

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE **research**

THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE ON BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

- TITLE** A Correlation Study of Principals' Knowledge of Literacy-Based Instructional Practices and Principals' Leadership Styles
- RESEARCHER** Michael Bellrose
Faculty of Education
Nipissing University (Ontario, Canada)
Unpublished Master's Thesis: May 2009
- OBJECTIVE** The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between principals' self-reported knowledge of pedagogical concepts and research-based instructional practices, and their self-reported understanding of the role of Literacy Resource Teachers (LRTs) with whom they work and to compare both principals' knowledge of pedagogical concepts and research-based instructional practices, and their perceptions of the role of LRTs, to their self-reported leadership practices using the Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practices Inventory.
- METHODOLOGY** The 23 principals participating in this study were all elementary school principals from the Pine Ridge District School Board. These 10 males and 13 females were individuals with a variety of educational backgrounds and years of experience as teachers and as administrators. They were selected to participate because Literacy Resource Teachers had been assigned to each of their schools during the 2008-2009 school year. The overall response rate for the population of principals was 100 percent. In addition to providing demographic information, and completing the Leadership Practices Inventory (Self), the principals completed two surveys designed by the researcher. The Instructional Practices Survey seeks to measure principals' self-perceived knowledge and understanding of pedagogical concepts and high-yield instructional practices, including, "gradual release", "modeling", "guided reading", "conferencing" and "writers' workshop." The Role of Literacy Resource Teachers Survey

(RLRTS) assessed their perceptions of the role of LRTs, to the extent that the latter are seen as important to school improvement.

KEY FINDINGS

The LPI scores for principals in this study, on all five leadership practices, were all higher than those reported, on average, in the Kouzes Posner LPI normative data base. A *medium* relationship between principals' knowledge of pedagogical concepts and instructional practices (i.e., their IPS score) and their score for the Model, Challenge and Encourage was found, while the relationship was *large* with Inspire and *small* with Enable. The relationships between the five leadership practices and their perception of the role of Literacy Resource Teachers (RLRTS) were generally quite small. The relationship between principals' years of experience working with an LRT and their LPI scores were very small, and this was also true on the dimension of principals' years of working at their current school as well as overall years of administrative experience.

Using four tests of covariance (Pillai's trace, Wilk's Lambda, Hotelling's trace, and Roy's Largest Root) a beta correlation coefficient of 0.78 was obtained when the effects of all five independent variables were measured. In the case of the multivariate or combined effects analysis – where a coefficient of 0.78 was obtained - there appears to be a *large* positive relationship between each of the independent variables identified and the transformational leadership practices of principals as measured by the LPI. Expressed another way, 78 percent of the variance in principals' LPI scores can be accounted for by the combined influence of each of the five independent variables studied. Principals' IPS and RLRTS scores “explain” more variance in their LPI scores than does the number of years that they have worked at their current school.

The author concludes: “Using the Kouzes and Posner leadership dimensions as a model for what transformational leadership looks like, directors and superintendents would do well to gauge the quality of aspiring leaders by how well these individuals conform to the model. Moreover, in an effort to cultivate a common vision of what effective leadership looks like, and to distribute leadership practices and responsibilities more broadly, ongoing professional development should be planned for principals and teachers that incorporates training of the five dimensions of leadership. This would ensure that both teachers and administrators are working from the same forward-looking framework or model and that new leaders were continuously being groomed to fill vacancies in district schools” (pp. 110-111).