

Educational Leadership and Management

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EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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CHAPTER 5

The Roles of Principal in Instructional Leadership and School Performance

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Basic Role of the Principal

The studies of the principal's role in the 1970s were more concerned with the principal's role in supervising and administering the school. In the 1980s, the research conducted aimed to identify the role and the functions of principals from different perspectives i.e. to identify the principal's role as a leader, administrator, problem solver, executive leader, professional leader, and provider of resources. In the 1990s, the studies became more focused on the principal's role as a school administrator and as an instructional leader (Latip, 2006).

The emphasis placed on the leadership role of the principal has changed dramatically during the past 30 years. Today's administrator in training must major in instructional leadership, learning how to fulfill essential management functions through skillful delegation and collaboration while excelling in creating a learning community (McEwan, 2003).

Nowadays, the principal's roles are more complex because they are always linked with change. According to Fullan (2001), the principal's role is very complex because the change which will be applied is various and difficult. In this situation, the principal is required to be a professional leader who takes appropriate action. Johnson and Kardos (2002) stated that an effective leader is one who is always in the school surroundings, focusing on teaching and learning processes, monitoring classrooms and giving feedback.

Fullan (2001) perceives that the role of the principal, in models in the future, will be to encourage collaborative groupings of teachers to play a more central role in the instructional leadership of the school. This, however, will require the active participation of the principal to facilitate change by motivating the staff and students, by reaching out to the community, and by continually improving the school. The assumption inherent, here, is that effective leaders manage and lead.

Moreover, Rutherford (1985) in McEwan (2003) lists four types of behaviour that distinguish effective principals from less-effective ones. Effective principals:

1. Have clearly informed visions of what they want their schools to become – visions that focus on students and their needs.
2. Translate these visions into goals for their schools and expectations for their teachers, students, and administrators.