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 private1chipx4(1c)2sb0

Contents

Introduction

Instructional Quality in Jewish Day Schools and Yeshivot: Best

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 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

Introduction

principal [*read: Jewish day school leader*], who sets the tone as the

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

Carl Glickman, noted educational reformer, once astutely commented, and
education is to have a powerful influence on the educational lives of

leadership sincerely want to make a difference. They realize that they
are in an optimal position in order to affect great change and provide
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, adst4(h)-4(e)y-19(ted)7l b4( )is4(vi-4(

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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 principalship[2] 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

This emphasis on instructional improvement is clearly reflected in

all.

When asked about time spent in instructional dialogue with

*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*

Extant research and anecdotal evidence indicates that many Jewish schools have been unaffected by these recent cutting-edge practices in instructional leadership (Feuerman, 2002, 2009; Gorsetman, 2005; Greene, 2008; Schick, 2007; Spotlight on Jewish Day School Education, 2003).[3] For instance, supervision of instruction in

x 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 (Leith4( )-75(sc)12(h)-is

administrator. He was well-organized, prompt, and efficient. He prided himself on his meticulous reports that were distributed to

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.   achers have a powerful, long-lasting influence on

   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.
   rookie teachers in that they have attained expertise through real-

   9). Research demonstrates that teachers with more experience plan better, apply a range of teaching strategies, understand
   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,

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:

- x develop, in collaboration with teachers, clear and consistent school-wide instructional policies
- x 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).
- x examine instructional grouping patterns to ensure student mastery of content
- x establish clearly defined academic goals for the school (by grade)
- x facilitate a process to develop and revise curriculum in all content areas
- x involve teachers in curriculum planning and decision making
- x maintain systematic methods of assessment
- x review data collected as a result of implementation of an assessment system
- x share and use the data to help improve the instructional school program
- x observe teachers and students engaged in the learning process
- x assist teachers who are having instructional difficulties
- x provide opportunities for teachers to learn and professionally grow
- x 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

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. 0550003≫65@0B. teainatog,403(abof(in)ex(pal(ed (e)-42

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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 d 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

(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

I discussed my research and work on teaching, supervision, and my vision for good schooling when he suddenly interrupted

garbage do you?
a break. Did we have them when we were in high school? 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.
no need for meeting after meeting.
continuing
are ill-
spoon feed them.
I have to run a tight ship, . . . be tough with teache

parental involvement, building team spirit, etc. during the
mittee wanted to

Instructional supervision, as best practice, is a school-wide process in which teaching and learning become the core of the schoo 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 resourD [(reo1r47tpri)5(nci)4(p)-s oureo1r4corpe40(t.021((46m)-7unit)-4(x(46m)o

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:

x *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.*
approximately 50% of the students of the class with many

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.

x *Curriculum development Development of curriculum needs more ongoing, comprehensive attention, although a start has*

13

the instructional process without turning attention to a deeper level of

Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009). The instructional core (see Figure 2

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)
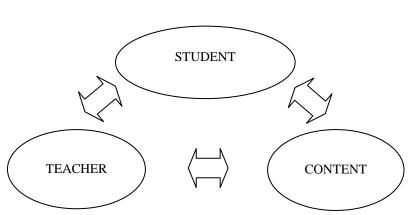
Figure 2
The Instructional Core

Learning occurs in the interaction among these three vital components. For instance, if we match the level of content to the
As

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

improving instruction and learnin   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.   h 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.
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)

16

content, and the need to ensure that the *student* is actively learning

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:

> *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.*
>
> *Ms. Reynolds: 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*
>
>
> *   your organizational skills are superior.*
> *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*
>
> *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.

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):

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.

questions throughout the lesson.

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

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

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).

and moves on to the next question and the next student. It is quite

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

convictions, strong commitments, and clear ideas about directions for

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,

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

- x
- x
  mission
- x teachers who really get to know the students and vice versa
- x enthusiastic and educationally diverse student body who value above all else the relationships with fellow students
- x 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

   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

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

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

Transformational change in instructional quality occurs gradually, according to the literature on school reform and change, and when

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

assessment central to its work if it expects to make a difference for student learning.
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
prove

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

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

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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

Some false assumptions:
    (1) PD is useless (thus, not valued)
    (2) Teachers do not necessarily need PD.

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

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

have to ask you to act out the case in front of the class in order for you
I was beside myself that he asked that question
rhetorically and in mockery. please do! I cannot
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*

methods for delivering content and assessing understanding, and
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

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

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

in meaningful discussions about the curriculum.

Implementing the recommendation:
- x Start small   Select one Judaic subject to focus on over a 2-year period.
- x 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

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

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

x <u>Reflective journaling</u>   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.

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.

x 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)? 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

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 such, continued professional development is of utmost importance. Teachers should be receiving a journal in their area, whether

Promoting Instructional Excellence

fight for it, demand it, and rid the ranks of those incapable or

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

The material that follows includes suggestions to improve the

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

1.

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

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

short answers to two questions. The responses can be on index

Questions should be open ended such as: What question(s) do
you have about t   What was
the concept that we learned today that was the most difficult

3. **Reciprocal Teaching**: Many forms of this very important

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.

