

**Improving Instructional
Quality in Jewish Day
Schools and Yeshivot:
Best Practices Culled from
Research and Practices in
the Field**

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Abstract

Over the past few years, I have been privileged to visit and study many yeshivot and day schools all across North America. I have personally met men and women who lead Jewish schools who personify the very best our community offers in terms of unyielding commitment and inspirational dedication to inculcating Jewish values and knowledge so that all children succeed academically and socially. Jewish school leaders (heads, principals, assistant principals, deans) confront a plethora of daily challenges. These leaders must, at once, deal with managerial, political, financial, operational, and communal issues, among others. These leaders know, though, that a significant portion of their time must be devoted to promoting educational quality; more specifically, a program of instructional excellence that promotes learning for all students. Leaders of Jewish schools are busy and may not always be cognizant of the latest cutting-edge theories and practices in the field of instructional leadership. On more than one occasion I have been asked by school leaders for a resource that may serve as a guide to best practices in instructional improvement. This monograph seeks to address that need. The monograph, in an academic manner, summarizes extant literature in the field of instructional leadership, culls best practices from private and public schools, provides, in a practical vein, recommendations to enhance a school's instructional program, and suggests strategies and steps to foster instructional excellence. The monograph includes an annotated reference list for further information and several questionnaires designed to assess instructional effectiveness.¹ I do not in any way mean to imply that Jewish schools are deficient or that their leaders are ill-prepared to chart a course towards educational quality. On the contrary, my intent is to laud Jewish schools' moral mission and efforts undertaken by their leaders who care deeply about each and every *yiddisha neshama*. The monograph aims, rather, to build on current successes in Jewish schools by offering pathways to even higher realms of instructional success. Suggestions that are offered might appear overwhelming at first. I recommend that readers start with some small changes and move forward gradually. Research indicates that large scale instructional reform, as advocated in this monograph, can take nearly five years to fully implement.

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Introduction

It is my privilege and pleasure to introduce “Improving Instructional Quality in Jewish Day Schools and Yeshivot: Best Practices Culled from Research and the Field,” by Jeffrey Glanz. Dr. Glanz, a full-professor, is the Raine and Stanley Silverstein Chair in Ethics and Values and director of the MS Program at the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration of Yeshiva University.

Prof. Glanz has a long and distinguished career as a practitioner and an academic in the field of public and Jewish education. He holds a doctorate from Teacher’s College – Columbia University and has served as a teacher and administrator in the New York City Public School System. He was professor of education at Kean University and at Wagner College, where he was later appointed Dean of Graduate Studies. Dr. Glanz has published widely in the areas of curriculum theory, leadership, supervision, and educational philosophy. His most recent co-authored book is *What Dewey Can Still Teach Us: Issues and Best Practices for Educating the Whole Child in the Era of High-Stakes Testing*, published by Rowman & Littlefield, and he is general editor of the School Leadership Series for Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

This monograph is the latest of the Azrieli Papers, our ongoing colloquium dedicated to excellence in teaching, administration, and research in Jewish education. Presentations in this series are released as occasional papers, individual monographs, special editions of academic publications and anthologies dedicated to Jewish education. A project of the Azrieli Graduate School, this program of research and publication is supported through the generosity of Henry and Golda Reena Rothman. Once again, we are indebted to them for their kindness and beneficence.

As will be evident from this and others in the series, our definition of Jewish education is expansive. We see the classroom instructor and school administrator in a yeshiva day school or supplementary Hebrew school, alongside the pulpit rabbi, camp director, guidance counselor special needs instructor, community and family educator, early childhood teacher, youth leader and all related

others, involved in a cognate enterprise. The best practices and models of effective instructional supervision provided by Dr. Glanz, therefore, and the prescriptions he draws from them, should resonate far beyond the limits of the classroom, the school building or the synagogue. With appropriate modification, they can be applied to the myriad of venues within which Jewish children are raised and educated, and to the training provided for the professional and lay people involved in that education.

Drawing upon his extensive experience and expertise, Dr. Glanz cautions day school educators, administrators, and the lay leaders who sustain their schools, against the complacency that often attaches itself to teaching. Despite their initial training and certification, educators need ongoing renewal and replenishment in the form of regular and systematic professional development—not the random and episodic in-service programs most frequently found in the field. Not only would this insure the continuing upgrading of pedagogic practice, but the sight of faculty and administration engaged in ongoing learning would serve as a source of inspiration for students as well.

One further point deserves mention. At Azrieli, we are committed to advancing Jewish education as a discipline, as an area of professional practice, and as a primary mandate for the future of Jewish life and culture. We hope that this and other papers in this series will contribute toward that goal, in tandem with the many and varied activities of the Azrieli Graduate School. We trust that you will derive benefit from these efforts and we actively solicit your comments and suggestions.

David J. Schnall, Dean
March, 2012

Introduction

“The key factor to the individual school’s success is the building principal [*read: Jewish day school leader*], who sets the tone as the school’s educational leader . . .”

Arthur Anderson (cited in Allen, 2003, p. 35)

Carl Glickman, noted educational reformer, once astutely commented, and I paraphrase, “The reason everyone goes into education is to have a powerful influence on the educational lives of students.” Those uniquely talented who aspire to Jewish day school leadership sincerely want to make a difference. They realize that they are in an optimal position in order to affect great change and provide for the larger “good.” They are driven by an unswerving commitment to facilitate the conditions necessary to foster high achievement for all students and to reinforce *Torah*-inspired *middot*. As managers, advocates, planners, mentors, supervisors, and above all else leaders, they establish a conducive tone in a school building that serves to promote educational excellence at all levels. School administrators and supervisors (headmasters, deans, principals, or assistant/associate principals) realize that in order for students to excel an instructional program must be established that is rigorous, sustained, and meaningful. As instructional leaders, they are most essential for promoting exceptional teaching that aims to improve student learning and character development (*middot*) (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2008; Gupton, 2009; Halverson, Grigg, Prichett, & Thomas, 2005; Holtz, Dorph, & Goldring, 1997; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Mangin, 2007; Nelson & Sassi, 2005; Reich Elster, 1998; Schiff, 1985; Sergiovanni, 2006; Smylie, 2009).

Parenthetically, on this latter point regarding student achievement and *middot* development, I would be remiss if I didn’t also mention that there also is a significant amount of research that supports the idea that students are most responsive academically in classrooms and schools in which students feel connected to the school, feel cared for, and are challenged in positive, encouraging ways (Lewis, Schaps, & Watson, 1996, Osterman, 2000; Zins,

Weissberg, Walberg, & Wang., 2004). Any discussion of improving instruction needs to include at least a mention of this vital concern.

The role of the principal in establishing an effective and efficient school has been affirmed since the early twentieth century when the principalship² assumed a prominent role in schools (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Kafka, 2009), along with research ever since the School Effectiveness Studies in the eighties and nineties (DeRoche, 1987; Lezotte, 1997). With the ever-increasing complexity of schools placing increased demands on Jewish school leaders (due to, e.g., changing demographics, more diverse students, and economic exigencies), the day school or yeshiva leader should be viewed, more than ever before, as not only essential for creating and sustaining a well run school, but most importantly, critical for promoting student achievement and *middot* development (Bloom & Glanz, 2010; Jewish Education Service of North America, 2008; Matthews & Crow, 2003; Newman, 2009; Schick, 2007; Schiff, 1966; Segal, 2009).

As recently as fifteen years ago, principals were largely responsible for ensuring a safe school building, managing bus schedules, keeping order by enforcing school policies, developing master schedules, ordering books and supplies, and other logistical managerial tasks. According to Paul Young (2004) “that principalship doesn’t exist anymore” (p. 50). Though still accountable for these and other managerial tasks, principals today are ultimately responsible for providing top quality instructional leadership that aims to promote best practices in teaching and related instructional areas for the chief purpose of ensuring student achievement (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Bender Sebring, & Bryk, 2000; Elmore, 1995; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996). Overseeing and delegating responsibilities to ensure a safe and secure school building are important, but good principals today focus on instruction because they know that doing so, more than *anything else they do*, directly impacts student learning (Barber, 2008; Hattie, 2009). According to Young (2004), good principals “must be viewed as guides and coaches, leaders who establish high expectations and common direction. . . . [they] regularly observe classrooms, guide lesson planning, create common planning time, monitor student learning, collect data, and use results to influence improvement plans” (p. 51).

This emphasis on instructional improvement is clearly reflected in the burgeoning literature on school reform (Barth, 1990; Barth, DeFour, DeFour, & Eaker, 2005; Elmore, 2004; Eysink, de Jong, Berthold, Kolloffel, Opfermann, & Wouters, 2009; Fink & Markholt, 2011; Fullan, 2000, 2002, 2007, 2008b, 2009; Hargreaves, 2009; Semadeni, 2009; Zmuda, 2010). Current school reform efforts include a redefinition of supervision and its relation to the improvement of instruction (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009; Marshall, 2009; Pajak, 2008; Sullivan & Glanz, 2009). Fullan, Hill, and Crevola (2006) have underscored the critical importance of high-quality instruction and its systematic delivery as most necessary in order to ensure “continuous improvement and ongoing academic success” (p. 8). Supervision plays a major role in such an effort (Marshall, 2009; Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011; Sullivan & Glanz, 2009; Zepeda, 2007). Systemic reform that affects student achievement, according to Fullan (2006), must focus primarily on the instructional process in the classroom.

Vignette: Not too long ago, I visited a high school in the northeast. I was to observe a student teacher. In discussions with the cooperating teacher, he mentioned to me that he is rarely given any feedback on his teaching. “They do, you know, that ‘dog and pony’ routine. I’m told I’ll be observed on a certain date and time. There’s no time for a pre-conference, but I’m told, reluctantly I sense, that if I insist on one my department chair will make the time for it. I’m observed for about 25 minutes of the 50 minute period and given a post-conference a week later that lasts about 5 minutes. Then two weeks later a letter summarizing the observation miraculously appears in my mailbox. I perfunctorily sign and submit it . . . over and done with . . . I learn nothing new about my teaching.” I asked him about PD in the school and I am told that the two days allotted for it before the school year were “taken away due to budget cuts.” “We have two other days, one in the fall and spring semesters, but they are a waste of time.” I queried for more information and he tells me that the PD offered is not related to his discipline (science) and that the presenter usually hasn’t set foot in a high school classroom in a decade, if at

all. "We are never asked for what we really need and want." When asked about time spent in instructional dialogue with supervisors or fellow teachers, he replies, "My principal does talk with me but not about teaching; he loves basketball and he knows I do too, so when meet all we talk about is the latest game or the Miami Heat's LeBron James."

Extant research and anecdotal evidence indicates that many Jewish schools have been unaffected by these recent cutting-edge practices in instructional leadership (Feurman, 2002, 2009; Gorsetman, 2005; Greene, 2008; Schick, 2007; Spotlight on Jewish Day School Education, 2003).³ For instance, supervision of instruction in many Jewish schools is performed perfunctorily, utilizing traditional methods of evaluative supervision and episodic utilization of professional development. Research indicates that such practices do not encourage change in teacher behavior that results in student achievement (e. g., Firth & Pajak, 1998; Glanz, Shulman, & Sullivan, 2007; Glickman, Gordon, Ross-Gordon, 2008). A major purpose of this monograph is to bring this current supervisory technology to Jewish day schools in order to underscore the vital role of principals and heads of school as primary instructional leaders who are charged, above all else, with promoting student learning (academic, social, interpersonal, etc.). The remainder of this Introduction will address the following topics:

- (1) essential assumptions about instructional leadership
- (2) key tasks of successful instructional leaders
- (3) vital aspects of instructional supervision within a professional learning community
- (4) necessary theoretical frameworks for supporting efforts to enhance instructional quality
- (5) noteworthy commitments of Jewish day school leaders to proactively promote teacher quality

The following assumptions, drawn from extant research in school supervision and instructional leadership, underscore the importance and vitality of instructional leadership:

- The principal is *the* key player in the school building to promote student learning. It's not that students cannot learn without a principal for teachers are certainly most essential as front-line educators in the classroom (Lieberman & Friedrich, 2010). But, a specially-trained instructional leader serving as building principal (or head of school) is vital in order to accomplish deep, sustained, and school-wide achievement for all students (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Lindstrom & Speck, 2004; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003; Zepeda, 2007).⁴
- High achievement for all students should be the major goal for a principal. A principal may possess charisma, increase parental participation in school activities, raise funds for the PTA, interact well with the Board, organize meaningful cultural events, or even possess great vision. However, the bottom line is that a principal first and foremost should be concerned in activities that actively promote good teaching that in turn promotes student learning. A principal cannot be considered successful unless high student achievement in academic areas is achieved for all students (Brown, 2008; Cotton, 2003; Murphy, 2002; Pajak, 2006; Reeves, 2002; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).
- Although other forms of leadership (i.e., cultural, managerial, human resources, strategic, external development, and micro-political) are important (Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (MCREL), 2001; Waters & Grub, 2004), instructional leadership can never be simply delegated to others.⁵ Others serve as instructional leaders for certain, but the principal plays an active and orchestrating role (Catano & Stronge, 2006).
- The effective principal is knowledgeable and skillful in the art and science of instructional supervision and leadership (Marzano & Brown, 2009).⁶

Vignette: I recall my first several years of teaching in an urban elementary school. The principal had an excellent reputation as an

administrator. He was well-organized, prompt, and efficient. He prided himself on his meticulous reports that were distributed to officials in the district office. He was not, however, an instructional leader.

He taught for about 2 years before assuming his first administrative position as an assistant principal. Within a few years he was promoted to principal. His organizational and interpersonal skills brought him notoriety. I recall that he was an avid runner. Although he didn't run marathons, he was adept at LSD; i.e., long slow distance runs. We shared many a conversation about running since, at the time, I too was into LSD. We usually conversed about aspects of running from the shoes we wore to where we ran. These conversations took place while waiting to take my class up to the classroom during morning lineup. We never spoke about teaching or about what I was doing to promote student achievement. He didn't, it seemed to me, feel comfortable talking about teaching. After all, he had only been a teacher for a short time. His forte was administration. He believed that a good principal sets a conducive tone in a school building that allows teachers to "do their thing," as he used to say back in the '70s. His philosophy was to foster good student discipline, a well-run school, and to leave instruction to teachers.

As a new teacher, I yearned to talk to someone about my instructional practices. Although the district reading supervisor occasionally popped in, our conversations were usually brief. As a new teacher, I had to learn through trial and error. Those poor kids during my early years of teaching were victims of my instructional experiments.

It was only several years later when I was transferred into another school in another district that I realized how valuable a supervisor can be as instructional leader. Mr. Chiradelli, our AP, was not only well-organized and personable but he also was comfortable talking to us about teaching. He was the first AP who actually said to me, "Jeffrey, no, let me show you." On the spot, he

demonstrated good pedagogical practice by taking over my class to show me how to more effectively pose critical thinking questions and check for understanding. Seeing a model in action, I was uplifted. Mr. Chiradelli was a teacher of teachers and a very effective AP.

More specifically, current research indicates that effective instructional leaders understand the following:

- 1) The single greatest influence on students in a classroom is the teacher. “Teachers have a powerful, long-lasting influence on their students” (Stronge, 2007, p. vii). Good principals support good teachers by providing instructional services and resources on a continuing basis. Moreover, good principals attract and hire certified teachers who have specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are essential to promote student achievement; certified teachers are more successful than unlicensed teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002). Good principals also realize that retaining good teachers is essential because experience counts. “Experienced teachers differ from rookie teachers in that they have attained expertise through real-life experiences, classroom practice, and time” (Stronge, 2007, p. 9). Research demonstrates that teachers with more experience plan better, apply a range of teaching strategies, understand students’ learning needs, and better organize instruction. Good principals appreciate the importance of this research.
- 2) An emphasis on academics is crucial. Effective principal instructional leaders spend much time discussing the instructional program with colleagues, teachers, parents, students, and lay leaders. They spend all available time discussing instruction: personal informal and formal contacts with teachers, memoranda, email communications, grade and faculty conferences, assembly programs, parent meetings, etc. (see, e.g., Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010). They realize that establishing an orderly environment conducive to educational excellence is necessary. Good principals set high expectations and standards for success (Matsumura,

Sartoris, DiPrima Bickel, & Garnier, 2009; Squires, Huitt, & Segars, 1984). Parenthetically, effective school leaders do not delegate instructional leadership to others (see, e.g., Fink & Resnick, 2001). More specifically related to instructional improvement, effective principals:

- develop, in collaboration with teachers, clear and consistent school-wide instructional policies
- ensure that instructional time is protected (e.g., good principals ensure that intrusions are kept to a minimum, i.e., excessive announcements over the loudspeaker, intrusionary attendance report collection by office monitors, etc. – all of which interrupts and compromises classroom teaching and learning).
- examine instructional grouping patterns to ensure student mastery of content
- establish clearly defined academic goals for the school (by grade)
- facilitate a process to develop and revise curriculum in all content areas
- involve teachers in curriculum planning and decision making
- maintain systematic methods of assessment
- review data collected as a result of implementation of an assessment system
- share and use the data to help improve the instructional school program
- observe teachers and students engaged in the learning process
- assist teachers who are having instructional difficulties
- provide opportunities for teachers to learn and professionally grow
- provide for meaningful and ongoing, collaboratively-developed professional development opportunities

Vignette: One of the most impressive schools I have been fortunate to visit was International High School (IHS), a

multicultural alternative educational environment for recent arrivals, serving students with varying degrees of limited English proficiency. The innovative principal, Eric Nadelstern, now known nationally, organized the school as interdisciplinary teams. On each team, four teachers (math, science, English, and social studies) and a support services coordinator were jointly responsible for a heterogeneous group of about seventy-five ninth-through- twelfth-grade students. The faculty worked with the same group of students for a full year providing a complete academic program organized around themes such as “Motion” or “The American Dream.” Teams also provided affective and academic counseling.

The interdisciplinary team concept provided an ideal infrastructure for significant opportunities for PD, power over curriculum, allocating resources, even budgeting and scheduling. Time was built into their schedules by the principal for meetings to do many of the bulleted items described above. Team teaching, flexible grouping, block scheduling were frequently employed. Teams developed peer observations and spent much time in and out of each others’ classrooms discussing instructional practices.

Dr. Nadelstern saw his role as establishing a school-wide focus on teaching and learning, building powerful community of leaders and learning, modeling in interactions with teachers the kind of relationships they should develop with students, developing a collegial vision and purpose, serving as a resource for solving problems, etc. For a fuller description of this important work read a chapter (Nadelstern, Price, & Listhaus, 2000) from one of my co-edited books (Glanz & Behar-Horenstein, 2000).

- 3) The three primary elements of successful instructional leadership (Blasé & Blasé, 2004), are:
 - a. Conducting instructional conferences: Whether involved in pre or post-observation conferences, informal or more formal

- grade conferences, etc., effective principals, according to Blasé and Blasé (2004), make suggestions, give feedback, model, use inquiry, and solicit opinions from teachers.
- b. Providing staff development: According to Blasé and Blasé (2004), “Behaviors associated with providing staff development include emphasizing the study of teaching and learning, support for collaboration, development of coaching relationships, use of action research, provision of resources, and application of the principles of adult growth and development to all phases of the staff development program” (p. 162).
 - c. Encouraging teacher reflection: Effective principals purposefully engage teachers in articulating feelings, sharing attitudes, and deep thinking about instructional issues (Carroll, Featherstone, Featherstone, Feiman-Nemser, & Roosevelt, 2007; Farrell, 2003; Lasley, 1992; Schon, 1987).

Vignette: About five years ago I visited a high school on the west coast. A friend I had known in college, but had not seen in thirty years, was the new principal. We began reminiscing about college but then the conversation turned ‘pedagogical.’ I discussed my research and work on teaching, supervision, and my vision for good schooling when he suddenly interrupted and assertively stated, “Now Jeffrey, you don’t believe that garbage do you? ‘Professional learning communities,’ give me a break. Did we have them when we were in high school? We turned out pretty damn good, didn’t we? I learned history and math primarily through memorization and I was able to tie things together using my own faculties. We rarely had PD. We knew how to think on our feet. This teaching thing, you know is all intuitive. If I had a question, I’d ask a colleague . . . no need for meeting after meeting. I agree, though,” continuing his tirade, “teachers today are really a sad lot; they are ill-prepared, . . . don’t even know their content; I have to spoon feed them. There’s no discipline in this school and I don’t mean the kids. I have to run a tight ship, . . . be tough with teachers; they have to know who’s the boss.” He later

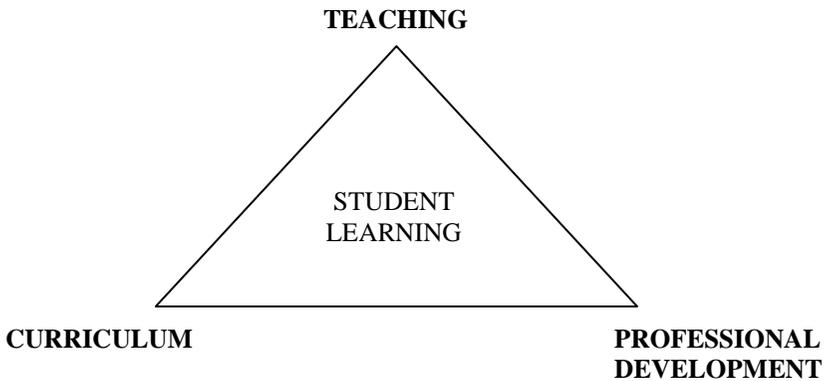
admitted that he had spewed forth this “pedagogical correctness” about involving teachers, inviting greater parental involvement, building team spirit, etc. during the interviews because he knew “what the committee wanted to hear” but that while he articulated such views he didn’t believe in them and, certainly, didn’t act on them.

Instructional supervision, as best practice, is a school-wide process in which teaching and learning become the core of the school’s mission. Principals and other administrators work to develop a professional learning community that supports such work (Burke & Krey, 2005; Hord, Roussin, & Sommers, 2009; Morrissey, 2000; Sullivan & Glanz, 2006; Ubben, Hughes, & Norris, 2004). A professional learning community has five dimensions: (1) supportive and shared leadership (e.g., school administrators participate democratically with teachers sharing power, authority, and decision making); (2) shared values and vision (e.g., the principal or head and staff decide on the values and vision of the school and support its realization); (3) collective learning (e.g., staff and the administration come together to learn how best to improve student performance); (4) supportive conditions (e.g., principals and teachers possess adequate resources to promote instructional excellence and create structures that facilitate learning for all); and (5) shared personal practice (e.g., peer review and feedback are school norms as is feedback given to administrators by teachers in informal and formal ways) (Hord, 1997 as cited by Morrissey, 2000, pp. 4, 32-33). Instructional leaders within professional learning communities keep instructional quality as their main focus.

