

Chapter 7

Educational Leadership and Ralph Tyler

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses the traditional instructional leadership (characterized with Tyler's four questions; teachers prescribe a curriculum; learners assume a submissive role of following instructors) in comparison with the andragogical or innovative instructional leadership. As more and more scholars cast their doubt on this particular instructional mode (traditional instructional leadership), especially when compared with the innovative instructional leadership, this article seeks to draw on traditional instructional leadership that revolves around Ralph Tyler's model. In doing so, instructors and practitioners will see clearly what the traditional instructional leadership may bring to most education settings and above all, they may rely on a ready-made formula when planning curriculums, instruction, program planning, or evaluation. While traditional instructional leadership may have come under much criticism, there is much to learn from it.

INTRODUCTION

Educational leadership can be divided into two areas: administrative leadership and instructional leadership. Administrative leadership deals with administrators leading followers in a certain organization or institution of learning whereas

instructional leadership deals with teachers helping learners in classroom settings. In actuality, scholars tend to focus more on instructional leadership than administrative leadership because the majority of educators, teachers, or trainers serve as instructors or teachers in the classroom or in the virtual environment. A small number of educators are chosen as administrative leaders, such as university presidents, school principals,

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superintendents or staff development managers. Researchers spend years trying to discover the most effective forms of instructional leadership, and the answer changes with the context. This should not be surprising considering the fuzziness that surrounds the notion of leadership itself. Schein (2010) notes that while the literature has increased with writings about leadership in the past 25 years, most people are not any clearer today about “what is a good leader and what a leader should be doing” (p. x). Wheatly (1999) describes leadership as “an amorphous phenomenon that has intrigued us since people began organizing” (p. 13). Lojewski and Reilly (2008) apply descriptive labels such as charismatic, transformational or ambassadorial to leaders but none of these gets to the essence of the term. Wiseman and McKeown (2010) might offer a description of a leader that is particularly applicable to instructional leadership. They suggest that “some leaders make us better and smarter. They bring out our intelligence” (p. 4). They continue that these leaders “access and revitalize the intelligence in the people around them. We call them Multipliers” (p. 4). Becoming a “multiplier” might be the perfect goal for the instructional leader.

Researchers have been innovative, trying to determine what prescribed instructional leadership may lead to the desired learning outcomes, or student performance objectives as termed by some scholars and educators in some organizational settings. Indeed, teachers are classroom leaders. They are just like drivers of cars or busses. Learners are, in a way, passengers. They do not know where to go until their teachers tell them where to go. This is especially true when learners are traditional age students or children. Teachers provide the direction and structure regarding how learners can embark on their learning journeys. Teachers prescribe curriculums, and they know what ought to happen in their classroom settings, given their prescribed curriculum’s approval by experts in their field and stakeholders in their community. Teachers conform to their school’s or

organization’s mission and goals which give them a clear idea of what is expected of them. Once a curriculum is prescribed, they will go about selecting the means for attaining the school’s or organization’s mission and goals. Then, teachers select the specific instructional methods that will work for a particular class. Finally, teachers have the responsibility of choosing methods to evaluate student learning. Teachers are driving the bus; they know where they need to go and when they should arrive. However, while the route the bus takes to arrive at the final destination is flexible, the driver, or teacher, needs to assess which route is the best and why.

In recent years, this traditional model of the teacher as the bus driver has come under criticism. Some scholars argue that traditional instructional leadership may lead to docile learners, learners who are high in scores and low in abilities (Ross, 1992). In the Western Hemisphere, researchers focus on critical thinking skills or problem solving skills rather than on rote learning or how much learners can regurgitate information or knowledge (Mezirow, 1991, 2000). Some scholars focus on learners’ “cognitive metamorphosis” rather than on psychomotor skills when the majority of their learners are adult learners. Another movement is that scholars focus more on higher order thinking skills than on the lower order thinking skills based on Bloom’s Taxonomy (1956).

Regardless of the movements or debate regarding what instructional leadership may result in the right learning outcomes, all instructional leadership has three kinds of educational objectives. In other words, instructional leadership is bound to change learners in three domains of educational objectives: cognitive domain, psychomotor domain and affective domain. In plain language, educators and teachers are concerned with whether their learners will be able to think, act, and feel differently at the end of their instruction in a classroom setting or in a virtual classroom environment (Wang, 2008). Clearly, being able to think, act, and feel differently by the end of a teacher’s

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