

Preface

This book is written for practicing and prospective instructional leaders—including principals, assistant principals, lead teachers, department chairpersons, curriculum directors, and staff developers—who want to develop reflective, collaborative, problem-solving contexts for dialogue about instruction. It is about what *successful* instructional leaders do to enhance teaching and learning and the effects that their behaviors have on teachers' performance and well-being.

Disagreement about the essential nature of instructional supervision has existed for well over 100 years. Indeed, the *practice* of instructional supervision has admittedly been plagued by images of control and bureaucratic snooping in classrooms. Power-oriented administrators wielding reductionist algorithms for good teaching have all too often prevailed in learning matters. Conversely, collegiality among educators, teacher empowerment, purposeful inquiry, and encouragement to reflect and experiment—the healthy counterpoints to common practice—too infrequently are found.

Interestingly, we noticed some congruence between the practices of empowering principals we studied in earlier projects and the practices of principals deemed to be effective instructional leaders. Those discoveries led us to mount a comprehensive study of principals' *instructional leadership behaviors* and *their effects on teachers*, the findings of which are reported herein.

We believe this book will illuminate basis elements of effective instructional leadership and describe specifically how it supports both teacher and student learning. Because these elements emerge only after critical review of the behaviors of good leaders and, even more important, study of the effects of those behaviors on teachers and their work, we have included many comments about effects from teachers.

The Handbook of Instructional Leadership: How Successful Principals Promote Teaching and Learning is drawn from a study of more than 800 teachers from public elementary, middle, and high schools in several regions of the United States. We asked these teachers to describe in detail the characteristics (e.g., strategies, behaviors, attitudes, and goals) of instructional supervisors (i.e., school principals) that influence, positively and negatively, their classroom instruction. We also asked them to discuss the personal and professional effects of related principal-teacher interactions. Thus, this book is representative of teachers' perspectives, and those perspectives were reported within a protocol that encouraged free expression and inclusion of details.

Specifically, we present descriptions of what good principals actually do that leads to such impacts as improved teacher morale and motivation, enhanced self-esteem and confidence, and reflectively oriented instructional behavior. We also present relevant concepts, models, and strategies from the literature that will help practitioners think through their approach to instructional leadership. Taken together, our database and the literature advocate a powerful holistic model of instructional leadership based on collaboration, reflection, and inquiry.

In this expanded second edition we include findings and insights from recent research, literature, and national reports; additional figures, models, tips, and reading lists; and an in-depth examination of the elements of instructional leadership related to the development of a professional learning community.

What does successful instructional leadership look like? Which approaches to instructional leadership enhance or hinder teaching and learning? Chapter 1 presents a brief overview of the professional literature on instructional leadership and supervision as well as a brief description of the study on which this book is based. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 focus, respectively, on three fundamental themes of instructional leadership—talking with teachers, promoting teachers' professional growth, and fostering teacher reflection. In reading these chapters, practitioners will see how specific principal behaviors help to build a culture of collaboration, equality, and lifelong study of teaching and learning. In Chapters 5, 6, and 7 we discuss principals' use of visibility, praise, and autonomy—as juxtaposed with abandonment, criticism, and control—and their effects

on teachers. Chapter 8 summarizes our findings and conclusions, presents our view of good instructional leadership, and offers suggestions for becoming a successful instructional leader. Chapter 9, the final chapter, integrates our findings about successful instructional leadership with extant research on professional learning communities and constructivist leading and learning. Research methods are found in the Resource section.

This book describes not only what successful instructional leaders are doing but also what can be expected when they support (as well as when they harm) teachers, teaching, and learning in our schools. Dramatic findings presented in the teachers' own words portray effective instructional leadership as an exciting, collaborative inquiry into the complex and perplexing world of teaching and learning; therein lies our hope of becoming a professional learning community.

Acknowledgments

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