In order to provide a theoretical frame for discussion of instructional quality (as measured by student learning), see Figure 1 below that highlights the key components of instruction: teaching, curriculum, and professional development (supervision). Instructional quality is achieved through excellent teaching, facilitated by cutting-edge practices in professional development, and an articulated and deep understanding of the content skills and values embedded in the curriculum. Therefore, an examination or audit of a school’s instructional or educational quality must necessarily encompass a

school's teaching practices, the state of curriculum development in the school, and professional development initiatives aimed to support excellence in teaching and curriculum.⁷

Figure 1
The Tripod View of Instructional Quality in a School



Vignette: Much of my work during the past few years has been to conduct instructional quality audits of schools. I am frequently invited by the school administration (sometimes at the behest of the school board) to conduct such a review. For the audit, I do not use a checklist or prescribed format. Rather, after speaking with school officials, I tailor make the audit based on needs articulated by school officials. However, I generally do look at teaching practices, PD (including supervision and evaluation procedures or processes), and the state of curriculum development. I interview all constituents, including all administrators, a representative sample of teachers, staff, parents, lay leaders, and students. I also request to view all instructional documents, including test data and analyses. A good part of my time is spent observing many classrooms at all grade levels and subjects. I then write my report and share it with school leaders. Based on my report and their perceptions of its relevance and accuracy, they develop an action plan in each of the three areas: teaching, curriculum, and PD (see Appendix A for a sample action plan chart). Below you will find a

short excerpt of a report that does not reflect any one particular school (done to ensure anonymity) but rather a compilation of several different schools:

Although the report details specific recommendations with suggested guidelines, following is a list of areas of concern:

- *Frontal teaching– Despite the small class sizes and use of Smart Boards, frontal teaching is the dominant model utilized. With the exception of one class, all others had students sitting in rows. Recitation was evident in all situations wherein the teacher was most active, guiding lessons, posing questions, in rapid succession and calling randomly upon selected students. Several students during choral recitals (i.e., repeating in unison words or phrases uttered by the teacher first) and during whole class instruction were off-task, either on the wrong page, working slowly on a project, or simply not engaged. The teacher’s attention was focused on approximately 50% of the students of the class with many students’ educational needs not attended to, a common problem with overuse of frontal teaching. Although the school does not track classes, observations of teaching in most classes indicate that teachers teach to the average, missing out on those gifted learners, while not attending sufficiently to the needs of struggling students. Teachers need professional development on an ongoing basis in differentiated instruction. Such an approach will enable teachers to more effectively and consistently address the learning needs of all students in a classroom. Additional ongoing, consistent, and collaboratively developed PD is needed to assist educators with the latest pedagogical approaches including, for instance, proper use of wait time, formative assessment strategies, individualized approaches to teaching, including differentiated instruction. I did not see, in my class visits, much use of formative assessment strategies or checking for understanding.*
- *Curriculum development – Development of curriculum needs more ongoing, comprehensive attention, although a start has*

been made in the areas of science and social studies in alignment with state curricular guidelines. The mere existence of these standards, however, does not imply that curriculum development is ongoing. Curriculum development involves deep and ongoing conversations collaboratively refined by both administrators and teachers. End of year conversations should take place among teachers regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum. Teachers at different grade levels rarely converse over curricular issues. Teachers at the school need ongoing conversations about curriculum to ensure proper articulation. Administrators need to provide time for teachers to converse over the curriculum.

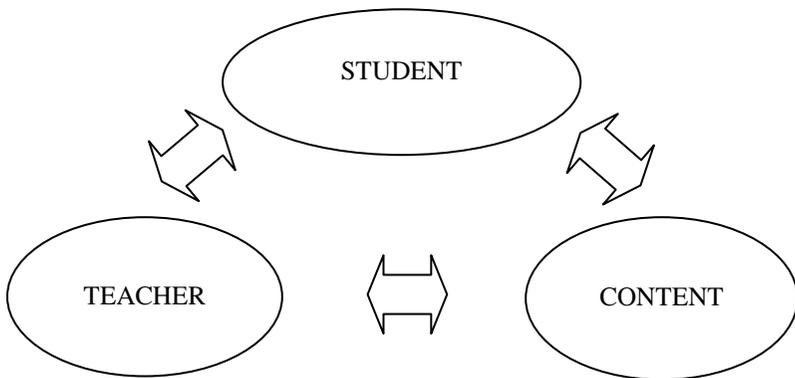
- *Supervision – Supervision at the school is traditional, too informal, and lacks consistency of use. The administrators could use additional professional development in the latest approaches to cutting edge practices in supervision. Supervision of instruction needs to be the focus of school improvement. Supervision and evaluation are confused. Teacher evaluation at the school is contractually driven and administrators utilize a form, based on Charlette Danielson’s four domains for teacher competency. The form itself merely lists her four categories with a few descriptors and without precise explanation for what satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or stellar performance looks like. Comments made by evaluators are subjective. There is no indication that such evaluations change teaching behavior or improves instruction. It does, however, serve an accountability function and contractual obligation. Most teachers shared their ambivalence with this “dog and pony” type observation. One representative teacher stated, “I’d rather them just pop in my room anytime rather than have to put on a meaningless show for them.”*

In a later chapter I will amplify each of these three areas of concern as they relate to a school’s instructional quality. In the meantime, parenthetically, how would you characterize your school in terms of its teaching, curriculum, and supervisory practices? Figure 1, however, is inadequate by itself to fully comprehend the import of

the instructional process without turning attention to a deeper level of the instructional process, called the “instructional core” (see City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009). The instructional core (see Figure 2 below) is “composed of the teacher and the student in the presence of the content” (p. 22). A reciprocal relationship exists between each component (i.e., between student and teacher; teacher and student, student and content, and teacher and content). The aforementioned authors explain:

Simply stated, the instructional task is the actual work that students are asked to do in the process of instruction – *not* (italics in original) what teachers *think* they are asking students to do, or what the official curriculum *says* . . . , but what they are *actually* doing. (p. 23)

Figure 2
The Instructional Core



Learning occurs in the interaction among these three vital components. For instance, if we match the level of content to the students’ ability level, then learning is more likely to occur. As teachers’ knowledge of the content and skills in delivering it increases, students are more likely to learn. If students themselves are engaged in learning (e.g., on task, challenged, monitored), then

learning is more likely to occur than without such attention to student engagement. City, Elmore, Fiarman, and Teitel (2009) say it plainly, “If you are not doing one of these three things, you are not improving instruction and learning” (p. 24). It is important to emphasize that the structures we employ to encourage learning (e.g., learning communities, differentiation, grouping, supervision, block scheduling, individualization, instructional prompts, professional development, etc.) do not, by and in themselves, improve learning. Rather, these structures must influence the instructional core for learning to occur. For example, if professional development is aimed at changing teacher behaviors in the classroom and appropriate follow up is employed to help the teacher gain a better understanding of the two other elements of the instructional core, students and content, then learning will be enhanced (Johnson & Fargo, 2010). The authors cited above explain:

At the very best, when they are working well, they *create conditions* that influence what goes on inside the instructional core. The primary work of schooling occurs inside the classrooms, *not* in the organizations and institutions that surround the classroom. Schools don’t improve through political and managerial incantation; they improve through the complex and demanding work of teaching and learning (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009, p. 25).

More pointedly, whether we are employing supervision, professional development, or any of the other structures, activities, or processes that impact teacher behavior and student learning, four questions in the instructional process must be considered at all times:

1. How will this affect teachers’ knowledge and skills?
2. How will this affect the level of content in classrooms?
3. How will this affect the role of the student in the instructional process?
4. How will this affect the relationship between [and among] the teacher, the student, and content? (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009, p. 27)

When teachers are observed by peers or supervisors, the observer, if s/he wants to know if learning is occurring, must examine the instructional core and ask:

1. What are the teachers doing and saying?
2. What are the students doing and saying? (in response to teacher behavior)
3. What is the task? (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009, p. 88)

Consider this scenario:

Joshua, a 7th grader at USA JEWISH Middle School, is asked to join a cooperative learning group with three other students to solve some math problems. Ms. Reynolds, Joshua's teacher, circulates making sure all groups are on task and fully understand the assignment. Joshua, a shy usually withdrawn child listens as his group tackles the math problems. Joshua's group is the first group to complete all the problems and as they wait for Ms. Reynolds to review the problems with the class they take out their readers. Ms. Reynolds notices that the group is finished and she asks the group, "Have you reviewed each problem carefully?" to which they all nod in the affirmative. Joshua goes along but remains clueless.

In the scenario above, Ms. Reynolds did not note, at least in this situation, that the level of the *content* was too difficult for Joshua as he had not yet mastered some basic mathematical computation skills necessary to solve most of the problems. Secondly, Ms. Reynolds, the *teacher*, was more concerned with the managerial aspects of coordinating multiple cooperative learning groups than she was with attending to individual learning needs of some students. Lastly, Joshua, the *student*, was not actively engaged in working with his partners; he was a passive observer. The essence of teaching involves paying attention to the relationship among the level of *content*, the *teacher's* skill and knowledge she brings to the teaching of that

content, and the need to ensure that the *student* is actively learning the content with the teacher's guidance, if necessary.

The supervisor also needs to pay attention to the instructional core. Notice in this scenario the advice Mr. Goldstein, the assistant principal, gives Ms. Reynolds in the post-conference after having observed her cooperative learning math lesson above:

Mr. Goldstein: "Thank you for inviting me to observe this wonderful lesson. The students appeared on task and you continually circulated to ensure proper adherence to effective classroom management. I noticed no fooling around during the entire lesson. Good job. How do you think the lesson went?"

Ms. Reynolds: "Yes, thanks. I thought the lesson went as planned. I wanted to build rapport among the students through cooperative learning as well as help them reinforce the mathematical concepts they learned over the past several weeks. Do you have any suggestions for me?"

Mr. Goldstein: "Well, you are a very good teacher as your organizational skills are superior. I haven't seen as good a classroom manager as you in a long time. I would, however, make a few suggestions for your consideration: (1) Instead of handing out the math papers yourself why not designate an individual from each group to do so?; (2) It's important to not only write the objective on the board, as you did, but to also indicate the math standard you are addressing; (3) In reviewing the math problems, I might suggest you call on group volunteers at random rather than go in sequential order from one end of the room to the other . . . you know, keep the kids on their toes.

Aside from the ineffective supervisory approach taken by Mr. Goldstein, which will be addressed later in this monograph, he does not pay attention to the instructional core. None of his suggestions, even if Ms. Reynolds follows them, will substantively improve her teaching and better promote learning.

Look at this scenario in contrast to the one above:

Vignette: I was privileged to visit a master supervisor at an elementary school in the southern part of the U.S. who adeptly helped a teacher focus on what really matters about teaching: the instructional core. Although I didn't take notes at the time (wish I had recorded the incident), the following is my version of the interaction between this assistant principal and a new teacher conducted as a post-conference (feedback session):

S: Hi Helen; I'm happy we have this time to discuss your lesson.

T: Yes, I am very interested in hearing your reactions and offering me some suggestions for improvement.

S: Well Helen, you do recall that when we met during the pre-conference I asked you to identify some areas of interest that you wanted me to focus on. We agreed that I'd look at your use of questions throughout the lesson. Although we didn't use any particular format or instrument to record the questions you asked, I did have the opportunity to take pretty careful notes at various points in your lesson. Perhaps we can start at that point for our discussion?

T: Sounds fine with me

S: Great, I had some time to write out this question-answer sequence between you and a few students, why don't you take a look at it now and tell me if you feel I accurately recorded the transaction and, even more importantly, what it may mean to you about your teaching? [Supervisor shares a one-page dialogue with the teacher that also included a make-shift seating chart with some arrows indicating who was asking the question, what the question was, who responded and to whom, and what was said.]

[A few minutes pass as the teacher reads and reflects on the data]

T: Umm . . . interesting. I notice my questions are succinct and, I think well-phrased . . . students seem to have responded.

S: Yes, your questions were well put and relevant to the lesson. Can you perhaps take a look at to whom you were speaking and describe the manner in which they responded?

T: I see I must have called on (mentions names of students).

S: Can you see anything common about their seating location?

T: Well, they are all seated near my desk . . . [Supervisor shows teacher three other illustrations of conversations with a similar

pattern.] I didn't really realize I was focusing only on a handful of students [four] seated near my desk. You know, you get caught up in conveying info that sometimes you're not cognizant, . . . you know.

S: Certainly.

T: I also notice the arrows you drew indicate that each student responds directly back to me after my question.

S: So, what could that indicate about your teaching?

T: I control conversations by having them only talk to me? [thinks] Maybe I could encourage students to react to each other's comments as well?

S: Why would that be beneficial?

T: I'd be involving more students in the lesson . . . and, uh . . .

S: I think you're right. What do you notice about each student's response to your questions?

[Pause]

T: Well, they answer the question.

S: How?

T: Briefly, . . . quickly. [Supervisor shows teacher the same three other illustrations of conversations with a similar pattern.] I guess they're all the same.

S: In what way?

T: Brief.

S: Yes, what could that indicate?

T: I don't give them time for elaboration? [Teacher asks for a moment to think] You know, I'm a new teacher and I get nervous sometimes I won't cover my material so sometimes, I think, I look for the 'right' answer from students and want to move on with the lesson. So I don't give students perhaps enough time to absorb or elaborate, or something.

S: That's a very astute and honest assessment, especially from a new teacher. I appreciate your forthrightness.

T: Thanks.

S: Sometimes many of us, even more experienced teachers do the same thing, rush to get through, don't allow enough time for students to interact with each other and really understand the material before we go on . . . Such a teaching pattern is commonly

referred to as recitation in which a teacher poses a question, quickly calls on a student to respond (the response is usually a few words). Then the teacher, at times, repeats the students' response and moves on to the next question and the next student. It is quite common.

T: I know.

S: Let me ask you a question, What are other students doing during the time such recitation is going on?

T: I guess listening?

S: Perhaps. How do you know?

T: Well, I sense it . . . ugh, perhaps next time I'd better look around and be a bit more attentive.

S: We can discuss some strategies I've used to key in on the students a bit later. But let me ask you another question, What can tell me about the difficulty level of the content for this lesson?

Let me end this scenario at this point. What can you say about the supervisor's approach in this vignette compared to the one earlier with Mr. Goldstein?

Certainly, you notice the supervisor in this recent scenario is not evaluative nor as prescriptive as was Mr. Goldstein. Although we can elaborate further on the supervisory approaches used by each supervisor, what can you say about the nature of their comments and what they tried to emphasize?

To my sense, this supervisor engaged the teacher in some reflective thinking about her lesson about key components of a particular aspect of the teaching process; i.e., her use of questions. By focusing on the instructional core, this teacher is engaging in reflective dialogue with her supervisor (or it could be with another colleague) about some very critical aspect of teaching.

A major theme of this monograph is to urge school leaders to accentuate their role as instructional leaders by focusing the majority of their efforts on the instructional core. Moreover, school leaders need to accentuate their role as instructional leaders as they also balance managerial, political, financial, operational, and communal imperatives. Too many leaders eschew instructional leadership responsibilities for a variety of reasons including perceived time

constraints, increase in administrative report keeping from the central office or board, management of school-wide student behavioral issues, lack of knowledge on how to best engage experienced teachers in discussions about teaching practice, among others. Not attending to instruction as the core of what a leader does is not only myopic but detrimental to optimizing student learning. This monograph provides strategies for balancing managerial responsibilities with quality time to improve teaching in classrooms and school-wide.

At this point, an important caveat must be noted. These cutting edge practices are likely to fall short without strategic attention in a school. In other words, instructional supervisory practices need to be conceived as part of a larger more encompassing strategic initiative to improve the school and thus receive ongoing support, financial and otherwise. Strategic planning is time consuming and labor intensive. It involves deep reflection, visioning, goal setting, strategy development, wide collaboration, strategic thinking and action, and disciplined follow-through. Supervisory practices need “front seat” attention in such a plan. When conceived as such, these supervisory initiatives are more likely to be sustained, refined, and ongoing. They become part of the school’s culture and thus go beyond the purview of just one person, i.e. principal or head of school. Instructional supervision becomes endemic and enduring (Davies & Davies, 2006; Eacott, 2008; Glanz, 2010; 2010b; Sullivan & Glanz, 2006).

Central to the work of Jewish day school leaders should be their commitment to further the professional growth of teachers. One cannot assume that since newly-hired teachers have earned a master’s degree their education ceases. Continued professional development⁸ in an ongoing manner is critical to improving teacher quality (Dorph & Holtz, 2000). My read of extant research on teacher quality indicates that:

- Teaching quality matters in terms of promoting student academic achievement (Billet, Druin, Hisiger, & Leibtag, 2009; Moir, Barlin, Gless, & Miles, 2009; National Research Council, 2010; Perkins, 2009).
- Teaching quality cannot be attributed to any one factor. Rather, effective teachers exhibit deep knowledge of their content specialization, knowledge of best practices in

pedagogy, skills in teaching methodology, and dispositions that promote high standards and expectations for learning among all students, regardless of ability (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Heck, 2007).

- Teacher quality can be attributed, in part, to years of teaching experience (e.g., teachers with five years of teaching experience promote higher academic gains in students than do teachers with only a few years of experience); formal teacher certification; and possession of an advanced degree in education pedagogy and/or in the content area (Darling-Hammond, 2000).
- Teachers grow professionally when they are mentored or supervised gradually with adequate instructional, administrative, and social supports (Wong, 2008).
- Induction and mentoring programs that are well-coordinated improve the practice of beginning teachers (Brown & Wynn, 2007; Court, 2008; Feiman-Nemser & Troen, 2008; Gray, 2002; Moir, Gless, Barlin, & Miles, 2009; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2009).
- Supervision needs to be viewed as a collaborative, ongoing, non-judgmental process that engages all teachers, regardless of experience, in conversations that promote reflection about teaching and learning, leading to change of teaching practices with the aim of increasing student achievement (Sewall, 2009; Sullivan, 1999; Sullivan & Glanz, 2009; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).
- Teacher evaluation, by itself, does not promote instructional excellence (Giliya, 2006; Holland & Adams, 2002; Nolan, Jr. & Hoover, 2007).

This monograph affirms the critical nature of instructional leadership as the main responsibility of a Jewish day school leader.⁹ It is meant to provide Jewish school leaders with the theory and tools necessary to meet the instructional challenges, demands, and crises facing Jewish schools in the twenty-first century (Cisco, Intel, & Microsoft., 2009; Drucker, 1999; Hargreaves, 2009).

The Transformational Change Project: The Role of the Yeshiva University School Partnership in Collaboration with the Azrieli Graduate School

“To exercise leadership in this climate of change will require deep convictions, strong commitments, and clear ideas about directions for changes in the form and content of schooling.”

Robert J. Starratt (1995)

This monograph is made possible through work I and other Azrieli Graduate School faculty do as senior fellows of the Yeshiva University School Partnership (YUSP) directed by Dr. Scott Goldberg.¹⁰ The YUSP draws on the intellectual capital and research expertise of Yeshiva University and connects it strategically and proactively to teachers and leaders in the field of Jewish education. The YUSP offers extensive continuing education for teachers, administrators, lay leaders and other school-based professionals: recruits and places educators, conducts research and development projects in schools, and publishes practical, research-based materials. Collectively these initiatives improve the academic, behavioral, social, emotional, and religious outcomes for Jewish students in Jewish schools, develop more and better quality educators and lay leaders, and create a culture in the Jewish educational world of research, innovation, experimentation, reflection and collaboration based on Jewish values.

This monograph grew out of the work I have done with schools in terms of assessing their instructional quality in three areas: teaching practices, curriculum development, and professional development (supervisory) initiatives. It should be noted that the standards of excellence in most Jewish day schools and yeshivot are high; however, *no* school, public or private, excels in all instructional areas, and schools certainly vary in terms of the extent to which adequate attention is drawn to improving teaching, curriculum, and professional development. Still, I have been impressed with the quality of most of the Jewish schools I have visited and audited. The

list that follows summarizes some of what I consider to be assets of the educational program and practices across all the schools I visited:

- dedicated faculty who appreciate the school's mission
- committed board members who deeply believe in the school's mission
- teachers who really get to know the students and vice versa
- enthusiastic and educationally diverse student body who value above all else the relationships with fellow students
- administrators who are passionate about their role

Each school, however, faced a number of educational challenges. My work was to highlight needed instructional improvements and recommendations in an attempt to bring each school to an even higher level of success thereby effecting transformational school wide change. Project goals included:

1. Improving the supervisory knowledge and skills of principals and their assistants based on cutting-edge technologies in instructional leadership that are intended to improve teaching practice (Zeldon, 1998).
2. Developing a school-wide professional development plan aimed at improving classroom-based instruction by focusing on teaching practices and curricular processes so that all students achieve at appropriate levels of performance (Blumberg, 1998)
3. Incorporating other instructional leadership initiatives such as action research (Schmuck, 2006), peer coaching (Truesdale, 2009), critical friends (Bambino 2002), meaningful walk-throughs (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009), all which deepen the school's commitment to a culture of instructional excellence.

I believe that transformational school-wide change cannot occur without a commitment to meaningful and sustained in-depth work in these aforementioned areas. Strategic attention to improve each component of the tripod (see Figure 1 above) is necessary. Initiatives

that are not strategic, but episodic, piecemeal, and not sustained are doomed to insignificance. Further, programs and practices that are for the most part top-down driven, without sufficient teacher input, are similarly problematic. Many schools, public and especially private Jewish schools (Dorph & Holtz, 2000; Gamoran, Goldring, Robinson, Goodman, & Tammivaara, 1997), either minimize time for professional development to a few days a year, and/or mandate workshops with little teacher input. Research and best practice indicate that if changes in teacher classroom behavior are to occur, then professional development must be purposeful and articulated, participatory and collaboratively-developed, knowledge-based, ongoing, developmental, and analytic and reflective (Fogarty & Pete, 2009; Griffin, 1997; Kent, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009; Whitaker, 1995; Zepeda, 2008). Therefore, models that offer one or two professional development workshops or seminars without follow-up in the classroom have not been proven effective. Moreover, a plan to improve instructional excellence in schools must take into account the notion that building and sustaining a culture of instructional excellence that permeates every aspect of the school takes three to five years, according to extant research (Fullan, 2008a; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Sergiovanni, 2008).

