

# *Instructional Leadership Inventory*



A n a m C a r a  
Leading and Learning with Soul

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# *Instructional Leadership Inventory*

There are many different ways, times, and places to provide leadership in schools today. Yet, if we were to be true to our purpose in schools, then all of us, not just those deemed “administrator” would need to provide *instructional leadership*. Instructional Leadership involves all the existing expectations for today’s leadership but begins with and maintains an added emphasis on the trait of *excellence in our field*. Instructional leaders continually learn about and refine the craft of teaching and learning, *as both teacher and learner*. And, instructional leaders view every opportunity to lead in at least two ways:

1. as an opportunity to model quality teaching and learning; and,
2. as an opportunity to keep student learning at the heart of all instructional decision making.

Anyone – principals, deans, classroom teachers, media specialists, curriculum and instruction coordinators, district administrators, to name a few – *anyone* who is willing and able in a school or school district can serve as an instructional leader.

*How willing, able, and ready are you?* This inventory is intended to serve as a tool for your personal growth toward instructional leadership, whether you intend to do so from applying new strategies in the classroom, from collegial conversations, from decision-making committees, from the role of an administrator or from any other role. The inventory explores the seven key components as identified by Stephen Covey in an article titled “Seven Habits of Highly Effective Leaders” (5/6/96), but with instructional traits identified for each component.

- Component 1:** Excellence in the field
- Component 2:** Self-knowledge
- Component 3:** Strategic Thinking
- Component 4:** The ability to build relationships
- Component 5:** Willingness to help others succeed
- Component 6:** A desire to continually learn
- Component 7:** The ability to communicate

**Directions:** Attached you will find a series of statements regarding the components of leadership. You can go through the entire inventory or isolate one or two of the components on which you would like to work.

For each statement, rate yourself on a scale of 1 – 4 (1 – “I am just beginning to focus on this area;” 2 – “I can do this work with some consistency, but I sometimes access others for support;” 3 – “I readily and consistently operate this way;” and, 4 – “I am recognized as a leader because I model this trait so others can do it too.”

Tally your scores for that component.

**Component 1:** Effective instructional leaders build capacity for *excellence in the field* by modeling quality teaching and learning, focusing decision making on student learning, and participating in leadership opportunities.

*Circle the appropriate score: 1 – low; 3 – high*

<b><i>Modeling quality teaching and learning</i></b>				
I strive to identify and adapt to the standards of excellence for teaching and learning into my daily practice.	1	2	3	4
I am intentional about the instructional strategies and methods I use and the information I choose to share when communicating with stakeholders.	1	2	3	4
I can describe my craft and my thinking behind my actions so that others might learn from my efforts.	1	2	3	4
I seek opportunities to “teach” with adult audiences (workshop presentations, peer coaching, lesson study, etc.) and when doing so, I help the audience reflect on my instructional decisions and my rationale for those decisions so that others may replicate those efforts that work best.	1	2	3	4
<b><i>Focusing decisions on student learning</i></b>				
I view all professional interactions as opportunities to discuss, share, and create new understandings of the art and science of teaching and learning.	1	2	3	4
I strive to make my understandings of teaching and learning the focal point of my interactions with students, parents, community, etc. so that they can participate in informed decision-making in their interactions with schools.	1	2	3	4
I make decisions in favor of the best interests of the students’ learning needs even at the risk of changing the systems involved or upsetting the needs of the adults.	1	2	3	4
I can transfer my frustrations with the current system or decisions into constructive action on my part for the benefit of student learning.	1	2	3	4

<i>Participating in leadership opportunities</i>				
I initiate activity and I exemplify shared responsibility and leadership for the group.	1	2	3	4
I make visible my support and my efforts to integrate new ideas in meaningful ways within my educational context.	1	2	3	4
I foster a climate of change amongst my peers by supporting their efforts to make changes in their classroom.	1	2	3	4
I take risks and show courage in favor of educationally sound decisions even with the possibility of ridicule from peers.	1	2	3	4
<i>Total of all self-assign scores: (48 points possible for component 1)</i>				

**Component 2:** Effective Instructional Leaders maintain a keen and continually evolving **self-knowledge** by maintaining a sense of efficacy, conducting accurate self assessments, and remaining open to feedback.

