

*When I reviewed this article on **School Goals, Principals, and Achievement** by Jerry D. Bamburg* and Richard L. Andrews, 1991, I found some conclusions still helpful 20 years later.*

Part 1 of 3

One conclusion : that there is no definitive style for instructional leadership and that the behaviour (read, sustained actions) of principals was more critical.

In summarizing his findings Fullan (1982) stated:

1. A large percentage of principals (at least half) operate mainly as administrators and ad hoc crisis managers. They are not effective in helping to bring about change in their schools.
2. Principals who do become involved in change do so either as direct instructional leaders or as facilitative instructional leaders. Both styles of leadership can be effective.
3. The principal cannot become an expert in all subject areas. Being a facilitator or coordinator of change is probably the more effective role under these conditions.
4. None of the research suggests that change is impossible without the principal. There are many instances of teacher leaders or project leaders having a strong impact on implementation, but they usually had supportive principals; if they did not the results of their initial efforts tended to disappear before long.

In research by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), several barriers to instructional leadership were identified, among them the lack of a clear definition of the role. Their research described three "dimensions of leadership activity" which occur as a consequence of specific practices and behaviors. They include:

1. defining the school mission ;
2. managing the instructional program; and
3. promoting a positive climate.

Their research clearly focuses upon the perspective that it is the behavior of principals, not their style, which is most critical.

Based upon the literature it is clear that the instructional leadership role is widely accepted. It is also clear that the question of whether leadership is dependent upon style or behavior is an important one. Based upon their review of much of that literature, Hall, Hord and Huling (1984) conclude that style is difficult to change and emphasizing style as the primary contributor to instructional leadership is deterministic and does not offer much hope to principals who seek to become instructional leaders. They stress that focusing upon behaviors is much more appropriate because behavior is something that can be consciously modified.