Jewish school leaders need to scrutinize the amount and quality of time allotted to the components of the tripod (Figure 1 above) and to the instructional core (Figure 2 above). Jewish leaders are most certainly passionate and committed to the notion of school and instructional improvement but may be unfamiliar with the application of cutting-edge supervisory and instructional practices and/or belabored by a plethora of administrative exigencies that draw attention away from the instructional core. Daily walk-throughs, for instance, are insufficient by themselves to address instructionally-related challenges in a school (David, 2007; Sullivan, 2006).¹¹ Only planned and sustained instructional and supervisory initiatives that are multi-focused have any chance of improving teaching and learning in a school. School leaders should regularly assess the effectiveness of their instructional program through the use of anonymous questionnaires, for instance, that may gauge levels of teacher satisfaction (Blumberg, 1980). Articulation of specific

instructional goals and objectives, including methods for implementation of initiatives are of utmost importance. Coordinating these goals and objectives to measures or outcomes (e.g., student achievement levels) is fundamental. Goals are best articulated and planned given a school's unique needs and understanding of the school's context including leadership talent pool, board support, levels of teacher experience and expertise, financial resources, among other factors.¹² Planning and goal setting alone are insufficient. Monitoring implementation of initiatives is necessary. Sometimes, outside consultants are valuable to provide "another set of eyes" or perspective on a school's instructional programming.

Transformational change in instructional quality occurs gradually, according to the literature on school reform and change, and when capacity is developed, nurtured, and sustained in the school building (Fullan, 2001, 2003a; Fullan & Pomfret 2008; Hargreaves, 2009; Levin, 2008; Sarason, 1971; Sullivan & Shulman, 2005; Zmuda, 2010). Educational quality is achieved to the extent to which those educators who work within the school are empowered to focus on instructional matters. One example will suffice here. Mentoring new teachers is clearly supported by research and best practice (Birkeland & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). Some programs that offer mentoring programs utilize mentors from outside the given school. I believe that having mentors who are themselves teachers within the school and who have been professionally educated and supported builds capacity within the school. The teacher serving as mentor shares her knowledge with other colleagues on a continuous basis at faculty meetings, informal and formal meetings, and in other contexts. Hargreaves (2009) and Fullan (2005) underscore the import of sustainability of reform measures by indicating that "home-grown" initiatives are more likely to be sustained over time than use of outside consultants or mentors.

The transformational school change project initiated by the YUSP in collaboration with the Azrieli Graduate School (AGS) is a multi-faceted one that provides support to Jewish day schools and yeshivot in many different ways and levels (e.g., induction sites are being developed in many schools across the country). A number of YU faculty and staff as well as outside consultants are involved in these and other initiatives. In this monograph, I am merely reporting upon

my personal involvement in work with these schools to improve instructional quality. This work is certainly not representative of the totality of the initiatives of the YUSP in collaboration with the AGS. Another motivation for writing this monograph comes from many school leaders who ask me for a book or series of articles from which they may glean additional information on instructional quality. I hope that this monograph will serve as a primer for improving instructional quality in Jewish day schools and yeshivot.

Reports from the Field: The Status of Instructional Quality in Selected Jewish Schools and Recommendations for Improvement

“A school learning community must hold curriculum, instruction, and assessment central to its work if it expects to make a difference for student learning. The principal’s role has evolved from manager to instructional leader to facilitator-leader of the school learning community. Through collaborative work of the principal and teachers, curriculum development and instructional and assessment practices continually change to conform to the needs of all students. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are the heart of the school learning community. The role of the principal is to facilitate and keep the school focused on excellent curriculum, instruction, and assessment to meet students’ learning needs and improve achievement.”

Marsha Speck (1998)

There is a dearth of research and literature on the status of instructional quality in Jewish day schools and yeshivot. On a positive note, there are some studies underway at the Azrieli Graduate School, at the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education at Brandeis University, at New York University and elsewhere in terms of doctoral dissertations to assess instructional improvement efforts and activities in Jewish schools. Although there is a growing body of research and literature in the public sector (e.g., Shulman, Sullivan, & Glanz, 2008) that we can draw on, many of the comments and ideas in this section of the monograph are necessarily anecdotal. I have drawn insights on the status of instructional quality in selected Jewish day schools and yeshivot not only from my own work, but also from colleagues in the field, both at the university and school practitioner levels. Also, please note, as I mentioned earlier, that Jewish schools are remarkably successful institutions that possess many assets and stellar individuals who lead and work in them. I only raise the concerns addressed in this section in order to focus awareness on areas of potential improvement that can raise instructional quality in Jewish

schools to even greater levels of success. It is not that most Jewish school leaders are oblivious to these instructional issues, although some are, but that often work in ones, especially Jewish schools with sparse resources (personnel and otherwise) is laborious and intensive and requires leaders to inevitably juggle multiple exigencies, often simultaneously. Unless a serious and ongoing commitment to instructional improvement is made, sometimes instructional matters are taken for granted or slip through the crack.¹³ This is offered not as an excuse, but for readers to understand the context in which Jewish school leaders work.

I begin with a few short vignettes that are fictional in nature as they do not represent any one school but are a compilation of my experiences in several different schools. These cases are embedded with a number of false assumptions about the instructional process in schools. Although the vignettes are admittedly presented in caricature form, they do represent, in their constituent parts, realities as I perceived them and have been confirmed to me by others. After each scenario, those false assumptions are highlighted. Later, each instructional issue is explained in greater detail with recommendations for improvement.

Vignette #1: When a school administrator was confronted with the observation that teaching in a specific grade and subject was primarily frontal in nature with little checking for understanding apparent, the response was: “Well, you know, we have to ‘give over’ information (the mesorah), and we do check for understanding as we give unit tests on each topic that I personally review.”

Some false assumptions:

- (1) “Giving over information” is best accomplished through lecture
- (2) Summative assessment is the primary (or sufficient) means to check for understanding

Vignette #2: When a school administrator was confronted with the fact that all classes in most subjects were tracked and that instruction and curriculum in the lower tracks appeared to ‘excessively dumbed-down,’ the response was: “Well, you know, some students can’t learn as quickly as others and we do take into consideration each child’s potential for learning and gear instruction best suited to her/his learning needs. Besides, it is nearly impossible for a teacher to address all the learning needs if we heterogeneously mixed our classes.”

Some false assumptions:

- (1) Learning is measured by how “quickly” students absorb the content
- (2) Teaching a heterogeneous class is not pedagogically sound, nor fair to the “slower” students (or to the “brighter” students for that matter).

Vignette #3: When a school administrator was confronted with the observation that formalized curricula in written form was nearly absent in the school, the response was: “Well, you know, you’re right. It is hard to develop curriculum in Judaic studies, but we do hire competent rabbeim. We do have a list of topics, though, that we require all instructors to follow. We also have worksheets for teachers to use. For secular studies we simply use State curriculum standards, so there is little need for curriculum development in these subjects.”

Some false assumptions:

- (1) Curriculum consists of just topics and worksheets
- (2) Competent teachers can develop curricula on their own.

Vignette #4: When a school administrator was confronted with the observation that professional development (PD) opportunities were sparse, spread out, often unevenly and without a theme over the school year, and that topics for PD were chosen primarily by administrators with little, if any, input from teachers, the response

was: “Well, you know, finding time for our teachers to be free for such work is very difficult as they have commitments prior to and after school, . . . besides, we find workshops by outside consultants to be of marginal value at best. We make sure we hire very competent teachers who will need a minimum of extra PD.”

Some false assumptions:

- (1) PD is useless (thus, not valued)
- (2) Teachers do not necessarily need PD.

Vignette #5: When a school administrator was confronted with the observation that there appears to be an absence of a planned supervisory program, the response was: “Well, you know, we always make ourselves visible in classrooms, we check lesson plans, and we offer comments (positive and constructive criticisms) to teachers after most of our visits. We do evaluate our teachers.”

Some false assumptions:

- (1) Supervision is about giving teachers suggestions for improvement
- (2) Supervision is equated with evaluation.

The issues highlighted above address the following areas: teaching, curriculum, and professional development.

I. Teaching

Overuse of Frontal teaching– Despite small class sizes, frontal teaching is the dominant model utilized in many schools. Some high school educators defend the practice by explaining that they are preparing students for college. College preparation, they say, requires “us to cover the material and teaching this way is the best way of meeting that goal.” Despite the fact that such a position is indefensible, in my view, the persistence of frontal teaching at all grade levels and most disciplines is striking. Noted Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1968) brought attention to the persistence of what he

called the “banking concept of education,” wherein teachers, for the most part, “deposit” information into the “bank” (i.e., the passive mind of students). Testing procedures, in the main, simply demand recall of deposited information.

Frontal teaching as a concept, however, is reminiscent of a more accurate description or phrase found in the literature of educational research; i.e., “the persistence of recitation” (Hoetker & Ahlbrand, 1969).¹⁴ Research based on scientific observations of classroom discourse, since the early part of the last century repeatedly demonstrated the persistence of recitation in the classroom (Barr, 1929; Bellack, 1965; Biddle & Raymond, 1967; Caram & Davis, 2005; Carlsen, 1991; Corey, 1940; Gall, Ward, Berliner, Cahen, Winne, Elashoff, & Stanton, 1978; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1990; Redfield & Rousseau, 1981; Stevens, 1912; Stodolsky, 1981). The three most relevant findings from this research are: (1) the great amount of talking done by both good and poor teachers; (2) the short responses made by students; and (3) the large number of questions asked by both good and poor teachers. The nature of questions posed, research indicates, remains at low levels of knowledge and comprehension according to Bloom’s (1956) Taxonomy scale. Moreover, recitation is often only bi-directional; i.e., from teacher to student and back to teacher. Rarely do students find the need to listen to each others’ responses since conversations are controlled and repeated by the teacher. Teachers, according to further research, address their attention to only one-third of the pupils in a given 40-minute period. The idea or conception of the learning model that has emerged in practice is that for the most part, “teaching is talking, and learning is listening.” Based on research on active learning (discussed later in this monograph), the educational process most conducive to student learning should be, rather, “learning is talking and teaching is listening (and facilitating learning)” (Hayes & Matusov, 2005; Pomson, 2002).¹⁵

Frontal teaching appears more advantageous, according to some educators, because their “classes are homogenously grouped, for the most part.” Such thinking, although not uncommon, is myopic in my view because it assumes that frontal teaching¹⁶ is the preferred approach even for above-average learners. Frontal teaching (also

called direct teaching), although employed in a differentiated classroom, is minimized. The need for educating teachers in differentiated instruction is axiomatic (Benjamin, 2002, 2003; George, 2005; Glanz, 2008; Gregory & Chapman, 2002; Tomlinson, 2003). Educating teachers in differentiated instruction and inclusive practices in order that they learn best how to meet the needs of all ability levels within the same classroom is similarly axiomatic (Alvarado, 1998; Hedrick, 2005; Reis, McCoach, Little, Muller, & Kaniskan, 2011; Tomlinson, 2001, 2005; Wormeli, 2005).¹⁷

Parenthetically, yet very importantly and that is why I insert these next three incidents in the main body of the monograph, there is a widely-held view about teaching that needs debunking, and is a primary motive for writing this monograph.

Incident number one: In the course of writing this monograph, I met a rabbi, defending the “sage on the stage” modality of teaching, who explained to me that when he was a *talmid* of some esteemed well-known rav, the rav once queried why he was always so quiet in class. The rabbi responded, “My parents pay a lot in tuition so that I should listen and learn, and not to speak but rather to hear the brilliance of the Rav expound.” This story was related, I presume, to support the rabbi’s use of direct teaching with little audience participation. I do not deny the import of the “sage on the stage” manner of presentation; it’s just not teaching. To “teach” implies that students are learning, and most students cannot learn without direct involvement and active engagement between teacher and student, student and student, and student and text. (See the Instructional Core in Figure 2 earlier in the monograph.) Moreover, if the “sage” or “presenter” does not check for student understanding then the process may be called anything but teaching. A minority of *talmidim* can learn from a “sage on the stage” approach, but most learners simply cannot. Parenthetically, I do appreciate those who might argue or, at least, posit that a *rav* might speak above the comprehension levels of the audience in order to affect their *neshamot*. I once heard from someone that the Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe once said, “Why should I aim my address to their present intellectual level when I can try to

stimulate them to realize their full potential by speaking to their noble, lofty souls?”

Incident number two: I was recently asked to participate in a “phenomenal” *shiur*. Admittedly, I have not attended a *shiur* in years because I can no longer learn by simply listening; I need to be engaged and challenged. I was informed that this *shiur* would indeed be engaging and challenging. After informing his audience of ten to fifteen *baalei batim* that they would be learning *masekhet Moed Kattan*, the rabbi continued to explain that we would be learning the text, *Rashi, Tosafot, Mishnah Berurah*, etc. There was no pre-assessment made of the skill level of the audience. For many participants, learning *Tosafot* was well beyond their skill level, although I do understand that “talking out” a *Tosafot* may be appealing to some individuals. I then decided not to attend another *shiur* when the rabbi, who was most articulate and inviting, explained that we needed to review the material, that during the week we should find a *havruta* to do so, and that he would answer any questions the following week. The rabbi proceeded to speak for the next 45 minutes occasionally addressing a question from the audience. Although the speaker was competent in the material and interesting to listen to, I walked away with little information I could retain. Of course, I noticed a few *baalei batim* engaging the proverbial practice of “nodding off.” Many of our *talmidim* and *rabbeim* in yeshivot, exposed to such frontal teaching practices, tend to think that is the way all students learn. We teach as we were taught. No wonder, then, that a student teacher I was observing working with a group of 9th graders while employing the same directive teaching methods, was surprised to find few, if any students engaged in the lesson!

Incident number three: I received this email message from a *semikhah* student while writing this monograph; it is quite startling: “I face a huge frustration; My mind is generally in the pedagogic mindset, always thinking what way there is to enhance education, . . . However, I then sit in *shiur*. . . and I am lost half the time, and three-quarters of the *shiur* are unresponsive. The rabbi, however, might talk or explain something for about 45 minutes to an hour, and then asks ‘okay, any questions?’ ‘No, okay, great, let’s go on.’ Later, he is

surprised when no one can answer ‘simple questions.’ He says, ‘Do I have to ask you to act out the case in front of the class in order for you to understand?’ I was beside myself that he asked that question rhetorically and in mockery. In my head, ‘yes! please do! I cannot learn purely cognitively, in abstract verbalization.’ While I have tried to respectfully request the use of visual aids, the rabbi often responds in a way suggesting he is not sure how that would happen, except in summation of the entire *sugya*.”

If one’s purpose is to “give over” material, then the aforementioned approaches are reasonable. However, if we care about students actually learning the material, then other methods of engaging teaching and active learning are necessary (as discussed more specifically later in the monograph; see e.g., Best Practice #4 in the subsection below entitled “An Overview of Best Practices in Teaching”).

II. Curriculum

Lack of understanding about curriculum development – Development of curriculum in both General and Judaic studies in many schools needs more ongoing, comprehensive attention, although some curricula in general education are dictated by state standards (see, e.g., Skolnik Moskowitz, 1998). Many educators have little knowledge of the curriculum development process and what a curriculum is supposed to look like (Tanner & Tanner, 2006). Many curricula, especially in Judaic Studies, are outlined by topics. In many schools, no further articulation exists. Curricula are generated by administrators, for the most part, without teacher input. In some cases, teachers themselves develop curricula in isolation of others. In other words, teachers at different grade levels rarely converse over curricula issues (Wiles, 2008). Concomitantly, schools should avoid overuse of pre-packaged curricula or top-down curriculum mandates. Explaining the curriculum development process, Birkeland and Feiman-Nemser (2009) in a recent issue of the *Journal of Jewish Education* state, “A teaching curriculum includes a comprehensive list of grade-level skill and knowledge objectives for students, content through which to teach those skills and knowledge, suggested

methods for delivering content and assessing understanding, and supporting materials” (p. 243). Suggestions for enhancing curriculum development are made later.

III. Professional Development

Lack of professional development (PD) and common meeting time for faculty – PD is episodic and uneven at many schools. Although teachers meet informally, there is often little time to meet formally and consistently to work on instructional issues e.g., curriculum development. Teachers are sometimes respected for their knowledge and experience. They are given much latitude in terms of subject coverage and instructional methodology. Although the principal often monitors teaching by checking lesson plans and occasionally meets with groups of teachers, instructional quality could be enhanced by much more planned meeting times where teachers and administrators collaboratively develop and engage in a coherent and ongoing PD program. PD is often top-down initiated without meaningful input by teachers. No wonder that so many teachers find PD useless. Best practices definitely demonstrate that instructional quality is improved by continued in-school learning by all educators (Joyce & Calhoun, 2010; Yendol-Hoppey & Fichtman-Dana, 2010; Zepeda, 2008).

IV. Supervision

Supervision in many schools traditionally consists of walk-throughs and occasional formal evaluative observations without utilizing the latest cutting edge practices. There is little evidence of professional growth plans created collaboratively between teacher and supervisor. Supervision as inspection, or the absence of supervision, characterizes the tone of supervisory practices in many schools. Supervision of instruction needs to be the focus of school improvement (Sullivan & Glanz, 2009).

Recommendations

I. Teaching

1. Teachers and supervisors must have a common understanding (articulated and detailed) of what good teaching is in order to make improvements and to simply talk a common language about instructional improvement. This coherent view of “good teaching practice” may be developed by examining extant models such as Charlotte Danielson’s (2007) model, Robert Marzano’s (2007) model,¹⁸ or professional teaching standards. This is a great idea for a starter discussion among faculty at grade and whole faculty meetings.
2. Research on effective teaching is clear in regards to the following instructional areas and school leaders, therefore, should emphasize them: (a) proper use of wait time (see, e.g., Brophy & Good, 1986); (b) checking for understanding using formative assessments, not only summative ones (see, e.g., Cohen, Raudenbush, & Ball, 2003; Douglass, 2009; Popham, 2008b; Rowan & Correnti, 2009); and (c) effective use of questioning strategies (see, e.g., Cochran Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre, & Demers, 2008; Richardson, 2001).

[See the discussion of teaching later in the subsection: An Overview of Best Practices in Teaching.]

II. Curriculum

Establish a Curriculum Process –Schools should begin a serious and continuous curriculum development project. This project should involve teachers, administrators, some parents and students, with the assistance, at some juncture, of a curriculum generalist (to guide each department through the “process”) and/or curriculum specialists (e.g., *Tanakh*, mathematics, etc.). Curriculum development should be viewed as an ongoing “process” rather than an event or series of events over a relatively short period of time.

- A. Administration should articulate a vision for curriculum development both in word and deed. The vision statement

should include goal setting strategies and a timeline. It is suggested that during the first year, beginning perhaps over the summer (many schools begin their curriculum planning at the end of the school year and/or during the summer with the availability of grants to support such efforts), forming committees, outlining goals and objectives, etc. The first year should involve the planning process, with the second year gradually initiating implementation of changes. Best practices in the curriculum literature demonstrate that a slower process builds a culture of learning thus sustaining the curriculum development in an ongoing fashion. Clearly, benchmarks and measurable outcomes should be established to ensure progress is being made, goals reached, etc. Curriculum in many schools depends too much on the “particular” teacher; alignment of curriculum is necessary so that all teachers (and new ones, in particular) would receive a formal curriculum to guide them, while still allowing for individual input and creativity.

- B. Administration must set aside time for curriculum committees to meet on an ongoing basis. Incentives, if possible at no or low cost, should be offered to active participants (e.g., release time, an extra day off, etc.)
- C. A curriculum consultant can assist the school with the “curriculum mapping” process. A UbD (Understanding by Design) approach to curriculum development (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) is recommended because it is particularly useful in Judaic studies. The “Paideia Proposal” (Adler, 1982) is also singularly well-suited for *limmudei kodesh* curricula since it allows one to begin the process by stipulating the text at the focus of the learning, elaborating on the acquisition of skills and, finally, the enlarged understanding of ideas and values.
- D. Even when State standards exist in secular studies, ongoing curriculum development is necessary (e.g., alignment of standards to lessons, revision of standards to meet local goals and objectives, etc.). Therefore, when a school official says “we don’t need curriculum development because we use State

standards,” a significant opportunity is lost to engage teachers in meaningful discussions about the curriculum.

Implementing the recommendation:

- Start small – Select one Judaic subject to focus on over a 2-year period.
- Form a committee of volunteers. One administrator and two subject specialists can examine the current status and offer recommendations to the faculty. Meetings can take place before/after school, or occasionally during school day (use a mass preparation period, for instance, to relieve teachers).
- Invite a consultant – A consultant at low or no cost could be obtained through an alliance with a local college or university as many assistant professors are required to do “community outreach” in order to obtain tenure. Two types of consultants are suggested (or one person with both skills). One may serve as a generalist who understands the process of curriculum revision and the other as a specialist, i.e., in *Tanakh* or *Chumash*. These consultants are not needed long-term, but merely to jump-start the process and report back occasionally.
- Develop a scope and sequence in the content area that articulates both the broad and specific areas to be covered and the specific goals and objectives in each area. Benchmarks should also be articulated (e.g., By the end of 3rd grade students will be able to ...)
- Review curriculum with all faculty of the same discipline for feedback and improvement.
- Implement, track, and assess the curriculum

III. Professional Development (Supervision)

Supervision is a collaborative, ongoing, non-judgmental, and developmental process that encourages instructional dialogue and reflection about teaching practices. This form of supervision leads to changes in teacher behavior, which, in turn, affects student achievement. The following recommendations are offered:

- A. End the “Dog-Pony” approach to classroom observations. In these traditional supervisory approaches, teachers are notified in advance of an observation, then prepare their “best” lesson for a supervisor to observe, followed by a post-conference and a written letter that highlights good teaching practices and needed improvements, they do not encourage instructional dialogue and reflection in a serious fashion. At the other end of the spectrum, short “walk-through” visits that offer little in-depth understanding of teaching are similarly unproductive. Not that visiting classrooms is unwarranted. In fact, supervisors must demonstrate their commitment to teaching excellence by visiting classrooms often and being available to teachers as resources.
- B. Incorporate a Multi-Faceted Approach to Supervision – The school’s supervision program should offer a variety of supervisory strategies, briefly outlined below:
- a. Clinical Supervisory Model – With the assistance of a consultant, the administration should start to incorporate a clinical supervision process (pre-conference, short observations, and a post-conference) that encourages deep reflection about teaching practices. With this model, supervisors, do not “tell” teachers what is “right” or “wrong” but rather offer teachers data through the use of observation forms or instruments and then begin an instructional conversation with teachers encouraging them to reflect on their classroom practices (see, e.g., Zelden, 1998).
 - b. Demo Lessons and Videotaping – Faculty or department meetings should occasionally include analyses of videotaped (or recorded) teaching episodes. A supervisor can first volunteer to have him/herself videotaped for 10 minutes, to be viewed and discussed by a group of teachers. Such practices build trust and a learning community in the school (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2009).
 - c. Professional Development (PD) is part of a supervisory program – PD must not be episodic nor should it be mandated. Teachers are encouraged to develop a plan for PD over the course of a year. Administrators and teachers can

decide on an area or theme they'd like to pursue. For instance, during my observations, I noticed that frontal teaching dominates classroom discourse at many schools. Wait time is poorly implemented and alternative assessment strategies (e.g., formative assessments) are minimal. Therefore, teachers might select as a theme for PD over a course of the year to bring in experts to offer PD workshops on formative assessment techniques and/or ways of differentiating to break the “habit” of frontal teaching as the dominant mode of teaching. The educational research literature is particularly rich here in terms of the benefits of formative assessments and alternative “active learning” strategies (see, e.g., Andrade & Cizek, 2010; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). PD, most importantly, should not stop after the workshop, but rather the consultant should then work with selected teachers in their classrooms to help teachers implement practices. Once some teachers become more expert in these new approaches, they can serve as turn-key personnel to work with other teachers. Workshops without follow-ups are of marginal worth at best.