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.

than students who were taught with rote traditional pedagogies (e.g., lectures or frontal teaching). More specifically, the researchers noted

authentic instruction would learn about 78 percent more math between 8th and 10th grade than a comparable student in a school with

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

:

> *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.
tend to recognize individual and group differences among their

(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

An Overview of Best Practices in Curriculum

develop a deep and broad knowledge base with respect to

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:

- x model best practice in curriculum by reviewing all instructional resources and materials in various content areas
- x align teaching with curriculum
- x encourage teachers to review curriculum guidelines and lu43441oarTd witvist i4.52 Td [(I)5(nst)5466((rupct)4o)3(co)-3(B)3(ic.s)-9

Research-Based Teaching Practices in Curriculum
x **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).
x **Tripod View of Curriculum** involves three ways of conceiving curriculum; based on the needs of the learner, needs of society, or the knowledge base.
x **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.
x **Planning, Implementing, and Assessing Teaching and Learning -** involves a three step curriculum developmental framework.
x **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.

work devised by administrators. Curriculum development is an ongoing, collaborative process to find new and better ways to match

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

curriculum? Schools, in my view, too often merely pay lip-service to

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.

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.

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.

(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

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

(Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 15) together without a clear

steps are cyclical as the process begins and ends with planning. Units or lessons are modified and improved through this process.

Figure 4
Operationalizing the Steps in Developing the Curriculum

Step 1
Planning for Teaching and Learning
A. Determine prior knowledge and skills
B. Establish instructional results/proficiencies
C. Review instruction resources and materials

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

4) Emphasize both the academic and the practical. Relating

- x Soliciting input from others in the curriculum process (e.g., curriculum specialists, parents, and students)
- x Examining the relationship between teaching and curriculum
- x Assessing the impact of curriculum materials on student achievement
- x 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

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 (Breaux & Wong, 2003) in which new and inexperienced teachers are paired with a mentor for professional education and

70

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,

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

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).

- x *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.
- x *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.
- x *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,

    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.
- x *Focused on student learning* According to Speck (1998),

    Principals and committees that are responsible for planning professional development programs should consider first and foremost the teacher behaviors or activities that most directly

- x *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.
- x *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.
- x *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   )5(cta(h)-4(ot)-1)4(-8( )-5 4 81.26615j /[urs)-t3(g,)-p:/s fownww.nsn0(

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

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

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:

x   In word and deed, place emphasis on improving teaching and

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

convictions, strong commitments, and clear ideas about directions for

Robert J. Starratt

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

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.

Charismatic, transformational leaders possess personal characteristics that include

nfluence others, being

self-

(p. 132). A more recent version of transformational leadership emerged in the work of Bass (1985).

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 Northou

helps followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of

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

identified: setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization.

aspect of transformational leadership . . . [by] . . . helping staff to

develop shared understandings about the school and its activities as

-

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

Michael Fullan (1991, cited by Fullan 2003a)

and Gregersen (2002 as cited by Fullan, 2006), Fullan explains

Citing Jim Collins (2002 cited by Fullan, 2007), he explains

5. <u>Leadership for change</u> - Fullan asks, what is the best leadership style for effecting the changes that are necessary in schools?   -flying, charismatic leaders look like powerful change agents, but are actually bad

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

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-
ideas advocated in this monograph.

2. I have culled these excerpts from the literature on the school principalship

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 co1bearc rlpreen-3(ng)-5( )-26w-5(e)-1l-g a29(i)-3(mp8(out)6(com)4(e

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

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 vieal, (uest)-22d (i)hai, 5(cur)- TDsT0 11.04 Tf nc, 9(p)4.w54,

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,

10.

throughs, explains t   -
throughs more useful than do teachers (who rarely receive individual

When a climate of trust and improvement is not secured in a school, for
example, then walk-

material t

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*

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

Teaching of History in Elementary and S
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.
Joyce and Weil (2008) in their classic book titled *Models of Teaching*, and

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.

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,

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, parenthet4(o-1t)-6(h)5(et)6(4(ob)-2(ser)

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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).   (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).

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

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
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 well worth a read.

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)

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 focus-129(of)3(6213()-3( )-27(aiB54iB54iB5a)8[o( )-4bJ-6it39

Appendices

Appendix A: Instructional Goals Matrix

TARGET AREA	TEACHING	CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENT	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

yourself.

anything you can do to help anyone, so budget y

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

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
clustered into four domains of teaching responsibility: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. I adapted

SA   A   D   SD   9. I do not fully recognize the value of unde
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.

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

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

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.

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.

128

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

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

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.

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 . . . ")

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.
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

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.

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,

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.

adjust a lesson appropriate to the needs and level of my students.

SA A D SD   14.

SA A D SD   15.

attributing their lack of success to their background or lack of interest or motivation.

SA A D SD   16.

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.

student completion of assignments.

SA A D SD   4.

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.

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 instanc

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,

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

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.

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	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				

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

41. My colleagues and I usually discuss student related problems and issues as part of the regular school day.　　　5　　4　　3　　2　　1