is that generally leaders will inherently possess strengths in one leadership style. An integrated model could pose a challenge to those whose personality does not fit within the framework of a particular style. In order for an integrated model to be truly effective, it must be understood that it is not necessary to master each of the styles, rather find the traits in each that fit for each individual.

Another implication is the time restraints on school leaders. School days can be filled with many management issues that are often perceived as priority at the time. Leaders must make a genuine and authentic effort to put the needs of teachers and students at the forefront of their daily work. It is important that leaders take the time to get to know their staff and show a genuine care and concern for them as people and as professionals. It is also essential to put classroom instruction at the forefront on a daily basis. This can be a challenge because of both time and lack of knowledge in this area. School divisions must provide the necessary supports to assist leaders in building up a level of comfort that allows them to truly understand and implement each of the four leadership styles that make up the integrated leadership model.

## Conclusion

Researchers have found that there is a need for integrated models of leadership (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Through an intensive review of leadership literature, it is evident that leadership styles play an integral role in positive educational outcomes and the creation of a positive school culture. Transformational, transactional, inspirational, and instructional leadership styles all have characteristics that are critical in effective leaders and can be effectively integrated in order to maximize the human resource potential of school administration.

Because of its dynamic and ever changing nature, leadership in schools also has a great effect on both teacher satisfaction and student learning. Educators who enjoy their job will have an increased level of organizational commitment, which has a major benefit for students. Leaders who have an integrated people first leadership style and are genuinely committed to the well-being of their staff have the greatest effect on the positive culture in their schools.

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### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Content retrieved from online posting of Smith's review of Inspirational Leadership for EADM 826.3. Retrieved from: [http://keithwalker.ca/wp-content/summaries/g-k/InspirationsI%20Leadership\\_Secretan.EBS.pdf](http://keithwalker.ca/wp-content/summaries/g-k/InspirationsI%20Leadership_Secretan.EBS.pdf)