- d. Mentoring and Induction – Beginning teachers are frequently not offered sufficient support to achieve success (Court, 2008; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Wong, 2008). A formal program of mentoring is necessary as well as an induction program that offers support to new teachers during years 2-4. Various models for mentoring and induction can be found nationally (the work of Harry Wong, 2008, is especially effective). A consultant can help set up such a program rather quickly.
- e. The following supervisory strategies are suggested and described—albeit briefly. These strategies encourage supervision as a collaborative process that teachers, themselves, can implement (with the support of school administration).
 - Intervisitations – Most teachers have rarely seen a colleague teach. Providing release time for colleagues to observe each other and then providing time for

discussion is highly recommended. Their experiences can later be shared at a department or whole faculty meeting. At several schools, some teachers I interviewed even suggested *limmudei hol* (general studies) teachers could observe *limmudei kodesh* (religious studies) teachers and vice versa. Selected teachers should also have the opportunity to observe a peer in another school in an ongoing peer consultation by phone or internet. *Limmudei kodesh* teachers, like their counterparts in secular studies, can benefit greatly from the opportunity to connect with peers in other communities in order to enhance their pedagogical skills and learn about the latest ideas and materials in their particular content area, such as *Humash* or Jewish History.

- Peer coaching – A pair of teachers, of the same or approximate ability or experience, alternate periods observing each other and use data to engage in conversations. Peer coaching may differ from the strategy above in the sense that such observations are conducted long-term.
- Action research – Encouraging teachers (this is particularly useful for tenured, experienced teachers), in lieu of the “Dog-Pony” observation requirement, to engage in a project in which they identify a problem they are experiencing in the classroom, compose some research questions, gather data to answer them, reflect on findings and take actions. This has proven to be an invaluable supervisory asset (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010; Du, 2009; Glanz, 2003; Mills, 2002; Sagor, 2008).
- Book studies – Teachers or administrators can distribute copies of a book on pedagogy or in a particular discipline, and then engage in meetings and conversations about strategies for classroom implementation. The chief criterion to be used in book selection should be, in most cases, the extent to which the book can assist teachers in addressing or gaining insights into some aspect of the instructional core.

- Reflective journaling – Another alternative to traditional supervision might be to offer teachers choices to record journal reflections of their teaching over time to be shared, in discussion, with another colleague or presented at a faculty meeting.
- Lesson studies – Teachers collaboratively plan a lesson (perhaps in association with the curriculum mapping process), each presents the lesson to a class, and then they meet together to discuss successes, questions, and challenges (Perry & Lewis, 2009; Stepanek, Appel, Leong, Turner Mangan, & Mitchell, 2007). The focus of lesson studies as well as instructional rounds (see next bullet) should be on student learning, not critique of the teacher.
- Instructional rounds – A small group of teachers and others visit a classroom of a colleague. There are various models used for such rounds (see approaches, for instance, of City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009, and Marzano, 2007, especially at http://www.marzano-research.com/documents/Marzano_Protocol.pdf).

C. Professional growth plans for individual teachers should be made as well. Utilize the talents of the experienced teachers and encourage them by drawing on their years of experience to help mentor less experienced teachers or conduct workshops for each other. In many cases, it is not necessary to call upon consultants from outside the school to offer PD; utilize the talent and expertise that exist in a school.

Accomplishing PD as explained above:

- Differentiated instruction – I suggest that differentiated instruction would serve as a valuable ongoing theme for PD to help teachers deal with a wide range of abilities in the same classroom.
- Start small – Select one department or grade to start.
- Form a committee of volunteers – One administrator, two or three teachers to develop a sequence of PD initiatives to

educate faculty in differentiated instruction and formative assessments, for instance – a year-long plan of PD should be offered – PD initiatives should be sequentially developed with follow-ups in teacher classrooms with consultants to implement said initiatives. Again, collaborating with a college or university would be a low or no cost way of obtaining such workshops.

- Establish modest goals, solicit volunteers among the faculty to lead the way (idea is to start small with successful implementation by a few teachers as the idea gets planted, nurtured, and grown).

Jewish day schools and yeshivot could also benefit from the following recommendations:

1. Check to determine the existence of optimal support mechanisms to facilitate instructional excellence. Is there an administrative structure in place that supports instruction (e.g., assistant principals, department chairs, lead teachers)? Who are the school's instructional leaders? What are their skills sets for facilitating instructional matters? What are the specific roles and areas of responsibility allotted for each leader? What evaluative measures are in place to determine instructional effectiveness of these leaders?
2. Consider creative scheduling to free teachers to participate in curriculum and instructional decision making. Release time for teachers on a rotational basis should be examined through the use of hiring substitutes or use of mass preparation periods (e.g., combine several classes to watch an instructional film or movie tied to curricular goals to allow teachers to meet). Opportunities for block scheduling, for instance, should be encouraged to facilitate deeper learning for students. The Board's input and support here is critical to provide the resources to allow administrators to schedule appropriately to accomplish the curricular and supervisory aims described here.¹⁹

3. Deep instructional improvement visioning is necessary for all schools. The administration should work with teachers, perhaps with an educational consultant, to create and implement targeted school-wide improvement goals over a three-year period.
4. Educators who work in schools should be seen—as well as consider themselves—as “scholars of practice.” As such, continued professional development is of utmost importance. Teachers should be receiving a journal in their area, whether it is the NCTM journal for math or a generic educational journal for *limudei kodesh* teachers. I highly recommend that the school subscribe to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development’s (ASCD) *Educational Leadership* magazine so that each member receives a copy, if possible. Subscription to *Jewish Educational Leadership* is recommended as is, perhaps, the *Journal of Jewish Education*.
5. Disseminate anonymous surveys to ascertain school climate, teacher satisfaction, parent satisfaction, and student satisfaction (with graduating class). Alumni data should also be collected.²⁰

[For further information, read the discussion of teaching below in: An Overview of Best Practices in Supervision and Professional Development.]

Research literature demonstrates that effective schools are ones in which primary attention is devoted to teacher quality (Heck, 2007). Research indicates that better teachers lead to higher student achievement (Brophy & Good, 1986). School leaders must articulate a commitment to high-quality instruction and provide the support to enable their teachers, through curriculum development and supervision, to offer high-quality instruction. School boards, especially, must be attuned to the importance of instructional quality as the main responsibility of school administrators (Birkeland, 2008). Their efforts and backing are imperative to ensure instructional excellence and high levels of student achievement.

Promoting Instructional Excellence

“If we desire instructional excellence, we must be prepared to fight for it, demand it, and rid the ranks of those incapable or unwilling to be excellent.”

John A. Black & Fenwick W. English (1997)

The material that follows includes suggestions to improve the school’s academic program in line with best practices culled from both the latest research and literature in the field of instructional quality.²¹ Ideas are also culled from everyday practices observed in Jewish day schools and yeshivot. It includes the following three areas of best practices: teaching, curriculum development, and PD (supervision). Please note that the information that follows in the next three subsections is meant as introductory because an entire volume can be written on each of these topics alone. I have selected practices that research indicates have the highest correlations with student achievement. In the annotated references section later in the monograph other works are cited for readers interested in a fuller treatment of the subject.

An Overview of Best Practices in Teaching

“Before I stepped into my first classroom as a teacher, I thought teaching was mainly instruction, partly performing, certainly being in front and at the center of classroom life. Later, with much chaos and some pain, I learned that this is the least of it – teaching includes a more splendid range of actions. Teaching is instructing, advising, counseling, organizing, assessing, guiding, goading, showing, managing, modeling, coaching, disciplining, prodding, preaching, persuading, proselytizing, listening, interacting, nursing, and inspiring.”

William Ayers (2004, p. 119)

Instructional leadership is about encouraging best practices in teaching. To do so, requires school leaders to become familiar with innovative teaching theories and practices, and encourage teachers to model them in classrooms.

Parenthetically, school leaders must also encourage a positive learning climate. To do so, an educational leader needs to focus on pro-social behavioral expectations to create a safe and supportive school environment that will foster both social and academic success for all students. Within each classroom, a positive environment can lead to increased student achievement (Ji, Segawa, Burns, Campbell, Allred, & Flay, 2005). Although this monograph does not focus on this vital aspect of student social success, its mention in a discussion of instructional leadership is important.

The boxed material below summarizes the teaching ideas highlighted in this sub-section. The list is not exhaustive, but is merely meant to highlight some key concepts and ideas that successful instructional leaders should know about as they conduct seminars, workshops, and collaborate with teachers (see, e.g., Marzano, 2003).

Research Based Teaching Practices

- **Allocated, Instructional, Engaged and Success Time** – are crucial factors in promoting student learning.
- **Wait Time** – increases the amount of time students have to think before responding.
- **Checking for understanding** – is essential regardless of what subject is taught.
- **Active Learning** – is the most crucial factor for promoting student achievement.
- **Differentiated Instruction** – refers to the varied teaching strategies employed by teachers to address the learning needs of all students.

Best Practice #1: Incorporating AAT, AIT, AET, and AST

Research into teaching effectiveness consistently points to four concepts related to time that are critically important for promoting achievement (Berliner, 1990). Effective principals work with teachers on these four concepts:

1. **Academic Allocated Time (AAT)** is the amount of time teachers assign for various subjects, e.g., reading, math, science, etc. Research studies consistently affirm strong relationships between the amount of time allocated by the school administration for a particular subject and achievement. School leaders can investigate and create appropriate AAT by reviewing school policies and schedules with teachers and discussing subject time allocations by grade or department.
2. **Academic Instructional Time (AIT)** refers to the actual amount of time teachers spend in various subjects. Instructional time is influenced by external interruptions (such as excessive announcements over the school loudspeaker and constant interruptions from the main office including monitors coming into class for attendance reports and the like). Minimizing these external interruptions goes far towards increasing the possibility for greater AIT. Classroom level factors are also significant. For instance, if teachers have difficulty controlling student behavior, AIT will be negatively affected. Therefore, to increase AIT schools must minimize classroom interruptions and teachers should have a system of rules and procedures that deal effectively with disciplinary problems and other disruptions This plan should be implemented with consistency in order to provide for greater time spent on the allocated curriculum.
3. **Academic Engaged Time (AET)** is the time a student actually spends attending to academic tasks. Often referred to as “Time on Task,” this factor must be present to ensure academic achievement. “Along with the importance of time allocated to instruction by the teacher, the time the students spend ‘on task’ or engaged in the learning activity, is an important contributor to classroom success” (Stronge, 2007, p.48). For example, teachers can allocate time for math and they can spend time instructing their students in the subject, but they will not see results unless the students are on-task. According to Ornstein (1990), “Students of teachers who provide more academic engaged time (as well as actual instructional time) learn more than students of teachers who provide relatively less time” (p.

76). Teachers who employ instructional strategies that increase time-on-task are more effective than those who do not. Research verifies that teachers who engage learners invite all students to actively participate in the lesson, use more positive reinforcement strategies including rewarding on-task behavior, make their lessons appealing, vary the types of questions they pose, distribute their questions to many students, tend to provide step-by-step directions to students, and come to class well prepared.

4. **Academic Success Time** (AST) is the percent of academic engaged time during which the student experiences high and medium levels of *successful* learning (Berliner, 1990). This is the most essential factor for promoting academic achievement. Teachers can allocate time, provide instructional time, ensure on-task behavior, but what does the extant research say about how can they ensure that students are successful? First a teacher needs to know if students are learning successfully. This can be done by frequently checking for understanding by circulating around the room during student independent work and providing situational assistance; calling on non-volunteers to ascertain attention and comprehension and at times administering a verbal or written quiz. Help can be provided for those students who are experiencing difficulties by using cooperative learning grouping and grouping students who have specific problems in a content area. Utilizing differentiated instruction in order to meet the needs of all students and provide equal attention to all greatly impacts on student success.

Best Practice #2: Using Wait Time

Research indicates that effective use of wait time is among the major factors in promoting student learning. Wait time is an instructional strategy that refers to the amount of time students have to think during questioning. Research indicates that providing between 7 and 10 seconds for students to think before the instructor answers a question or calls on someone else improves student accurate

participation. Teacher focused instruction decreases and student failure to respond is reduced.

Benefits include increases in (see <http://med.fsu.edu/education/FacultyDevelopment/notesbackofroom.asp>):

1. the length of student responses
2. student initiated and appropriate responses
3. the number of students' responding
4. student confidence in responding
5. student speculative responses increase
6. student to student interactions
7. student evidence to support statements
8. the number of student questions
9. the participation of "slow" students
10. the variety of student responses

Successful teachers use wait time in various ways. Here's how one teacher reported his use of wait time: "I pose a question. I don't call on anyone before about 7 seconds even if someone raises a hand immediately. I allow think time. What happens if after 7 seconds no one responds? I ask myself, 'Do I need to rephrase the question?' If so, I do and start again. If not, I ask them to pair and share thoughts about possible answers. I give them about 60-90 seconds. This technique always yields results. Students give their answers. Not always, however, are the answers right, but at least they had time to reflect and respond."

Best Practice #3: Checking for Understanding

Use of formative assessments has received much attention in the literature on classroom effectiveness (Brookhart, 2008; Moss & Brookhart, 2009; Popham, 2008a). Here are a few techniques culled from this literature:

1. **Use pair and share** – Upon teacher prompt, one student turns to another to repeat or explain the concept just reviewed by the teacher.
2. **The Minute Paper** (Angelo & Cross, 1993) – The teacher takes the last minutes of class and asks the student to write down

short answers to two questions. The responses can be on index cards that the teachers hands out or the students' own paper. Questions should be open ended such as: What question(s) do you have about the material covered in today's class? What was the concept that we learned today that was the most difficult for you to understand? List the key concepts from today's class.

3. **Reciprocal Teaching:** Many forms of this very important teaching strategy can be used (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Research demonstrates that reciprocal teaching is particularly effective during and after learning content-laden material. One form is as follows:
 - A. Some time after having presented relatively difficult material, tell students to close their notebooks and texts to find a partner to "pair and share."
 - B. Inform students that one of them should be designated as "Student A" and the other "Student B."
 - C. Let Student B tell Student A everything s/he just learned. Student A cannot ask any questions. Student A records information. As Student B relates the information, Student A pays attention to any errors or omissions.
 - D. After about 5 minutes, tell Student A to tell Student B any errors or omissions. Allow about 3 minutes.
 - E. Tell students to now open their notebooks and texts to determine if the information they related to each other is correct.
 - F. Share experience with whole class.

Best Practice #4: Active Learning

Most students cannot learn unless they are actively engaged with other elements in the instructional core (see Figure 2 above). Through extensive classroom observations, researchers have determined that active learning is evident when students are engaging with teachers in active ways (e.g., dialoguing, not merely through recitation wherein the student is left on his own), when students engage with fellow students (e.g., dialoguing with each other, not merely having teachers repeat student responses), and when students are provided

opportunities to engage course content (e.g., in its selection). More fundamentally, active learning is fostered when knowledge is viewed as a process of constructing meaning through exploration and when students are provided opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge in different ways.

The research on active learning is extensive. John Dewey (1899) said that people learn best “by doing” (also see, Bruner, 1961). Hands-on instructional tasks encourage students to become actively involved in learning. Active learning increases students' interest in the material, makes the material being taught more meaningful, allows students to refine their understanding of the material, and provides opportunities to relate the material to broad contexts.

Active learning is a reflection of constructivist theory. According to constructivist theory, learning is a socially-mediated process in which learners construct knowledge in developmentally appropriate ways and that real learning requires that learners use new knowledge and apply what they have learned (Vygotsky, 1934/1986; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Foote, Vermette, & Battaglia, 2001). These beliefs emphasize “minds-on” learning. This endorses the belief that all learners must be intellectually engaged in the learning process by building on their previous knowledge and experiences, and applying their new learning in meaningful contexts. Constructivism also supports the social dimensions of learning; people learn best when actively working with others as partners (e.g., cooperative learning) (Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Johnson, Johnson, & Johnson-Holubec, 1994; Segal, 2003).²² Thus, constructivist pedagogy is aligned with the moral commitment to provide all students with high-quality developmentally- appropriate instruction (Udvari-Solner & Kluth, 2007). Such learning and the theory that supports it must, in my view, become mainstays in Jewish day schools and yeshivot.

More specifically, students who are encouraged to "gather, assemble, observe, construct, compose, manipulate, draw, perform, examine, interview, and collect" are likely to be engaged in meaningful learning opportunities (Davis, 1998, p. 119). Students may, for example, gather facts about Shoah history by exploring primary and secondary sources, even exploring the Internet, and then compose essays about key historical figures. Students of diverse learning styles

may become involved in cooperative group projects in topics they deem interesting. Students may record their observations about reading selections and react to video segments in personal reaction journals. Students may construct posters demonstrating artifacts, while teams of students may interview survivors and others.

Barak Rosenshine (1971) and others have highlighted principles of effective instruction and student engagement that serve to promote student learning and achievement.²³ Among the most relevant research findings include:

- Abstract ideas need to be first made concrete through the use of objects, illustrations, manipulative, and examples through hands-on learning. (Mayer, 2008)
- Graphic organizers and visual frameworks should be used when introducing new content and when designing student worksheets. (Mayer, 2008)
- Inductive [indirect] instruction is often preferable to deductive [direct] instruction because the content becomes more meaningful if the learner is guided to independently discover rules, definitions, and attributes. (Bruner, 1966; Good & Brophy, 2007)
- Students need to be allowed to interact verbally in order to process new learning for increased understanding and retention (Slavin, 2008).
- Opportunities for practice must follow instruction. (Rosenshine, 1971; Good & Brophy, 2007)

Other studies reveal benefits of active learning in specific subject areas (e.g., Hayman, 1997; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Newmann, Marks, and Gamoran (1995) found increased levels of achievement for student who were taught with active learning pedagogies in mathematics and social studies. These researchers identified what they called *authentic pedagogies* in which instruction focused on real-world contexts that called for higher order thinking and interaction with the world outside the classroom, among others. Lee, Smith, and Croninger (1995) found that students in high schools that emphasized *authentic instruction* experienced greater gains on achievement tests

than students who were taught with rote traditional pedagogies (e.g., lectures or frontal teaching). More specifically, the researchers noted that “an average student who attended a school with a high level of authentic instruction would learn about 78 percent more math between 8th and 10th grade than a comparable student in a school with a low level of authentic instruction” (Lee, Smith, & Croninger, 1995, p. 9 as cited in Darling-Hammond, 2000). Bonwell and Eison (1991), both of whom popularized the term active learning, found that active learning was equally as effective as traditional pedagogies for content mastery, but far exceeded traditional methods in regards to developing critical thinking.

Finally, in one of the most comprehensive and methodological research studies undertaken, Prince (2004), in an article entitled “Does Active Learning Work? A Review of the Research,” concludes:

Although the results vary in strength, this study has found support for all forms of active learning examined . . . The best evidence suggests that faculty should structure their courses to promote collaborative and cooperative environments . . . Teaching cannot be reduced to formulaic methods and active learning is not the cure for all educational problems. However, there is broad support for the elements of active learning most commonly discussed in the educational literature and analyzed here. (p. 7)

For some additional information on active learning and concrete strategies for assessing active learning see Glanz (2009).

Best Practice #5: Differentiating Instruction

Classrooms are more complex and inclusionary than ever. Teachers must learn how to differentiate instruction in order to accommodate the learning needs of all students. “Effective teachers tend to recognize individual and group differences among their students and accommodate those differences in their instruction” (Stronge, 2007, p. 57). Differentiated learning takes place when teachers are aware and able to consider and deal with different learning needs and abilities of their students. Active learning is often

utilized within a differentiated learning environment. Here are a few suggestions that might be discussed with teachers:

- Utilize homogeneous grouping: Identify above average learners and provide them opportunities to work with students of similar abilities on special activities and projects.
- Utilize their talents through peer tutoring: Educate and allow these accelerated learners to assist “slower” (different) learners in specific learning activities. Students receiving the assistance will benefit, but so too will the advanced learners. They will benefit emotionally because they are helping fellow students. They learn that all students are unique and should be valued. They too will learn the material better. I always say that if you want to really understand something, teach. These arguments in favor of peer tutoring can be shared with parents who insist that such an activity detracts from the educational experiences of their children.
- Provide enrichment activities and individualized attention: Do not ignore these accelerated learners by teaching to the “middle.” Plan specific lessons for their needs. Plan on meeting and working with them individually.
- Use cooperative learning: Research indicates that teachers who incorporate cooperative learning strategies promote student achievement.

Best Practices in Teaching: Conclusion

Schools should develop a conception of good teaching practice, however good teaching is much more than being able to use wait time correctly and be knowledgeable about ways to differentiate instruction. Good teaching, probably above all else, also entails those immeasurable qualities such as caring, commitment, enthusiasm, and empathy (see, e.g., Entwistle & Tait, 1990; Goh, 1996; Grimmer & MacKinnon, 1992; Hare, 1993; Sandel, 2006; Simmons, 1987; Soloveitchik, 1979; Zoul, 2006).

An Overview of Best Practices in Curriculum

“Principals can best discharge their leadership role if they develop a deep and broad knowledge base with respect to curriculum.”

Allan A. Glatthorn (2000b, p. 3)

Instructional leadership is about encouraging best practices in curriculum. To do so, requires familiarity with basic concepts involved in curriculum development. Successful instructional leaders facilitate best practices in curriculum in the following ways:

- model best practice in curriculum by reviewing all instructional resources and materials in various content areas
- align teaching with curriculum
- encourage teachers to review curriculum guidelines and recommend revisions to the instructional program.
- unpack the standards and convert them into curriculum and instruction
- review testing and assessment procedures
- invite curriculum specialists from within and outside of the school to help facilitate curriculum revisions and development

The boxed material below summarizes different ways of approaching or thinking about curriculum development. The list is not exhaustive, but is merely meant to highlight some key concepts and ideas that successful instructional leaders should know about as they engage in curricular matters.

Research-Based Teaching Practices in Curriculum

- **Understand the Curriculum Development Process** –involves analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation of educational experiences in a school in order to establish goals, plan experiences, select content, and assess outcomes of school programs (Wiles & Bondi, 1998, p. 12).
- **Tripod View of Curriculum** –involves three ways of conceiving curriculum; based on the needs of the learner, needs of society, or the knowledge base.
- **Two Curriculum Models - The Tyler Rationale** involves four steps to consider in developing curriculum. **Understanding by Design (UbD)** has become the most popular approach to curriculum design over the past fifteen years.
- **Planning, Implementing, and Assessing Teaching and Learning** - involves a three step curriculum developmental framework.
- **Designing Quality Curriculum** –involves three guidelines offered by Glatthorn (2000a) for designing quality curriculum.

Best Practice #1: Be Collaboratively Involved in Curriculum Leadership

Curriculum development is a dynamic, interactive, and complex process that serves as the foundation for good teaching practice. School instructional leaders must be actively involved in curriculum leadership. Engaging teachers in helping develop, monitor, and assess curriculum is best practice (Davis & Krajcik, 2005; Remillard, 2000; Slattery, 2006).

Principals, for instance, play a key role in engaging teachers in discussion about curriculum. They can ask, “What is curriculum?” and “How can we take ownership of what is taught?” In doing so, they encourage teachers to become stakeholders in curriculum development so that they can enrich the educational lives of their students through meaningful and relevant pedagogy. Moreover, effective educators set aside school time for curriculum-based discussions and allow teachers to creatively develop new curricula. The curriculum is not in the textbooks, not in worksheets, and not in

work devised by administrators. Curriculum development is an ongoing, collaborative process to find new and better ways to match content to students' abilities, interests, and aspirations.

Best Practice # 2: Understand and use the Tripod View of Curriculum

A key ingredient to empower teachers to think about curriculum as an engaging instructional process is to help them explore their beliefs and values of education itself. Principals can ask their teachers “Where should our emphasis be placed when developing curriculum for our students, on knowledge itself, on the learner, or on what society deems most important?”

The “Tripod View of Curriculum” (Figure 3) is important to uncover fundamental beliefs of teachers and others in designing and developing curricula.

Figure 3
The Tripod View of Curriculum

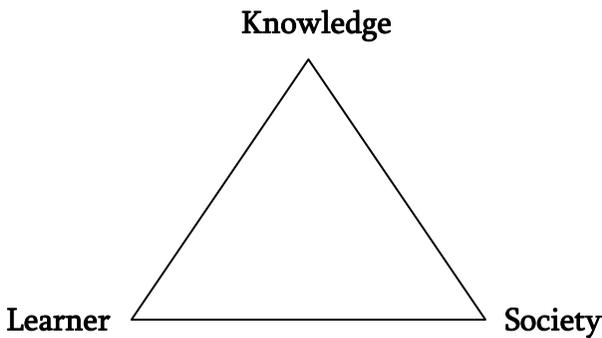


Figure 3 depicts three emphases or sources in thinking about curriculum: subject matter (knowledge) considerations, learners' needs, or society's (community's) values. Teachers may be asked to discuss is “knowledge” or subject matter most essential? In other words, should instruction be guided by subject matter considerations rather than by societal (communal) or learner needs? Should the needs of learners play the most prominent role in designing

curriculum? Schools, in my view, too often merely pay lip-service to meeting student needs. Successful schools, according to research, are ones in which students' learning needs are paramount (Darling-Hammond, 2008).

Best Practice #3: Understand and Apply the Use of the Tyler and UbD models of Curriculum

In working with teachers to plan for teaching and learning, several curriculum models may serve as guides. One of the most helpful curriculum development models for teachers to easily implement is the one developed by Ralph Tyler (1949). His model is practical in the sense that principals can work with teachers to establish curriculum goals that can then be translated into instructional objectives. Through curriculum development, teachers identify learning activities to provide students with meaningful learning experiences.

Widely known as the Tyler Rationale, this useful model identifies four steps in curriculum development:

- 1) What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
- 2) What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
- 3) How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
- 4) How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

Tyler advocated detailed attention to these four questions in developing curriculum. The basic idea to keep in mind about Tyler's model is that four steps are involved whenever curriculum is developed:

- (a) First, state objectives. According to Tyler, objectives must be stated in behavioral terms so that teachers can assess the extent of student learning. For example, the teacher may state that the "student will be able to identify 4 or 5 reasons why the civil war started." Therefore, if the student can only identify two reasons, teachers know that student has not

achieved the objective and needs additional work. Second, select learning activities.

- (b) After objectives are articulated, select meaningfully relevant activities to help students accomplish the stated objectives. These learning activities should relate to the developmental stage of the student and should consider student needs and interests. Providing learning activities that motivate students is critical.
- (c) Third, organize the learning activities. Learning activities should be concrete and sequential (i.e., one builds on the other). Learning experiences also must be well- integrated according to Tyler. That is, they should relate to each other so that students see some rhyme and reason to them and to how they relate to the objectives.
- (d) Fourth, develop a means of evaluation. Teachers should develop performance measures to determine the extent of student learning. These may take the form of traditional testing (e.g., objectives tests) or alternate forms of assessment, although Tyler focused more on traditional means of evaluation. Tyler's model is predicated on a particular view of teaching and learning. According to Tylerian pedagogy, teaching is often conceived as a systematic or organized process in which outcomes are readily discernible, even measurable. Although some scholars have criticized Tyler's narrow view of teaching, curriculum, and assessment (see, e.g., Kliebard, 1975; Walker, 2003), his model remains a good and practical starting point.

Another prominent curriculum model is Understanding by Design (UbD) (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). UbD is a backward curricular or unit design model that focuses on clear identification of the desired learning outcomes before planning the teaching process. It "begins with the end in mind" (Covey, 2004, p. 95) by requiring teachers to identify the big ideas, enduring understandings and essential questions that are found in the unit. Subsequent to that, the teacher also decides on the skills and knowledge that the student should be able to do and know at the conclusion of the unit. Once all the

learning objectives have been identified, the teacher still does not begin to plan the lessons. The next step in the model is to develop assessments by determining what would be considered appropriate evidence of the student's understanding and attainment of the desired results. The teacher uses this information to create both formative and summative assessments some of which include performance tasks and products. Only then does the teacher begin to plan the lessons and determine what learning experiences and teaching will lead to the predetermined desired results.

This type of unit planning avoids the content-focus design followed by many teachers who just “throw some content and activities” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 15) together without a clear sense of the learning objectives. It also eliminates learning activities that are not oriented toward the goals and have no purpose. In content-focus design the lessons are not framed in big ideas and understandings and students are left without a deep understanding of what they are learning because facts remain isolated bits of information that are forgotten as quickly as they are learned. When a teacher uses UbD, a student makes connections between discrete facts, creating a whole picture which then allows him to make sense and really understand what he has learned. As part of that understanding he is also able to “transfer ... and to apply the knowledge and skills effectively in realistic tasks and settings” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 7).

Best Practice #4: Implement a Curriculum Development Process

Principals can facilitate three key curriculum development steps for teachers, which are the same steps used for all lesson planning.

- 1) Planning for teaching and learning
- 2) Implementing the plan
- 3) Assessing teaching and learning

According to Beach and Reinhartz (2000), “These three steps provide a framework for supervisors to use in working with teachers in groups or individually as they develop a blueprint for teaching and learning in classrooms and schools” (p. 199). Figure 4 (p. 199) illustrates the three steps of the curriculum development process. The

Developing curriculum at the planning stage involves determining prior knowledge and skills of learners, establishing instructional outcomes, and reviewing appropriate resources and materials. As teachers and principals plan together at this stage, they reflect on the teaching and learning process. During a grade conference, for example, teachers and principal can examine mandated curricula but still be free to develop and match instructional objectives with learner needs and abilities. Curricular modifications at this stage are possible and indeed recommended to plan for the most meaningful unit of instruction possible. Instructional practices, for instance, in an inclusive classroom will differ dramatically from a more homogenous grouping of students. During this stage, teachers and principal can review availability of appropriate resources and materials that support instruction. They can also address possible teaching strategies and activities, goals and objectives, assessment procedures (always keeping the end in mind), content or subject matter, and standards that must be met. Principals play a key role in this opening step of the curriculum development process as they challenge and lead teachers to consider:

- Content matched to the developmental level of students
- Prerequisite knowledge and skills before undertaking a new unit of instruction
- Inductive and deductive teaching approaches
- Selection and appropriateness of learning experiences
- Sequencing of learning experiences
- Selection and appropriateness of assessment instruments

Beach and Reinhartz (2000) remind us that “the success of the curriculum depends on the quality of planning and the decisions that teachers make as they prepare for instruction” (p. 201).

During the second step of the curriculum development process, plans are implemented. Teaching is the process of implementing curricular plans. Curriculum and teaching are conceived as very much interrelated. During this step, teachers present their lessons using appropriate and varied strategies and activities. Teachers also model skills and monitor student progress (see Figure 4).

The third step of assessing teaching and learning is critically important. If students are not learning, the curriculum development process requires modifications. Perhaps instructional objectives need reconsideration, teaching strategies may need revision, or reteaching and review may be necessary. Leaders can also assist teachers by engaging them in informal and formal conversations about units of instruction. They can assist teachers in gathering learning data from a variety of sources beyond the traditional pencil and paper test. Alternative forms of assessment are shared with teachers that may include, among others, student portfolios that include work samples and journal writing.

Best Practice #5: Understand How to Design Quality Curriculum

Glatthorn (2000a, pp. 11-12) highlights several guidelines for developing quality curriculum, some of which are reviewed below:

- 1) Structure the curriculum to allow for greater depth and less superficial coverage. Teachers should engage students in meaningful and detailed lessons that involve problem-solving projects and activities and critical thinking teaching strategies. Such activities and strategies form the basis for any topic to be covered during the course of the school year. Rather than rushing to “cover” topics or “teaching for the test,” teachers should give students the problem solving and critical thinking skills that they, on their own, can apply to any topic. “Just as it makes no sense to try to teach factual content without giving students opportunities to practice using it, it also makes no sense to try to teach critical thinking devoid of factual content” (Willingham, 2007, p. 9).
- 2) Structure and deliver the curriculum so that it facilitates the mastery of essential skills and knowledge of the subjects. Providing students a rich and deep knowledge base is primary but should be incorporated with problem solving strategies that are realistic and meaningful to students.
- 3) Structure the curriculum so that it is closely coordinated. Coordinating content within lessons and among units over the course of the school year is imperative so that curriculum is sequential and well organized.

- 4) Emphasize both the academic and the practical. Relating content to the lived experiences of students is important to increase student learning. Hands-on activities, when feasible, are very much warranted.

Best Practices in Curriculum: Conclusion

Curriculum involves an analysis of all the learning experiences that occur in school. Effective instructional leaders involve teachers in curriculum development. Pre-packaged curricula, or curricula designed by outside consultants with minimal involvement of school personnel, is not best practice. In *masekhet Bava Metzia* (38a) Rav Kahana says that a “person prefers a *kab* [a measure of volume] of his own to nine *kabim* of his friend’s.” If teachers are involved in the curriculum process they assume ownership and are more likely to implement said revisions. Even an exceptionally designed curriculum created by someone else may be less likely used because of the lack of teacher involvement and ownership.²⁴ Curriculum involvement, however, requires requisite curriculum knowledge and skills. Effective principals draw upon the skills of curriculum supervisors and consultants who share their knowledge and experience with faculty. Good teaching does not occur in isolation of curriculum. Effective principals as instructional leaders know this fact.

Effective principals are involved in these curricular activities, among others:

- Reviewing state curriculum guidelines and procedures
- Organizing curriculum discussion groups at faculty and grade conferences with teachers
- Assigning curriculum facilitators among the faculty and assistant principals
- Reviewing instructional materials and resources
- Evaluating the relevance of curriculum materials and resources
- Involving, most importantly, teachers in the curriculum design and revision process

- Soliciting input from others in the curriculum process (e.g., curriculum specialists, parents, and students)
- Examining the relationship between teaching and curriculum
- Assessing the impact of curriculum materials on student achievement
- Engaging teachers on a continual basis in discussion of teaching, learning, and curriculum

An Overview of Best Practices in Supervision and Professional Development

"In short, supervision is not so much a view of a teacher by a superior viewer; it is a super-vision, a view of what education might mean at this moment, within this context, for these particular people. Perhaps more accurately, the process of supervision is an attempt by a segment of the community of learners to gain this super-vision of the educational moment within their reflective practice, so that their insight into the possibilities of the moment can lead to the transformation of that moment into something immensely more satisfying and productive for them."

Thomas Sergiovanni & Robert Starratt (2007, p. 145)

In a monograph devoted to instructional leadership, I believe that addressing supervision of instruction and professional development is vital. Supervision is a process that engages teachers in instructional dialogue for the purpose of improving teaching and promoting student achievement. Principals should view themselves, and be seen, as “teachers of teachers.” This notion is predicated on the condition that principals have adequate teaching experience themselves, and possess the knowledge and skills to communicate good teaching practice to teachers. Principals, as instructional leaders, understand how to work with teachers in order to improve teaching and promote student learning. Principals can implement a variety of instructional improvement strategies, including clinical supervision that incorporates purposeful classroom observation of teachers in action, not for evaluative purposes but to engage teachers in instructional dialogue about classroom practice. In fact, there is no discussion of evaluation in this monograph because the chief purpose of evaluation is accountability, not instructional improvement. Moreover, I particularly frown upon the use of checklists. They are more reminiscent of inspection practices of the past than they are of mechanisms generated, shared, and used by teachers and supervisors (or peer coaches or partners) for the purpose of encouraging dialogue

and reflection in order to examine and analyze teaching practices and their impact on student learning.

In my view, supervision in most schools relies on antiquated practices involving inspection and teacher evaluation (Shulman, Sullivan, & Glanz, 2008) that offer few, if any, opportunities for professional growth and improvement. In my view, reliance on such conceptions of supervision, a relic of the past (see, e.g., Glanz, 1998), is unethical because it does not consider teachers professional partners or colleagues worthy of collaboration (Emihovich & Battaglia, 2000; Fullan, 2003b; Lieberman & Friedrich, 2010; Sergiovanni, 1992). When hierarchical relationships predominate (i.e., power and politics), teachers are reluctant to scrutinize their instructional practices in meaningful ways (Blumberg, 1980; Pajak, 2008).

Programs and practices that aim to improve instructional excellence through supervision are often developed and initiated without anchoring them within the context of the overall school strategic plan or vision (Duffy, 2000; Fullan, 2008a; Glanz, 2010b; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Instructional supervisory initiatives are not likely to succeed unless strategically contextualized (Glanz, 2010b). Episodic walk-throughs, poorly-planned observations, occasional supervisory conferences, superficial email correspondences, and a lack of alternatives to traditional supervision, characterize supervisory programs in many schools, private and public (Shulman, Sullivan, & Glanz, 2008). Similarly, top-down supervisory mandates (e.g., requiring teachers to undergo a specified number of formal evaluative observations) or bottom-up initiatives (e.g., teachers who form critical friends groups) are likely to fail unless strategically planned, implemented, and assessed (Fahey, 2008; Fullan, Hill, & Crevola, 2006). Instructional supervision is not likely to succeed in schools without careful attention to strategic leadership initiatives.

Today, theorists of supervision (Pajak, 2008; Sullivan & Glanz, 2009; Zepeda, 2007) understand that meaningful supervision involves treating teachers as professionals worthy of engaging in intellectual and practical discussions of classroom interactions. Supervision, as cutting edge practice, is conceived as a collaborative process in which teachers and supervisors engage in instructional dialogue through critical reflection in order to align teacher behavior in the classroom

with practices best suited to promote student learning and achievement (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2008; Sullivan & Glanz, 2009; Zepeda, 2007). Predicated on a conceptual framework of justice and an ethic of caring, supervisors encourage teachers, who have been politically disenfranchised, historically, from playing an active role in their own professional growth, to participate in various options including peer coaching, intervisitations, critical friends groups, lesson studies, action research, mentoring, and peer assessment. Differentiated supervision means that teachers are not treated the same; one size does not fit all (Glatthorn, 1997; Pajak, 2008).

A three-tiered approach to supervision might include the following: Tier I, reserved for an induction and mentoring program (Breux & Wong, 2003) in which new and inexperienced teachers are paired with a mentor for professional education and the teacher is well-integrated into the school culture (Anthony, 2009). Tier II, in which tenured, competent teachers are not evaluated regularly, as are Tier I and Tier III teachers, but are given individualized or group professional growth plans involving some of the strategies mentioned above such as action research projects, (Fenwick, 2001, 2004). Tier III, reserved for teachers in need of improvement due to teaching deficiencies and other issues. Similar to Tier II teachers, these teachers also develop professional growth plans by working closely with peers and supervisors to improve teaching skills if possible, but unlike Tier II, they are monitored closely to ensure success (Glickman, 2002).

A variety of supervisory approaches are advocated including, among others, cognitive coaching (Costa & Garmston, 2002), mentoring (Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998), and peer coaching (Showers & Joyce, 1996). Action research, quietly emerging as a popular alternative to traditional supervision, is often teacher-initiated in the sense that the teacher identifies a problem, collects and interprets data, and arrives at some conclusion to improve practice (Glanz, 2003; Sagor, 2008). These supervisory approaches are identified as best practices (see, e.g., Coppola, Scricca, & Connors, 2004; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2008; Pajak, 2008; Zepeda, 2003), and are much favored over a checklist approach to supervision that is perfunctory, evaluative, and not very useful for teachers.

Parenthetically, it should be pointed out that the work of supervision affects students and teachers alike. Educational leaders are in a unique position to transform a school community to embrace the value of providing a nurturing, positive and safe environment for its students. Through instructional supervision, principals and teachers can model mutual respect, and through collaborative efforts, principals can be attuned to the pulse of the school climate. Children, then, will have exemplary role models, and in a pro-social and emotionally safe environment, they will have opportunities to participate as active community members in which they, too, can experience mutual respect and tolerance, acquire good problem-solving skills, actively learn and achieve, and become caring, compassionate individuals.

Research-Based Practices in Supervision and Professional Development

- **One Size Does Not Fit All** –Differentiating supervisory approaches is recommended. Given teachers’ levels of experience and expertise, establish a variety of supervisory options for teachers in order to improve and grow professionally.
- **Professional Development** – is a process of supporting teacher’s work and student learning by systematic, continuous, meaningful, knowledge-based workshops and seminars around collaboratively developed topics.
- **PCOWBIRDS** – All good principals work with teachers on instructional activities that include **p**lanning, **c**onferences, **o**bservations, **w**orkshops, sharing **b**ulletins and research, **i**ntervisitations, providing **r**esources, **d**emo lessons, and **s**taff development.

Best Practice #1: Establish a Differentiated Approach to Supervision

Administrators are very good at compiling reports, engaging with parents, and writing reports. Although these activities are sometimes urgent, it is essential to remember not to neglect other important concerns. Serving as instructional leaders is paramount to positively affecting teaching and learning. Engaging teachers in instructional

dialogue and meaningful supervision (not evaluation) is axiomatic. Writers in the field also recommend the following ideas: Get out of the office into classrooms and save report writing for downtimes and after school. Strive to encourage good pedagogy and teaching. Faculty and grade meetings should focus almost exclusively on instructional issues. Avoid quick-fix approaches that presumably guarantee high student achievement. Take reasonable and intelligent steps to establish an instructional milieu in the school. Emphasize instruction at every turn; i.e., at grade and faculty conferences, email and memo correspondences, parent workshops, etc.

Best Practice #2: Collaboratively Planning and Implementing Professional Development

What is the relationship between supervision and professional development? Although some disagreement exists (e.g., Glanz, & Neville, 1997, Issue #8), many in the field now concur that for supervision to be congruent with professional development, it must be reconceived as a process that is non-evaluative and integral in terms of promoting instructional dialogue about teaching and learning. In fact, professional development can be seen as a way of delivering supervision. By providing professional development workshops, principals provide opportunities for teachers to engage in instructional conversations about relevant issues affecting teaching and learning. Professional development may include, among others, sessions on teaching strategies, studying latest theory and research on practice, receiving feedback on teaching, providing resources for practice, coaching (peer or otherwise), etc.

The literature on professional development is vast (Reeves, 2010; Speck, 1998). Almost all schools provide some sort of professional development learning opportunities for teachers. Although professional development workshops have been offered, many individuals criticize the manner in which professional development is planned and delivered. Potentially, professional development is undoubtedly an invaluable learning activity to support teachers and to improve student learning. However, much of professional or staff development is content weak, episodic, and at its worst, irrelevant to the needs of teachers.

Principals, as instructional leaders, realize that professional development, well-conceived, planned, and assessed, is vital to improving teaching and student learning. Best practice in professional development points to several components as necessary (Griffin, 1997; Lieberman, 1995).

- *Purposeful and articulated* – Goals for a professional development program must be developed, examined, critiqued, and assessed for relevance. These goals must be stated in some formal way so that all educators concerned with the professional development program are clear about its intent and purpose.
- *Participatory and collaborative* – Too often professional development is top-driven, even at times by administrative fiat. Such programs are less effective because teachers, for whom professional development serves the greatest benefit, are not actively involved in its design, implementation, and assessment. Best practice in professional development requires wide participation by all stakeholders.
- *Knowledge-based and discipline-based* - Professional development must be based on the most relevant and current research in the field. Also, teachers will not value professional development unless it contains, in the words of one teacher, “some substance, . . . something I can take back to the classroom.” Moreover, professional development should be, at times, targeted by discipline. Often high school English teachers may want and need a workshop on a topic quite different from, say, a Jewish studies rebbe.
- *Focused on student learning* – According to Speck (1998), “Educators must never forget that the objective of professional development is to increase student learning” (p. 156). Principals and committees that are responsible for planning professional development programs should consider first and foremost the teacher behaviors or activities that most directly impact student learning and then “work backward to pinpoint the knowledge, skills, and attitudes educators must have” (p. 157).

- *Ongoing* – Too much of professional development is of the one-shot variety. A leader delivers a workshop, for instance, then leaves without any follow up. Such efforts have marginal value at best. Professional development opportunities must be made on a continuous basis so that ideas and practices are sustained. Professional development cannot impact classroom practice in a significant way unless workshops and programs are continually offered.
- *Developmental* - Professional development must not only be ongoing but developmental; i.e., building gradually on teacher knowledge and skills in a given area or topic.
- *Analytical and reflective* – Professional development opportunities must promote instructional dialogue and thinking about teaching practice and purposefully address ways of helping students achieve more. Also, professional development must be continuously assessed in terms of its relevance and value to teachers.

As of this writing, the latest research findings on PD indicate, among other interesting things, that for PD to have significant effects on student achievement, teachers need at least 49 hours on a given topic (see <http://www.nsd.org/news/nsdcstudytechnicalreport2010.pdf>).

Best Practice #3: Promoting Instruction through PCOWBIRDS

Leaders can incorporate best practice by following a mnemonic known as PCOWBIRDS (a strategy I learned from Dr. Thomas Monterro in workshops leading to my certification as a principal in New York City many years ago).

Competent instructional leaders should attend to *PCOWBIRDS*:

P = Plans: Planning is integral to instructional success and the principal as an educational leader should help a teacher develop appropriate and meaningful instructional activities and learning experiences. Checking plans, offering suggestions, co-planning, reviewing procedures, and framing thought-provoking questions, among other important aspects, are essential. Supervision, then,

involves assisting teachers to better plan their lessons and units of instruction.

C = Conferences: Conferencing with teachers, formally and informally, in order to share ideas and develop alternate instructional strategies is an essential supervisory responsibility. Meeting and talking with teachers throughout the day and school year on instructional matters are essential. Focus as an instructional leader must be on teaching and learning (see, e.g., Zmuda, 2010). Sharing insights, reviewing recent research (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001), and engaging in reflective practice are very important. Formal and informal conferencing must be continuous and should involve teachers in the planning and agenda of conferences. The key to establishing a school culture that fosters instructional dialogue for the purpose of improving teaching and learning is to consider such activity the number one priority and, thus, devoting time and energies to ensuring and nurturing it.

O = Observations: An educational leader should offer her/his expertise by both formally and informally observing classroom interactions. A skilled principal who utilizes various observation systems (Sullivan & Glanz, 2009; Acheson & Gall, 1997; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2008) can facilitate instructional improvement by documenting classroom interaction so that a teacher might reflect upon and react to what has been observed. Providing teachers with evidence of classroom interaction is fundamental to begin helping them understand what they are doing or not doing to promote student learning. Observations play a key role in supervision.

W = Workshops: Principals as educational leaders should conduct or organize various workshops for teachers on relevant instructional topics such as cooperative learning, alternative teaching strategies, and multiple intelligences. Sometimes principals will feel comfortable conducting a workshop. Principals are not expected, of course, to be conversant in all areas. Sometimes they may ask an outside consultant or expert in a particular field to conduct a workshop on a topic of interest to teachers or even ask one of the more experienced teachers

to do so. In fact, utilizing in-school talent is highly recommended (Hunefeld, 2009). The bottom line here is that effective principals realize the importance of instruction as the main focus of their work. Realizing the importance of instruction, they plan and coordinate varied and continuous workshops for teachers. These workshops may be conducted as a part of professional development days designated by the school, as part of a grade or faculty conference, or as an after/before school or, even, summer activity.

B = Bulletins: Bulletins, journals, reports, and newsletters can be disseminated to interested faculty. One of my teachers became interested in cooperative learning after attending a reading conference. I sustained her interest by placing several articles about cooperative learning in her mailbox. Principals should be conversant with the literature of various fields and subscribe to various journals including *Educational Leadership*, *Kappan*, *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, *Elementary School Journal*, *Instructor*, *Teaching K-12*, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *Education Digest*, etc. Principals should always be on the alert for relevant articles, bulletins, and publications that encourage and support instructional improvement.

I = Intervisitations: Teachers rarely have the opportunity to visit and observe colleagues. A principal can facilitate intervisitations by rearranging the schedule so that teachers might observe one another and then share common instructional strategies or discuss common problems. Intervisitations, to be effective, must be voluntary and non-judgmental. Shared dialogue about instructional practices goes a long way towards promoting instructional improvement.

R = Resources: Principals should make available for teachers a variety of instructional materials and technologies to enhance instructional improvement. Purchasing textbooks, trade books, computers, LCD smart boards, and other relevant resources are important to support an instructional program.

D = Demonstration Lessons: A principal presumably is a teacher-of-teachers. A principal is not necessarily the foremost teacher in a

school, but s/he should feel comfortable in providing "demo" lessons for teachers, when appropriate. Providing such lessons enhances supervisory credibility among teachers and provides instructional support.

Parenthetically, I once noticed during a formal observation, that the teacher was not using wait time effectively. He posed good questions, but waited only about 2 seconds before calling on someone. I suggested that he watch me teach a lesson and notice how long I wait after posing a question before calling on a pupil. These observations were the basis for a follow-up conference at which we discussed the research on "wait time" and the advantages of waiting before calling on a pupil. As the saying goes, "a picture is worth a thousand words." Having this particular teacher watch me demonstrate effective use of "wait time" was more valuable than had I merely told him what to do. Competent supervisors not only "suggest" how to do something, they also must "demonstrate" how it should be done.

S = Staff Development: Principals can aid instructional improvement by providing staff development that is "purposeful and articulated," "participatory and collaborative," "knowledge-based," "ongoing," "developmental, and "analytic and reflective" (Griffin, 1997). Although I addressed workshops above, staff development means a series of collaboratively planned and implemented workshops on single or varied topics over time. Understanding the relationship between staff development and instructional improvement is critical. Teachers need continued and sustained instructional support. A good principal will plan for such meaningful staff or professional development.

Best Practices in Supervision and Professional Development: Conclusion

Providing instructional leadership by focusing on best practices in supervision and professional development is an important responsibility of the principal. Unfortunately, much of what currently takes place as supervisory practice and professional development activities is not very useful for teachers. Supervisors can contribute

greatly to meaningful supervision and professional development by engaging in these leadership behaviors:

- In word and deed, place emphasis on improving teaching and promoting learning;
- Involve teachers in planning, implementing, and assessment supervision and professional development;
- Utilize experts in supervision and professional development as consultants;
- Provide options or alternatives to traditional practices of supervision and professional development;
- Draw links between supervision and professional development and student achievement.

Conclusion: Learning to Lead Instructional Change Transforming Jewish Day School Culture to Improve Teaching and Promote Learning for All

“To exercise leadership in this climate of change will require deep convictions, strong commitments, and clear ideas about directions for changes”

Robert J. Starratt

“Some people will tell you to enter hinukh because this way your olam haba will be assured. And I tell you, that you should enter the world of hinukh because there is no greater simhah in this world than to teach Torah to Jewish children.”

Rav Pam to one of his students

This last section of the monograph highlights the imperative for Jewish day school and yeshiva leaders to transform their school culture to strategically address ways to promote teacher professional growth in order to improve teaching and promote student learning for all students regardless of their abilities. In order for instructional leadership to form the core work of Jewish school leaders, they must be acquainted with Michael Fullan's (2008a) "key drivers for change" and the literature of "change knowledge."

Why, you might ask, must we transform our schools? Why change? Schools today are more complex than schools of yesteryear. We confront a plethora of challenges – we have more students than ever identified with emotional and learning issues and we face communal pressures that compel school leaders to remain responsive to a growing, varied, and diverse constituency. We need to keep pace with these internal and external vicissitudes that inevitably challenge our convictions and fortitude. Because problems are more onerous today, we need a theory of leadership to guide our work in schools. Transformational school leadership theory provides such a foundation for our important work in Jewish schools.

Transformational leadership, according to Northouse (2003), was “first coined by Downton” (1973 as cited by Northouse, 2003, p. 131)

and amplified by James MacGregor Burns in 1978, in a landmark book entitled, simply, *Leadership*. Burns, according to Northouse (2003), identifies two types of leadership: transactional (managerial) and transformational (visionary). The former represents the everyday interactions between manager and follower. Offering an incentive, for instance, to a follower for procedural compliance to school policy reflects transactional leadership. In contrast, transformational leadership engages people around an ethical and moral vision of excellence for all.

Another version of transformational leadership emerged with the work of House (1976), interestingly around the same time that Burns published his work. House's leadership construct focused on a personality trait of a leader known as "charisma." Charismatic, transformational leaders possess personal characteristics that include "being dominant, having a strong desire to influence others, being self-confident, and having a strong sense of one's own moral values" (p. 132). A more recent version of transformational leadership emerged in the work of Bass (1985). Bass extended House's work by placing greater attention on the needs of followers rather than the leader and that charisma by itself does not encapsulate all there is to know about transformational leadership. His model also more explicitly addressed how transformational leaders go about their work. According to Northouse (2003), "Transformational leadership helps followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the group or organization" (p. 137). Transformational leadership does not provide a recipe for leading but rather a way of thinking that emphasizes visionary and participatory leadership.

Transformational leadership has received much attention in the educational leadership literature (see, e.g., Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Although transformational leadership has been examined by other theorists (e.g., Bass, 1997; Burns, 1978; House, 1976), Kenneth Leithwood and Doris Jantzi (2005) have addressed implications of transformational leadership for schools. According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), "three broad categories of leadership practices" can be identified: setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization. The authors explain that setting directions is a "critical aspect of transformational leadership . . . [by] . . . helping staff to

develop shared understandings about the school and its activities as well as the goals that undergird a sense of purpose or vision” (pp. 38-39). They explain that people are more likely to participate when they have had a say in developing ideas and practices. Transformational leaders realize that anyone can set a direction for an organization, but it is the effective leader who considers and solicits the participation of other key school personnel to share in the development and actualization of the institutional vision and purpose

Pursuant to the theme of this monograph, a transformational visionary agenda should include a redesign or, at the very least, a reexamination of a school’s commitment to teacher quality, teacher growth, instructional excellence, and student learning. Although no theory of leadership is beyond criticism (Northouse, 2003, see pp. 144-146), transformational leadership informs work in Jewish schools. Jewish day school and yeshiva leaders must champion a vision of instructional excellence that includes:

- Best practices in teaching,
- Best practices in curriculum,
- Best practices in professional development (supervision and evaluation), and
- Attention to the “instructional core.”

Transformational leaders work to alter school culture by nurturing a professional learning community. They serve as change agents or facilitators of change in order to actualize their vision for instructional excellence (Fullan, 2006). They work diligently and consistently to keep instructional quality as their main focus.

Transforming schools is easy if done superficially. Such change, however, is ephemeral. Unfortunately, much change, says Fullan (2003a), occurs at this superficial level. In fact, he says, much of the change in schools in the 1960s around innovative instructional and curricular practices was short-lived because it was implemented on the surface without a deep change in people’s beliefs and behavior. Both Fullan (2003a) and Starratt (1995) concur that change without addressing a change in core beliefs and values is doomed to remain temporary and superficial. “Transformational leadership,” says Starratt (1995), “is concerned with large, collective values . . . ” (p. 110).

Leadership is predicated on the foundation of changing core beliefs and values.

Michael Fullan (1991, cited by Fullan 2003a) has identified “five crucial mind and action sets that leaders in the 21st century must cultivate: a deep sense of moral purpose, knowledge of the change process, capacity to develop relationships across diverse individuals and groups, skills in fostering knowledge creation and sharing, and the ability to engage with others in coherence making amidst multiple innovations” (p. 35).

1. Engaging people’s moral purposes - Jewish school leaders do a good job setting *hashkafic* (ideological) vision for students in terms of their spiritual, emotional, and academic growth. Embedded in such a vision should also be a detailed articulation of the school’s commitment to instructional excellence for all students. A Jewish school is committed to refining the lives of children by improving the quality of the instruction they receive. Such a commitment must be further predicated on serving the needs of all students within an inclusive learning environment (Glanz, 2008) while remaining cognizant of extant research into the latest and most effective teaching pedagogies.
2. Understand the change process - Although Fullan discusses several ideas about change, I will highlight a few relevant ones. The ‘implementation dip,’ according to Fullan, is a proverbial landmine. People, often board members, expect fast results. Fullan says, “Since change involves grappling with new beliefs and understandings, and new skills, competencies and behaviors, it is inevitable that it will not go smoothly in the early stages of implementation.” Such an understanding helps people within the organization to relax and experiment with new ideas, practices, and policies. Learning anything new is initially “awkward.” Furthermore, being aware of this “implementation dip” actually shortens the dip, according to Fullan. Another aspect of change, for Fullan, is the realization of the necessity to overcome fear. Citing research by Black

and Gregersen (2002 as cited by Fullan, 2006), Fullan explains the reason why despite a clear vision, people seem immobilized. He cites Black and Gregersen's answer:

The clearer the new vision the easier it is for people to see all the specific ways in which they will be incompetent and look stupid. Many prefer to be competent at the [old] wrong thing than incompetent at the [new] right thing. (p. 69)

3. Cultures for Learning – This third mind-set of change, according to Fullan, encourages the establishment of a conducive environment “so that people can learn from each other and become collectively committed to improvement.” That is why involving teachers in decision making about curriculum and instruction is so critical. Mechanisms and structures within a school need to be developed to allow for and facilitate communication among teachers and administrators about instruction. Instructional conversations, whether they take the form of lesson studies among members of the math department, critical friends groups among *rabbeim* who teach *gemarrah* (discussing, for instance, how they teach *tosefot*), action research projects by individual teachers, or supervisory strategies that encourage instructional dialogue about the proper use of wait time are at the heart of a professional learning community that values instructional improvement.
4. Cultures of Evaluation – Coupled with these emphases on instructional improvement is a focus on assessment. Gathering data on student learning continuously in aggregated and disaggregated ways, developing action plans based on an analysis of the data from parent, teacher, and student satisfaction surveys in order to inform instructional decision making are examples of creating a culture of evaluation or assessment in a school. Fullan explains, “When schools . . . increase their collective capacity to engage in ongoing assessment for learning, major improvements are achieved.”

Citing Jim Collins (2002 cited by Fullan, 2007), he explains that “great organizations” have a “commitment to ‘confronting the brutal facts’ and establishing a culture of disciplined inquiry.”

5. Leadership for change - Fullan asks, what is the best leadership style for effecting the changes that are necessary in schools? He explains “It turns out that high-flying, charismatic leaders look like powerful change agents, but are actually bad for business because too much revolves around themselves.” Leadership, he continues, must be distributed throughout the organization.

So what can Jewish day school leaders glean from Fullan’s advice? Strategically-minded Jewish school leaders need to transform their work in schools deeply, not artificially and superficially. Doing so takes time and effort within a collaborative and empowering paradigm. A focus on the “instructional core” is fundamental and morally imperative. Such work, moreover, is necessary because transformational leadership has been linked to student achievement. Cotton (2003), who has conducted one of the most extensive reviews of the literature in the field, states quite emphatically:

Not surprisingly, researchers find that transformational leadership is positively related to student achievement and is more effective than the deal-making between principal and staff that characterizes the transactional approach alone. (p. 61)

What is our moral commitment to such ideals? What are we willing to sacrifice to actualize our beliefs? Do we really believe our work in supervision of instruction matters? Have we acknowledged our inability sometimes to play a significant role in instructional improvement? Do we decry in very concrete ways inspectional, faultfinding supervisory practices? Do we involve faculty in leading their own professional development? Are we satisfied with the absence of a curriculum in Judaic studies? Do we rally against practices in teaching that do not give attention to the learning needs

of all students regardless of their abilities? Do we complain that we cannot effect much change given financial constraints? Do we deny the fact that we need to improve our practices in promoting good teaching and curriculum? Are we committed above all else to spend the time to work with teachers, at all levels of experience, in order to improve teaching and promote student achievement and development of *middot*? Are we willing to make such efforts a priority?²⁵ Are we able to justify our work in instructional leadership to board members? The moral imperative, it seems to me, is that we must remain committed to instructional excellence by offering insights into ways our work in instruction can serve to enhance teachers' dignity, impact student learning, and, in the process, transform Jewish schools themselves so that educational practices that have been taken-for-granted turn into new opportunities, and stagnation is transformed into progress.

Notes

1. Before continuing, I suggest that readers self-administer a few of the questionnaires as are relevant in Appendices B, C, D, E, and/or F. Doing so will serve as an advanced organizer of sorts for the material to follow, but will also serve as a personal spot-check of one's awareness and knowledge of ideas advocated in this monograph.

2. I have culled these excerpts from the literature on the school principalship and use the term "principal" as it is utilized in the literature on instructional leadership. I realize, of course, that Jewish day school and yeshiva leaders are referred to in various ways (not always consistently), at least in terms of job descriptions. Yet, this review of the literature is relevant to all Jewish school leaders, regardless of title. If a nuanced difference is important, I will insert a comment when appropriate. Cf. n. 9 below.

3. Why have so many Jewish schools been immune to the latest cutting edge instructional practices? Drawing from the classic work of Lortie (2002) and more recently ideas from Hargreaves and Shirley (2009, also cited by Marshall, 2009), I feel Jewish school leaders, in particular, share three characteristics: (1) presentism - a short-term perspective that prevents them from envisioning or planning collaboratively for long-term systemic change; (2) conservatism - a mistrust of reform initiatives and a reluctance to change familiar classroom practices, even in the face of research findings and pupil learning outcomes suggesting that better approaches are needed; and (3) individualism - Jewish leaders often work in isolation from colleagues and such isolation may result in lower levels of self-efficacy, less relational trust, and lack of awareness of other best practices. This lack of trust, parenthetically, also extends to those of us who teach at the university level. The perception is that we are not practitioners, although most of us have been teachers and administrators, and that since we deal in "theory" we have little to offer in terms of insights into practice. Such dichotomous thinking that theory and practice are bifurcated is myopic and imprecise. To paraphrase, Kurt Lewin, "There is no good theory without practice as there is no good practice without theory." Practitioners are ill-informed if they think that what they do in the classroom is not informed by some theory or research. Administrators in Jewish schools and not unlike many in the public sector, it seems to me, rely on entrenched practices of the past (Pomson, 2002). Learning is viewed as predictable, simple, and undifferentiated. Teaching is seen as mastering routine behaviors, not informed through reflective judgments. Supervision is practiced through reinforcing prescribed

teacher behaviors and skills, not helping teachers discover and construct professional knowledge and skills through instructional dialogue and reflection. Teachers and supervisors are viewed as bureaucratic functionaries, isolated and independent rather than collegial team members. Finally, schools are viewed as bureaucracies rather than democratic learning communities (Pajak, 2008).

4. My guess is that most readers, reading this last sentence did not react to the choice of words I employed, but I will not use the word “trained” again in this monograph because as one of my mentors, O.L. Davis, Jr., (cited in Spearman, 2009) states “you train dogs, you educate teachers.” Avoidance of the word “trained” is not simply an exercise in semantics, but rather indicates the true nature and power of education. Professional development, for instance, is not training, but rather stimulating and developing the minds of those who work with our children. Education, as opposed to training, is an intellectually challenging, creative, and collaborative process. In the field of education, we do not “train,” we educate (see, e.g., Holcomb, 1994).

5. The principal must play an active, ongoing role in instructional leadership. Notwithstanding the comprehensive study, “Making Sense of Leading Schools: A Study of the School Principalship” (www.Crpe.org) that indicated that principals do not necessarily have to have expertise in all areas (e.g. instructional, cultural, managerial, human resources, strategic, external development, micro political leadership), they must be master “diagnosticians,” able to provide the school what it needs at the right time and in the right context. I maintain that instructional leadership is qualitatively different from other forms of leadership. Although it is difficult to separate one form of leadership from another, since they all form an undifferentiated whole, instructional leadership cannot be delegated to others.

6. What is the relationship among instructional leadership, supervision, and professional development, three concepts I have alluded to thus far in the monograph? Briefly, instructional leadership is a generic term used in the literature to indicate a school leader’s responsibility to lead instructional improvement in a school. To achieve instructional improvement one must utilize the tools or approaches of instructional leadership that include, among others to be discussed in this monograph, supervision, professional development, induction, mentoring, action research, peer coaching, etc. However, some in the field consider supervision a subset of professional development. Given the sometimes negative connotations associated with the term “supervision,” I, too, subsume supervision under the more palatable

rubric of “professional development.” My doing so should not minimize the importance of a well-planned supervisory program, as will be discussed later.

7. The instructional quality audit, as I term it, is one in which I do not use a checklist or prescribed format. Rather, after speaking with school officials, I tailor make the audit based on what the school desires to know. However, I generally look at teaching practices, PD (including supervision and evaluation procedures or processes), and the state of curriculum development. I interview all constituents, including all administrators, a representative sample of teachers, staff, parents, lay leaders, and students. I also request to view all instructional documents, including test data and analyses. A good part of my time is spent observing many classrooms at all grade levels and subjects in both Judaic and General studies. I then write my report and share it with school leaders. Based on my report and their perceptions of its relevance and accuracy, they develop an action plan in each of the three areas: teaching, curriculum, and PD. Often, my work is best understood as part of an overall strategic plan or effort. Importantly, unless I was hired by a board for the specific purpose of “evaluating” a school or a particular administrator, I do not share my report with any board member, unless I am hired to do so with the consent of the principal. My aim is to assist the school and its leaders in moving forward to heightened levels of instructional excellence. Therefore, even when requested by boards to conduct an instructional audit, I first share my findings (an oral and then written report) with school leaders who, in turn, are expected to chart an action plan establishing goals in teaching, curriculum, and professional development. I ensure, of course, that their plan reflects, in its essence, my key findings, but this plan is written by the leaders themselves who can then share it with Board members. I thank Dr. Harry Bloom for his keen insights in helping develop such an approach to presenting the results of the audit.

8. In the same light as note 4 above, “professional development of teachers” is preferred over the commonly used term “in-service training.” In-service, like pre-service is “sometimes conceived as a deficit word” which “implies that something is wrong with initial teacher preparation that necessitates further attention after employment” (Spearman, 2009, p. 56). Aside from other reasons for not employing the term “in-service” or even “pre-service,” continued professional development in contrast, “is a growth term which connotes continual learning that supplements existing knowledge” (p. 56).

9. Jewish leaders have different titles. A Head of School, in some schools, is the chief instructional leader; in others, s/he is the educational manager in charge of public relations, fund raising, and similar administrative duties. In

still other schools, Heads are expected to assume both roles; i.e., instructional leader and public relations visionary. In some schools I visit, there is role confusion: Boards expect heads to serve in one or both capacities, whereas the Head sees his role in a different way. In some schools the Head is in charge of administrative matters, while the Principal is expected to handle instructional matters. And so on, regardless of the title. More often than not, Jewish day school leaders are challenged by competing expectations and responsibilities. In the absence of clear role or job descriptions, it seems to me, instructional leadership responsibilities are often minimized, if not ignored, not due to negligence but because Jewish leaders have to balance competing obligations. My point here is to emphasize that day school and yeshiva leaders, regardless of title, should never abrogate active interest and sustained involvement in instructional matters. Someone, the dean or principal, should assume chief responsibility for promoting school wide instructional improvement. This person must not only revere instructional leadership, but s/he must possess the requisite knowledge and skills to effectively serve in such a capacity. Specific knowledge and skills sets will be discussed later in the monograph. Also, in a school in which only one administrator is assigned to instructional leadership, teacher-leaders should be designated and empowered to assist with various aspects of the instructional program because no one person can or should, for that matter, “go it alone.”

10. I would like to acknowledge the work and leadership of Dr. Harry Bloom, Director of Planning and Performance Improvement at the Yeshiva University School Partnership (YUSP). Without his keen guidance and insights, my work in this area would not be as successful as it has been. Dr. Chana Maybruch, former Associate Director of Learning and Professional Development at YUSP, also was an invaluable resource in writing this section of the monograph. Any errors or misrepresentations are my sole responsibility.

11. Walk-throughs, popularized by the recent work of Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, and Poston, Jr. (2007, 2009) are commonly employed in schools and, if improperly implemented (as they are usually), are detrimental to meaningful teacher development. Jane David (2007), in reviewing extant research, explains that walk-throughs, “also called learning walks, quick visits, and data walks,” are “touted as a systematic way to gather helpful data on instructional practices” (p. 81). In explaining the idea behind the concept, she says principals, for example, might “want to know whether teachers are able to put into practice their recent training on quick-writes and pair-shares” (p. 81). David reviewing the little research available on walk-

throughs, explains that according to one study “administrators find walk-throughs more useful than do teachers (who rarely receive individual feedback)” (p. 81). David points out “significant risks” with such practices. When a climate of trust and improvement is not secured in a school, for example, then walk-throughs are perceived “as compliance checks, increasing distrust and tension” (p. 82). David, in her article, seems to suggest, however, that walk-throughs if appropriately implemented can play “a constructive role” in instructional improvement (p. 82). She advocates proper preparation for observers, adequate communication of the purposes of walk-throughs, and recommends that it not merely be used to monitor implementation of some school-wide practice. When employed in most settings I visited, they were viewed as inspectional because they resembled the check-lists approaches to supervision of the past. Short cuts and quick fixes, expedient and efficient as they are, are not conducive to classroom and school improvement. In support of such a view, Sullivan (2006) explains that walk-throughs “shed light on an approach to classroom observation that can become monitoring couched in the language of teacher growth and reflective practice” (p. 2).

12. Appendix A contains a matrix developed by Dr. Harry Bloom in consultation with one modern-orthodox day school that is simple yet useful to chart instructional goals.

13. To assess leader beliefs and commitments to instructional issues, take the brief survey in Appendix B.

14. See Thayer (1928) for a history of classroom recitation in the United States. It is most interesting to note, as do Hoetker and Ahlbrand (1969), that recitation was originally conceived as a progressive reform to make it possible for a teacher to deal with a large number of students. The older way of teaching and testing involved more one-on-one conversations and discussions.

15. Thanks to Rabbi Rafael Cashman who reminded me that Nechama Leibovitz discusses this idea of active learning (1995):

Forty-eight things were numbered by Chazal (Avot, Chapter 6) through which a person acquires the Torah, and one of them is a ‘hearing ear’; only one of forty-eight, and none the less we tend to base all of learning on it!...it is difficult for the young student, for the child – and in this all ages are the same – to learn through listening, through passivity, through sitting and not doing anything, through acceptance of information only. He wants to act, to flex his muscles, to conquer difficulties, to stick to the

material that he is learning as much as possible.... And if the teacher brings the student to the subject matter with a stick, without any exertion or struggle on their part, he will not retain anything. And if he does retain something – he will lose it immediately. The students will get bored, and the learning will not grab their hearts, and if there is anyone who thinks that the excitement of the teacher in his discourse, in his explanation of Torah, in the Holy fire and love of Torah that burns within him will be enough to prevent the student from wandering during the class, the words of the midrash will come and slap him in the face (*Shir Hashirim, Parsha 1, 64; 15, 3*) “Rebbe would sit and darshan, and the people would start to fall asleep, so he wanted to wake them up. He said: Women in Egypt would give birth to 600,000 at one time!

Indeed, in 1939, even before establishing her reputation in Bible, she published a series of pedagogical essays entitled: “Active Learning in the Teaching of History in Elementary and Secondary Schools” (Leibowitz, 1989).

16. Note that frontal teaching is not necessarily a negative practice. In fact, it is quite a viable approach when used appropriately among other teaching models such as jigsaw, role playing, reciprocal teaching, inquiry-based learning, synectics, induction, etc. See discussion of “direct instruction” by Joyce and Weil (2008) in their classic book titled *Models of Teaching*, and Dell’Olio and Donk (2007).

17. With increasing numbers of students identified with disabilities (20% in some schools), such PD efforts in differentiation are necessary as is hiring additional faculty with special education and inclusion expertise. Providing an orientation to all teachers about students with special needs is also recommended. Current economic realities may, in fact, encourage schools to educate faculty in differentiated instruction and inclusive pedagogy as a cost-saving measure (see, e.g., Bloom & Glanz, 2010).

18. Thanks again to Rabbi Rafael Cashman who reminded me that we should have some hesitancy with the Marzano approach in general, which is very technical and positivistic. (I mean that in the sense that there is the assumption that these specific actions on the part of the teacher will lead to successful teaching.) Teaching is complex and context counts a lot. Marzano’s research, and Danielson’s too for that matter, may yield possible directions for improved practice, but guarantees cannot be assured.

19. The role of boards is critical in discussing school-wide instructional transformational change. In many cases, from my experiences, board

members are not fully cognizant or supportive of the role of school leaders as, first and foremost, instructional leaders; they often view public relations, fund raising, and other necessary administrative duties as priorities for their leaders. They often pay lip-service to instructional quality or examine student achievement levels for the school's "top students" as the chief criterion for the school's success. Also, student enrollment averages or levels may be the foremost measure boards look at for school leader effectiveness. I have seen schools that have risen in student enrollments in recent years but have appalling instructional programs and practices. These increases in enrollment may be due to a community's demographic changes or a perception by parents of the school's effectiveness. Often *hashkafah* plays a critical role. A co-ed modern-orthodox high school, for instance, might have a superior instructional program, but if a parent eschews co-ed practices, then she may send her child to another school more in line with her *hashkafic* desires without sufficient scrutiny of the school's educational quality. Without belaboring this sensitive and potentially controversial subject, the point here is that boards need to be educated about a school's instructional program, in its specifics, so that they fully support a school leader's work in this area, not only in word, but also in deed (e.g., resources allocated to sufficiently support the school's instructional program) (see, e.g., Birkeland, 2008).

20. Research indicates that administrators who utilize survey instruments to assess a wide range of attitudes are more in touch with realities about their schools. See Appendix E for an instrument that supervisors can take in order to guesstimate how teachers might respond to a variety of instructional issues in the school. Then, supervisors should actually distribute the survey instrument in Appendix F to teachers for use as a comparison to results of the questionnaire taken in Appendix E. Feel free to tweak items on the questionnaires to suit your specific school/community situation.

21. Some school leaders I have spoken with are suspicious of "latest research culled from best practices." Other leaders are simply out of touch with current research because they rely on methods they might have learned and used years ago and have not kept up with the literature by reading relevant education journals. Leaders sometimes base their work on classical notions of pedagogy. Effective school leaders, in my view, do need to keep a critical eye on developments in the field of education. There are valid and important research studies and practices that have been published that can inform one's work in Jewish day schools. Imagine a physician or attorney who remains oblivious to recent developments in their respective fields of study. Why should educational leaders not take proactive steps to read and learn about

current innovations and best practices to determine which might fit in their school? I urge readers to examine the Annotated Works on Instructional Leadership section of this monograph for readings that might inform their own professional development in the area of instructional leadership.

22. A strong argument is made that early Jewish education systems clearly saw the value in constructivism. The *gemara* (*Berakhot* 63b), explains that we learn *be-havruta* because of the different styles of the two participants (note that they are, ideally, actively engaging in learning, as opposed to listening to a lecture; see Brown & Malkus, 2007 for a recent study on this point). In my observation of many classrooms, parenthetically, I am not particularly fond of the way *havruta* is conducted with students working in pairs without any continuous oversight and instructional guidance by the teacher (*rebbe*).

23. I highly recommend reading the research conducted by Barak Rosenshine (1971), an often overlooked educational researcher, whose ground-breaking research formed the foundation for many of today's best practices in teaching, curriculum, and instruction.

24. Thanks to Rabbi Yehuda Deutsch for this point.

25. Some readers will complain that although the ideas in this monograph are intriguing they are, for the most part, unrealistic because of the difficulty to find the time to devote to promoting instructional quality. I maintain that if a school head is committed to instructional improvement s/he will find the time. Allocating an hour in the morning and, say, 45 minutes in the afternoon for uninterrupted time to work with teachers on curriculum or observe and provide feedback to a teacher is not impossible. Some principals I know block off time on their schedule and inform their secretary that barring an emergency "I am not to be disturbed." There are several no-cost or very low cost measures that can be taken as well to make such work a reality. Although my focus in this monograph has not been devoted to a full discussion of implementation strategies, here are some ideas I have seen other day school leaders incorporate for meetings and/or time to devote to this work: Lunch and Learns, relieve Rabbeim from morning minyan responsibilities on a rotational basis to attend a curriculum discussion with a small group of peers, build into contracts for all new hires set days teachers must attend PD (extra Sundays perhaps), partner with another school to hire PD or curriculum consultants, partner with a local university wherein a professor may provide free services in order to meet her community service requirements for tenure, etc.

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Annotated Works on Instructional Leadership

The literature on the subject at hand and related areas is extensive. The list below is not meant to serve as a comprehensive resource by any means. The selected titles I have annotated are few but, in my opinion, are among the most useful references on the subject. I encourage individuals or teams of school leaders to read selected books and periodicals as a means of personal/team professional development.

Instructional Leadership

Blase, J., & Blase, J. (2004). *Handbook of instructional leadership: How successful principals promote teaching and learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

This is a classic volume and one of the most comprehensive treatments of instructional leadership that provides fascinating insights into actions and strategies leaders should take to promote instructional quality. The second edition expands the scope of the topic by explicating in concrete ways how instructional leaders inspire their staff to develop professional learning communities. This book serves as both a theoretical exposition and a practical guide to maximizing teaching and learning.

Fullan, M. (2008). *What's worth fighting for in the principalship* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Michael Fullan is a world-renowned expert on school change. Arguably, this is his classic work on the subject, although he has published many books. There are practical guidelines for implementation. Fullan masterfully interweaves extant research with practical strategies. This volume is a short and quick read.

Glickman, C. D. (2002). *Leadership for learning: How to help teachers succeed*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

This book is practical guidance to help teachers improve classroom teaching and learning. Instructional supervisors can read this volume with teachers as a conversation piece. The book is easy to use and reader friendly.

Marshall, K. (2009). *Rethinking teacher supervision and evaluation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Although I personally may not agree with his entire approach, Marshall (author of *The Marshall Memo*, see below) provides several excellent ways for school leaders to effectively improve their school's instructional program. The book raises the question why we need a new approach to supervision and evaluation in the first place. Then it methodically outlines a new approach that is clearly presented and practical. This book will be appreciated by practitioners.

McEwan, E. K. (2003). *7 steps to effective instructional leadership* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

This volume is another practical, research and standards-based, hands-on guide to becoming an effective instructional leader. Packed with concrete suggestions, this book is a must read.

Pajak, E. (2000). *Approaches to clinical supervision: Alternatives for improving instruction* (2nd ed.). Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon.

This volume is the best review of the prominent models of supervision.

Zepeda, S. J. (2003). *The principal as instructional leader: A handbook for supervisors*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Very helpful workbook accompanied by a CD that contains electronic versions of many forms provided throughout this useful work.

Books to Recommend for Teachers

Armstrong, T. (1998). *How to awaken genius in the classroom*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Some may consider this book "far-out," but I think its thesis is true and a must-read – a really short book.

Ayers, W. (1993). *To teach: The journey of a teacher*. New York: Teachers College Press.

This volume is an inspiring introduction to teaching. Although dealing with public schools, its messages are universal.

Canter, L. (1992). *Assertive discipline*. Santa Monica, CA: Lee Canter and Associates.

This is the very best book on corrective discipline. Learn and practice the difference among the three response styles. Although controversial (some hate the system, others swear by it), I'm in the latter camp. Recommend it! A life saver!!

Gill, V. (2001). *The eleven commandments of good teaching: Creating classrooms where teachers can teach and students can learn* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Really concise and useful – Don't let the catchy title fool you; this book is excellent. Full of tactics and strategies, this resource is written by a veteran teacher who has practical and wise advice.

Ginott, H.G. (1993). *Between teacher and child*. New York: Macmillan.

If I could recommend only one book, this is it! Sensitive, insightful, and practical, this work is a classic in the field.

Lemov, D. (2010). *Teach like a champion: 49 techniques that put students on the path to college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Although not traditionally research based, this book is filled with practical teaching techniques that have relevance to classroom instruction. Some of the strategies appear very rigid and manipulative, but it's well worth a read. It's a great work to share with faculty during faculty or department meetings.

Tatum, D. B. (1997). *Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?* New York: Basic Books.

This volume is practical and relevant with a universal message.

Wong, H.K., & Wong, R.T. (1998). *How to be an effective teacher: The first days of school*. Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong Publications.

National best-seller, Wong is an inspirational speaker and his book is a must read not only for every

beginning teacher but for even experienced teachers to remind them of the basics and to inspire them.

Instructional Strategies

Gregory, G. H., & Chapman, C. (2002). *Differentiated instructional strategies: One size doesn't fit all*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Practical strategies and techniques

Harmin, M. (2006). *Inspiring active learning: A complete handbook for today's teachers*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

If I could only recommend one book for you to read on practical strategies to promote learning, then this book would be the one!

King-Shaver, B., & Hunter, A. (2009). *Adolescent literacy and differentiated instruction*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Highly readable, research-based practical text on incorporating differentiated instruction into secondary classrooms. Focus is not only on reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, but also on viewing multimedia texts and engaging with digital literacy. Practical lesson plans are included.

Tileston Walker, D. (2004). *What every teacher should know about . . .*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

For principals a bit insecure about instructional leadership or who want to brush up on a host of topics related to teaching and learning, should read this superb series. The 10 topics included are: Diverse Learners; Student Motivation; Learning, Memory and the Brain; Instructional Planning; Effective Teaching Strategies; Classroom Management and Discipline; Student Assessment; Special Learners; Media and Technology; and The Profession and Politics of Teaching.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Provides easy-to-read and useful practical strategies for how teachers can navigate a diverse classroom. If

you want to learn how to teach students of different abilities at the same time, read this book – great case studies of classrooms at all levels in which instruction is differentiated successfully.

Journals and Newspapers

The Clearing House

Educational Leadership

Education Week

The Educational Forum

HaYidion: The RAVSAK Journal

Jewish Educational Leadership (Lookstein)

Journal of Research in Jewish Education

Journal of School Leadership

Kappan

NASSP Bulletin

Principal Leadership

Teachers College Record

Peruse www.corwinpress.com

Research on Instruction and Teaching

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2008). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

The authors examine decades of research in education to come up with nine teaching strategies that have positive effects on student learning - one of the books that is a must read.

Stronge, J. H. (2007). *Qualities of effective teachers* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

This volume is one of the best summaries of current research on teacher effectiveness.

Danielson, C. (2007). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

The author has developed a popular framework or model for understanding teaching based on current research in the field.

Research on School Reform and Improvement

Barr, R. D., & Yates, D. L. (2010). *Turning your school around: A self-guided audit for school improvement*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Learn a step-by-step protocol for the self-guided audit that focuses on the most critical areas of school improvement. The authors give readers a realistic view of the work involved in a top-to-bottom audit, while providing supporting researched base evidence of its effectiveness.

Web Sites

- <http://www.ascd.org>
- <http://www.aera.net>
- <http://www.nassp.org/>
National Association of Secondary School Principals
- <http://www.naesp.org/>
National Association of Elementary School Principals
- <http://www/yuschoolpartnership.org>
A wonderful resource

Appendices

Appendix A: Instructional Goals Matrix

TARGET AREA	TEACHING	CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENT	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Specific Goal			
Assessment Tool			
The Plan – Steps involved			
Desired Outcome Relating to Instruction			
Time Frame			
Associated Costs			

Appendix B: On-the-Spot Beliefs about Instructional Leadership: A Questionnaire

Directions: Beliefs influence our conception of leadership and consequently our actions (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). The questionnaire below challenges readers to reflect on views of leadership with particular attention to instructional leadership. Research indicates that the extent to which school leaders attend to instructional matters within the classroom is influenced in large measure by their beliefs of their efficacy regarding their work in instructional leadership (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Sullivan & Glanz, 2006). Using the Likert-scale below, circle the answer that best represents your on-the-spot belief about each statement. After the survey, I include a brief discussion on each of the items. Readers may agree or disagree with my responses, but I hope it will provoke reflection and continued study.

SA = Strongly Agree ("For the most part, yes")

A = Agree ("Yes, but . . .")

D = Disagree ("No, but . . .")

SD = Strongly Disagree ("For the most part, no")

SA A D SD 1. To be effective, the principal must have been a successful classroom teacher.

SA A D SD 2. Good principals must know how to facilitate best practices in teaching, curriculum, and supervision.

SA A D SD 3. It is reasonable to expect a principal to serve as a presenter in a professional development session.

SA A D SD 4. It is reasonable to expect principals to know as much or more about wait time, Bloom's Taxonomy, and differentiated instruction than teachers.

SA A D SD 5. It is reasonable to expect principals to lead disciplinary instruction in *gemarah, tanakh*, mathematics, biology, English, history, etc.

SA A D SD 6. The principal should spend many hours on the job in the classroom each day.

SA A D SD 7. The principal should be the most important instructional leader in a school.

SA A D SD 8. The principal is the single greatest factor in determining the extent of student achievement.

SA A D SD 9. Instructional leadership should take priority over other forms of leadership.

SA A D SD 10. I am comfortable facilitating instructional leadership in my school.

Suggested responses:

1. To be effective, the principal must have been a successful classroom teacher.

Successful, yes; not necessarily the best.

2. Good principals must know how to facilitate best practices in teaching, curriculum, and supervision.

Yes, and “facilitate” is the key word.

3. It is reasonable to expect a principal to serve as a presenter in a professional development session.

Yes; not the sole presenter, but a principal should feel comfortable enough to “show the way” by demonstrating sound teaching practices; to communicate to others “do as I do, not just as I say.”

4. It is reasonable to expect principals to know as much or more about wait time, Bloom’s Taxonomy, and differentiated instruction than teachers.

No; although principals are somewhat conversant with ideas in each area, they are not experts and should therefore reach out to others; the principal serves here as a discussant of these areas with teachers.

5. It is reasonable to expect principals to lead disciplinary instruction in *gemara, tanakh*, mathematics, biology, English, history, etc.

No; the words of Wilmore (2004) are instructive here: “Yet even though you are the instructional leader, there is nothing that requires you to be the expert in all forms of language, mathematics, science, technology, history, and civic responsibility. What you are required to do is to understand and facilitate appropriate processes for curriculum enhancement and developmentally appropriate instructional methods. . . . You are the facilitator of these areas, not the sole provider of them.” (p. 51).

6. The principal should spend many hours on the job in the classroom each day.

Not necessarily; although a principal who believes and feels comfortable in dealing with instructional matters spends a large part of the day thinking about and facilitating instruction, it is equally unreasonable that the principal needs to spend literally hours in the classroom. Although, you will notice that principals who have not been successful teachers and are uncomfortable and/or not knowledgeable about teaching, for instance, will avoid the classroom or spend just a few moments “shooting the breeze” with teachers and students in the classroom.

7. The principal should be the most important instructional leader in a school.

Yes; but not the sole leader. Allow me to quote Wilmore (2004) once again: “Be careful to notice the difference between being able to facilitate the successful progress of teachers and others, rather than doing everything

yourself. If you try to do that, you will kill yourself. Once dead, there isn't anything you can do to help anyone, so budget your time." (p. 51).

8. The principal is the single greatest factor in determining the extent of student achievement.

Yes and no; Promoting student achievement is a complex process that involves many school/classroom/community contextual variables. Although the teacher is certainly the key individual in the classroom, who on a daily basis influences student learning, the principal can be viewed as an orchestra leader of sorts who coordinates, facilitates, and oversees the instructional process on a school-wide basis. The principal as orchestra leader, seen in this way, is the most important link or ingredient to ensure high student achievement.

9. Instructional leadership should take priority over other forms of leadership.

All forms of leadership work synchronistically; i.e., in unison with one another. Although it is difficult to separate instructional from cultural leadership as well as with other forms of leadership, the principal, I assert, should be primarily focused in a strategic way with promoting high instructional standards that encourages exceptional teaching, and that yields high achievement for all students.

10. I am comfortable facilitating instructional leadership in my school.

This is a statement each of you must assess on your own. If you have not had successful or sufficient experience in the classroom, all is not lost. You must engage in strong and ongoing personal professional development in this area. The more you read, the more workshops you attend, and the more you practice your instructional skills, the more legitimacy you'll receive in the eyes of teachers and the more likely you'll positively influence the school's instructional program.

Appendix C: Assessing Your Role as Instructional Leader: A Questionnaire

Charlotte Danielson, in a 2007 work titled *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* (published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), developed a framework or model for understanding teaching based on current research in the field. She identified “components” clustered into four domains of teaching responsibility: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. I adapted and developed the questionnaire below based on her framework. Please take the survey now because it will *serve as an important reflective tool to judge what you consider as instructionally important*. Please note that your responses are private. Therefore, your honest responses to the various items below will best *serve as reflective tools to assist you in becoming an even better instructional leader*. At the end, you will find a brief self-analysis to encourage reflection on your role as an instructional leader.

SA = Strongly Agree ("For the most part, yes")

A = Agree ("Yes, but . . .")

D = Disagree ("No, but . . .")

SD = Strongly Disagree ("For the most part, no")

Planning and Preparation

SA A D SD 1. Teachers should be offered guidance in planning and preparing for instruction, and I feel comfortable in doing so.

SA A D SD 2. Good teachers should display solid content knowledge and make connections with their discipline or with other disciplines.

SA A D SD 3. Good teachers should consider the importance of prerequisite knowledge when introducing new topics.

SA A D SD 4. Good teachers actively build on students' prior knowledge and seek causes for students' misunderstandings.

SA A D SD 5. Good teachers are content knowledgeable, but may need additional assistance with pedagogical strategies and techniques, and I feel comfortable providing such assistance.

SA A D SD 6. I am familiar with pedagogical strategies and continually search for best practices to share with my teachers.

SA A D SD 7. Good teachers know much about the developmental needs of their students.

SA A D SD 8. Principals are familiar with learning styles and multiple intelligences theories and can help teachers apply them to instructional practice.

- SA A D SD 9. I do not fully recognize the value of understanding teachers' skills and knowledge as a basis for their professional development.
- SA A D SD 10. Goal setting is critical to teacher success in planning and preparing, and the principal should offer to collaborate with teachers in this area.
- SA A D SD 11. I am familiar with curricular and teaching resources to assist teachers.
- SA A D SD 12. I know I can help teachers develop appropriate learning activities suitable for students.
- SA A D SD 13. I can help teachers plan for a variety of meaningful learning activities matched to school/state instructional goals.
- SA A D SD 14. I would encourage teachers to use varied instructional grouping.
- SA A D SD 15. I can assist teachers in developing a systematic plan for assessment of student learning.
- SA A D SD 16. I can provide professional development for teachers in planning and preparation.

The Classroom Environment

- SA A D SD 1. I realize the importance of classroom management and discipline.
- SA A D SD 2. I expect that teacher interactions with students will be generally friendly and demonstrate warmth and caring.
- SA A D SD 3. I expect teachers to develop a system of discipline without my assistance.
- SA A D SD 4. I will play an active role in monitoring grade/school discipline plans.
- SA A D SD 5. I support the classroom teachers in matters of discipline.
- SA A D SD 6. I always communicate high expectations to all my teachers and emphasize that they are the single most critical element in the classroom.
- SA A D SD 7. I expect teachers to have a well-established and well-defined system of rules and procedures.
- SA A D SD 8. I expect that teachers are alert to student behavior at all times.
- SA A D SD 9. I can provide professional development to teachers on classroom management.
- SA A D SD 10. As a teacher, I was a competent classroom manager.

Instruction

- SA A D SD 1. I expect that teachers' directions to students will be clear and not confusing.
- SA A D SD 2. My directives to teachers about instruction are clear.

- SA A D SD 3. My spoken language as a teacher was clear and appropriate according to the grade level of my students.
- SA A D SD 4. I believe that teacher questioning techniques are among the most critical skills needed to promote pupil learning, and I feel comfortable in helping teachers frame good questions.
- SA A D SD 5. Teacher questions must be uniformly of high quality.
- SA A D SD 6. From my experience, teachers mostly lecture (talk) to students without enough student participation.
- SA A D SD 7. I encourage teachers to encourage students to participate and prefer that students take an active role in learning.
- SA A D SD 8. I can provide a workshop for teachers on giving assignments that are appropriate for students, and that engage students intellectually.
- SA A D SD 9. I don't know how to group students appropriately for instruction.
- SA A D SD 10. I am very familiar with grouping strategies to promote instruction.
- SA A D SD 11. I can advise teachers on how best to select appropriate and effective instructional materials and resources.
- SA A D SD 12. My demo lessons to teachers are highly coherent and my pacing is consistent and appropriate.
- SA A D SD 13. I rarely provide appropriate feedback to my teachers.
- SA A D SD 14. Feedback to my teachers is consistent, appropriate, and of high quality.
- SA A D SD 15. I expect my teachers to rely heavily on the teacher's manual for instruction.
- SA A D SD 16. I consistently encourage teachers to seek my advice on teaching and learning matters.
- SA A D SD 17. I encourage teachers to use wait time effectively.
- SA A D SD 18. I feel competent enough to give a workshop to teachers on effective use of wait time.
- SA A D SD 19. I consider myself an instructional leader.
- SA A D SD 20. Teachers perceive me as an instructional leader.

Professional Responsibilities

- SA A D SD 1. I have difficulty assessing the effectiveness of teachers.
- SA A D SD 2. I can accurately assess how well I am doing as an instructional leader.
- SA A D SD 3. I really don't know how to improve teaching skills.
- SA A D SD 4. I am aware of what I need to do in order to become an effective instructional leader.
- SA A D SD 5. I rarely encourage parents to become involved in instructional matters.

- SA A D SD 6. I actively and consistently encourage parents to visit classrooms.
- SA A D SD 7. I feel comfortable giving workshops to parents on curricular and/or instructional matters.
- SA A D SD 8. I have difficulty relating to my colleagues in a cordial and professional manner.
- SA A D SD 9. I collaborate with my colleagues in a cordial and professional manner.
- SA A D SD 10. I avoid becoming involved in school projects.
- SA A D SD 11. I rarely encourage teachers to seek to engage in professional development activities.
- SA A D SD 12. I seek out opportunities for professional development to enhance my pedagogical skills.
- SA A D SD 13. I am rarely alert to teachers' instructional needs.
- SA A D SD 14. I serve teachers.
- SA A D SD 15. I am an advocate for students' rights.
- SA A D SD 16. I am an advocate for teachers' rights.
- SA A D SD 17. I rarely encourage teachers to serve on a school-based committee.
- SA A D SD 18. I enjoy working with teachers collaboratively on instructional matters.

Analyzing your responses:

Note that the items above draw from research that highlights good educational practice. Review your responses and circle responses that concern you. For instance, if you circled Strongly Agree for "I am rarely alert to teacher's instructional needs," ask yourself, "Why is this a problem?", "How can I remedy the situation?", and "What additional resources or assistance might I need?" If you agree, share and compare responses with another educator. The dialogue that will ensue will serve as a helpful vehicle to move towards more effective practice.

In summary, review your responses for each of the four domains as noted below:

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation. This domain demonstrates your comfort level in working with teachers on content and pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of students and resources, ability to select instructional goals, and the degree to which you help them assess learning.

SA A D SD 1. My ability to work with teachers on planning and preparation is satisfactory.

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment. This domain assesses the degree to which you encourage and create an environment of respect and caring and establish a culture for learning related to many aspects of classroom environment. SA A D SD 1. I am satisfied that my ability to work with teachers on the classroom environment is satisfactory.

Domain 3: Instruction. This domain assesses the ability to work with teachers to communicate with clarity, use questioning and discussion techniques, engage students in learning, provide feedback to students, demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness to student's instructional needs
SA A D SD 1. I am satisfied that my knowledge and skills of instruction are satisfactory.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities. This domain assesses the degree to which you encourage teachers to reflect on teaching, maintain accurate records, communicate with parents, contribute to the school, grow and develop professionally, and show professionalism.
SA A D SD 1. I am satisfied I am professionally responsible.

Appendix D: Teacher Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Charlotte Danielson, in a 2007 work titled *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* (published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), developed a framework or model for understanding teaching based on current research in the field. She identified “components” clustered into four domains of teaching responsibility: *planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities*. I developed the questionnaire below based on her framework. Please take the questionnaire because it will serve as an important reflective tool. A short activity to assess your responses can be found at the end of the questionnaire.

SA = Strongly Agree ("For the most part, yes")

A = Agree ("Yes, but . . .")

D = Disagree ("No, but . . .")

SD = Strongly Disagree ("For the most part, no")

Planning and Preparation

SA A D SD 1. I make many errors when I teach in my content area.

SA A D SD 2. I display solid content knowledge and can make connections with other parts of my discipline or with other disciplines.

SA A D SD 3. I rarely consider the importance of prerequisite knowledge when introducing new topics

SA A D SD 4. Although I am content knowledgeable, I need additional assistance with pedagogical strategies and techniques.

SA A D SD 5. I know the typical developmental characteristics of the age groups I teach.

SA A D SD 6. I have a solid understanding of learning styles and multiple intelligences theories and can apply them to instructional practice.

SA A D SD 7. I do not fully recognize the value of understanding students' skills and knowledge as a basis for my teaching.

SA A D SD 8. I don't believe that setting goals for my class is ever helpful because they may influence my expectations for them in a potentially negative way.

SA A D SD 9. I am very aware of teaching resources and seek to use them in preparing for lessons.

SA A D SD 10. I plan for a variety of meaningful learning activities matched to my instructional goals.

SA A D SD 11. I teach the whole class most of the time without utilizing instructional groups.

SA A D SD 12. My lessons are well-planned, organized and matched to my instructional goals, most of the time.

SA A D SD 13. I have a well-defined understanding of how I will assess my students after a unit of instruction.

The Classroom Environment

SA A D SD 1. I realize I sometimes use poor interaction skills with my students, such as use of sarcastic or disparaging remarks.

SA A D SD 2. My interactions with students are generally friendly and demonstrate warmth and caring.

SA A D SD 3. Students in my class, generally, don't get along with each other and conflicts are not uncommon.

SA A D SD 4. I convey a negative attitude towards the content suggesting that the content is mandated by others.

SA A D SD 5. I convey a genuine enthusiasm for the subject.

SA A D SD 6. Students in my class demonstrate little or no pride in their work and don't perform to the best of their ability.

SA A D SD 7. Students meet or exceed my expectations for high quality work.

SA A D SD 8. I communicate high expectations for all my students.

SA A D SD 9. Students in my class are sometimes on-task, but often off-task behavior is observed.

SA A D SD 10. Transitions in my class occur smoothly, with little loss of instructional time.

SA A D SD 11. Routines for handling materials and supplies in my class are not well organized causing loss of instructional time.

SA A D SD 12. I pride myself on the well-established system of rules and procedures in my class.

SA A D SD 13. I have difficulty enforcing standards for acceptable conduct in my class.

SA A D SD 14. I monitor student behavior and I am aware of what students are doing.

SA A D SD 15. I am alert to student behavior at all times.

SA A D SD 16. My classroom is safe and the furniture arrangements are a resource for learning.

Instruction

SA A D SD 1. My directions are not clear to students often causing confusion.

SA A D SD 2. My spoken language is often inaudible and unintelligible.

SA A D SD 3. My use of questions needs improvement.

SA A D SD 4. I mostly lecture (talk) to my students without enough student participation.

SA A D SD 5. Only a few students participate in class discussions.

- SA A D SD 6. My ability to communicate content is sound and appropriate.
- SA A D SD 7. Activities and assignments are inappropriate to students, and don't engage students intellectually.
- SA A D SD 8. I am very familiar with grouping strategies to promote instruction.
- SA A D SD 9. I select inappropriate and ineffective instructional materials and resources.
- SA A D SD 10. My lessons have little, or no structure and my pacing of the lesson is too slow, rushed or both.
- SA A D SD 11. I rarely provide appropriate feedback to my students.
- SA A D SD 12. Feedback is consistently provided in a timely manner.
- SA A D SD 13. I rarely, if ever, rely on the teacher's manual because I can adjust a lesson appropriate to the needs and level of my students.
- SA A D SD 14. I often ignore students' questions or interests.
- SA A D SD 15. I often blame my student's for their inability to learn by attributing their lack of success to their background or lack of interest or motivation.
- SA A D SD 16. I don't give up with slow learners and try to encourage them all the time.
- SA A D SD 17. I tend to go off on tangents.
- SA A D SD 18. I ask multiple questions that sometimes confuse students.
- SA A D SD 19. I use wait time effectively.

Professional Responsibilities

- SA A D SD 1. I have difficulty assessing my effectiveness as a teacher.
- SA A D SD 2. I am aware of what I need to do in order to become an effective teacher.
- SA A D SD 3. I don't have a system for maintaining information on student completion of assignments.
- SA A D SD 4. I don't have a system for maintaining information on student progress in learning.
- SA A D SD 5. I rarely encourage parental involvement in my class.
- SA A D SD 6. I reach out to parents consistently.
- SA A D SD 7. I collaborate with my colleagues in a cordial and professional manner.
- SA A D SD 8. I often volunteer to participate in school events.
- SA A D SD 9. I generally avoid becoming involved in school projects.
- SA A D SD 10. I rarely seek to engage in professional development activities.
- SA A D SD 11. I am active in serving students.
- SA A D SD 12. I am not an advocate for student's rights.

SA A D SD 13. I rarely desire to serve on a school-based committee.
Analyzing your responses:

Note that the items above draw from research that highlights good educational practice. Review your responses and circle responses that concern you. For instance, if you circled Strongly Agree for “I ask multiple questions that sometimes confuse students,” ask yourself, “Why is this a problem?”, “How can I remedy the situation?”, and “What additional resources or assistance might I need?” If you agree, share and compare responses with another educator. The dialogue that will ensue will serve as a helpful vehicle to move towards more effective teaching practice.

In summary, review your responses for each of the four domains as noted below:

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation. This domain demonstrates your content and pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of students and resources, ability to select instructional; goals, and the degree to which you assess student learning.

SA A D SD 1. I am satisfied that my planning and preparation knowledge and skills are satisfactory.

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment. This domain assesses the degree to which you create an environment of respect and caring, establish a culture for learning, manage classroom procedures, manage student behavior, and organize physical space.

SA A D SD 1. I am satisfied that my knowledge and skills of classroom environment are satisfactory.

Domain 3: Instruction. This domain assesses the ability to communicate with clarity, use questioning and discussion techniques, engage students in learning, provide feedback to students, demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness to student’s instructional needs

SA A D SD 1. I am satisfied that my knowledge and skills of instruction are satisfactory.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities. This domain assesses the degree to which you reflect on teaching, maintain accurate records, communicate with parents, contribute to the school, grow and develop professionally, and show professionalism.

SA A D SD 1. I am satisfied I am professionally responsible.

Appendix E: Supervisor Attitude Questionnaire

This survey assesses your attitudes and views about how teachers would respond about working in your school.

For each statement below, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by circling the appropriate number.

- Strongly agree =5
 Agree =4
 Uncertain =3
 Disagree =2
 Strongly disagree =1

1. Teachers willingly spend time before or after school to work on curriculum or other special school projects.	5	4	3	2	1
2. There is a feeling of togetherness in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
3. The principal provides instructional support to faculty on a regular basis.	5	4	3	2	1
4. Decision making in this school can be described as democratic.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Faculty are consulted about school's goals or mission.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Teachers are treated as professionals.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Teachers feel threatened by supervisors.	5	4	3	2	1
8. There is a pessimistic atmosphere in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
9. Teachers feel lines of communication between principal and teachers are open.	5	4	3	2	1
10. Faculty opinions are solicited but seldom used.	5	4	3	2	1
11. There is no opportunity for faculty growth to develop professionally.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Teachers enjoy working in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
13. The principal is accessible.	5	4	3	2	1
14. Teachers are free to share problems with the administration.	5	4	3	2	1
15. Parents actively support this school.	5	4	3	2	1
16. Teacher evaluation is used to threaten teachers.	5	4	3	2	1
17. There is a focus on student learning in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
18. Opportunities for staff development provided by my school meet my needs for professional growth.	5	4	3	2	1
19. Curriculum materials are readily available.	5	4	3	2	1

20. This is a well managed school.	5	4	3	2	1
21. There is a clear and rigorous, yet differentiated academic focus in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
22. The principal supports new teachers on an ongoing basis.	5	4	3	2	1
23. PD is ongoing, collaborative, and useful.	5	4	3	2	1
24. Teacher evaluation in this school is not very useful for me as a classroom teacher.	5	4	3	2	1
25. The school does not have clear goals and objectives.	5	4	3	2	1
26. Morale is high in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
27. Supervisory conferences are meaningful and helpful.	5	4	3	2	1
28. I am provided concrete feedback about my teaching on an ongoing basis.	5	4	3	2	1
29. This school is a learning community in that all or most teachers meet to discuss common problems.	5	4	3	2	1
30. The Board is supportive of the school's instructional program.	5	4	3	2	1
31. There is opportunity to meet with my supervisor about my teaching practice.	5	4	3	2	1
32. I have a professional growth plan.	5	4	3	2	1
33. Ample instructional materials exist to support my teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
34. New teachers are supported to manage their personal and professional time appropriately.	5	4	3	2	1
35. Release time is provided for PD and additional training.	5	4	3	2	1
36. I have a voice in the kind and type of PD we have in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
37. Principals frequently visit my classroom to offer instructional assistance.	5	4	3	2	1
38. I receive adequate resources to support instruction.	5	4	3	2	1
39. I usually meet with my supervisor after I am observed.	5	4	3	2	1
40. I have an opportunity on occasion to visit my colleagues as they teach.	5	4	3	2	1
41. My colleagues and I usually discuss student related problems and issues as part of the	5	4	3	2	1

regular school day.					
42. There is a genuine concern for teachers and students in this school	5	4	3	2	1
43. There is obvious conflict among administrative and supervisory personnel.	5	4	3	2	1
44. I am supported by the administration in terms of student behavior.	5	4	3	2	1
45. I am often given feedback on what I need to improve as a teacher.	5	4	3	2	1
46. The curriculum in this school is written, discussed, understood, and revised every few years.	5	4	3	2	1
47. All students have access to all curriculum.	5	4	3	2	1
48. Parents are partners in instruction and are encouraged to participate in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
49. We meet as a grade to review student performance data.	5	4	3	2	1
50. Our supervisor discusses the latest research in the field of teaching and education.	5	4	3	2	1
51. Curriculum is mapped and well organized.	5	4	3	2	1
52. Teachers have high expectations for student achievement.	5	4	3	2	1
53. We are provided with the latest research on assessment.	5	4	3	2	1
54. Judaic studies and general studies teacher meet on occasion to discuss common problems.	5	4	3	2	1
55. There is no homework policy in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
56. The supervisor does not effectively conduct classroom observations.	5	4	3	2	1
57. The principal creates a supportive learning environment in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
58. The principal does not demonstrate leadership skills in the area of instruction.	5	4	3	2	1
59. The principal is more of a manager and than an instructional leader.	5	4	3	2	1
60. Judging teacher competence is a fair process in this school.	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix F: Teacher Attitude Questionnaire

This survey assesses your attitudes and views about working in your school.

For each statement below, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by circling the appropriate number.

- Strongly agree* =5
Agree =4
Uncertain =3
Disagree =2
Strongly disagree =1

1. Teachers willingly spend time before or after school to work on curriculum or other special school projects.	5	4	3	2	1
2. There is a feeling of togetherness in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
3. The principal provides instructional support to faculty on a regular basis.	5	4	3	2	1
4. Decision making in this school can be described as democratic.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Faculty are consulted about school's goals or mission.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Teachers are treated as professionals.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Teachers feel threatened by supervisors.	5	4	3	2	1
8. There is a pessimistic atmosphere in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
9. Teachers feel lines of communication between principal and teachers are open.	5	4	3	2	1
10. Faculty opinions are solicited but seldom used.	5	4	3	2	1
11. There is no opportunity for faculty growth to develop professionally.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Teachers enjoy working in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
13. The principal is accessible.	5	4	3	2	1
14. Teachers are free to share problems with the administration.	5	4	3	2	1
15. Parents actively support this school.	5	4	3	2	1
16. Teacher evaluation is used to threaten teachers.	5	4	3	2	1
17. There is a focus on student learning in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
18. Opportunities for staff development provided by my school meet my needs for professional growth.	5	4	3	2	1

19. Curriculum materials are readily available.	5	4	3	2	1
20. This is a well managed school.	5	4	3	2	1
21. There is a clear and rigorous, yet differentiated academic focus in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
22. The principal supports new teachers on an ongoing basis.	5	4	3	2	1
23. PD is ongoing, collaborative, and useful.	5	4	3	2	1
24. Teacher evaluation in this school is not very useful for me as a classroom teacher.	5	4	3	2	1
25. The school does not have clear goals and objectives.	5	4	3	2	1
26. Morale is high in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
27. Supervisory conferences are meaningful and helpful.	5	4	3	2	1
28. I am provided concrete feedback about my teaching on an ongoing basis.	5	4	3	2	1
29. This school is a learning community in that all or most teachers meet to discuss common problems.	5	4	3	2	1
30. The Board is supportive of the school's instructional program.	5	4	3	2	1
31. There is opportunity to meet with my supervisor about my teaching practice.	5	4	3	2	1
32. I have a professional growth plan.	5	4	3	2	1
33. Ample instructional materials exist to support my teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
34. New teachers are supported to manage their personal and professional time appropriately.	5	4	3	2	1
35. Release time is provided for PD and additional training.	5	4	3	2	1
36. I have a voice in the kind and type of PD we have in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
37. Principals frequently visit my classroom to offer instructional assistance.	5	4	3	2	1
38. I receive adequate resources to support instruction.	5	4	3	2	1
39. I usually meet with my supervisor after I am observed.	5	4	3	2	1
40. I have an opportunity on occasion to visit my colleagues as they teach.	5	4	3	2	1

41. My colleagues and I usually discuss student related problems and issues as part of the regular school day.	5	4	3	2	1
42. There is a genuine concern for teachers and students in this school	5	4	3	2	1
43. There is obvious conflict among administrative and supervisory personnel.	5	4	3	2	1
44. I am supported by the administration in terms of student behavior.	5	4	3	2	1
45. I am often given feedback on what I need to improve as a teacher.	5	4	3	2	1
46. The curriculum in this school is written, discussed, understood, and revised every few years.	5	4	3	2	1
47. All students have access to all curriculum.	5	4	3	2	1
48. Parents are partners in instruction and are encouraged to participate in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
49. We meet as a grade to review student performance data.	5	4	3	2	1
50. Our supervisor discusses the latest research in the field of teaching and education.	5	4	3	2	1
51. Curriculum is mapped and well organized.	5	4	3	2	1
52. Teachers have high expectations for student achievement.	5	4	3	2	1
53. We are provided with the latest research on assessment.	5	4	3	2	1
54. Judaic studies and general studies teacher meet on occasion to discuss common problems.	5	4	3	2	1
55. There is no homework policy in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
56. The supervisor does not effectively conduct classroom observations.	5	4	3	2	1
57. The principal creates a supportive learning environment in this school.	5	4	3	2	1
58. The principal does not demonstrate leadership skills in the area of instruction.	5	4	3	2	1
59. The principal is more of a manager and than an instructional leader.	5	4	3	2	1
60. Judging teacher competence is a fair process in this school.	5	4	3	2	1