*Circle the appropriate score: 1 – low; 3 - high*

<i>Sense of efficacy</i>				
I feel I have a strong sense of self-assurance and self-confidence as an instructional leader.	1	2	3	4
I am clear about my own purpose, motivation, values, and goals.	1	2	3	4
I exercise resiliency. I have the necessary skills and strategies to recover from mistakes, mishaps, and errors in judgment.	1	2	3	4
I maintain a sense of humor about myself and my situation.	1	2	3	4
<i>Accurate Self Assessments</i>				
I have a deep understanding of my emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives.	1	2	3	4
I am capable of distinguishing and controlling my personal views. I can	1	2	3	4

separate my personal needs from those of the group or member needs.				
I recognize when I am blocking actions, exemplifying an undesired behavior pattern, revealing a missing skill, or experiencing difficulty in changing the contexts that control my thinking.	1	2	3	4
I have a firm grasp of my capabilities and I work to avoid setting myself up to fail by overstretching on assignments.	1	2	3	4
I know when to ask for help.	1	2	3	4
I request challenges that I know that I can handle – things that will play to my strengths.	1	2	3	4
<b><i>Openness to Feedback</i></b>				
I openly and actively solicit constructive feedback from all stakeholder groups for my work.	1	2	3	4
I accept feedback graciously and I express gratitude for the information, whether I agree with it or not in that moment.	1	2	3	4
Rather than immediately discarding any criticism with which I struggle, I seek validation for constructive feedback through reflecting and seeking additional data and/or other sources of information.	1	2	3	4
I weigh feedback carefully for balance in perspective – acknowledging what has truth for my growth efforts and discarding that which is more harmful than helpful.	1	2	3	4
I set goals and action items and then work to make the necessary changes in my beliefs, behaviors, or instructional practices to address any feedback requiring change.	1	2	3	4
<b><i>Total of all self-assign scores: (60 points possible for component 2)</i></b>				

**Component 3:** Effective instructional leaders practice **strategic thinking** by inviting change, planning collaboratively, and thinking systemically.

***Circle the appropriate score: 1 – low; 3 – high***

<b><i>Inviting Change</i></b>
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I feel committed to creating a better way. I make my vision, my passion and my efforts toward that change visible among stakeholders.	1	2	3	4
As I participate in conversations with all stakeholders, I choose to discuss how things can be done, not why they can't be done.	1	2	3	4
I have a strong sense of my organization's current reality and a vision of where we need to go to improve student learning.	1	2	3	4
I generate conversations or requests for conversations that will support our efforts in creating a meaningful vision for improved student learning.	1	2	3	4
I generate enthusiasm. I am seen as active, expressive, and energetic by my peers. I am optimistic and open to change. I am alert and uninhibited.	1	2	3	4
<b><i>Planning Collaboratively</i></b>				
I invite or encourage the invitation of all key stakeholder groups into the visioning and planning processes.	1	2	3	4
I strive to focus upon building a sense of community, group cohesiveness, and consensus decision-making within the group.	1	2	3	4
I am enthusiastic about the goals of the group and quite willing to work for their accomplishment. I am a part of a team and am emotionally and physically committed to the team's success.	1	2	3	4
I strive to take the initiative to work with others to solve unexpected problems, break bottlenecks, challenge the status quo, and think outside the box. I invite the group to look for ways over, around, or through obstacles.	1	2	3	4
<b><i>Thinking Systemically</i></b>				
I value the school's vision and goals as exciting, worthwhile and essential to the future success of the institution; I believe deeply that the school's future is dependent upon any visionary change - particularly my part of it - being successfully executed.	1	2	3	4
During our planning processes, I encourage the group to think over relatively long time spans; to generate a series of goals that will help us make the vision a reality across all parts of the system; and to develop a meaningful and on-going evaluation plan to measure our success.	1	2	3	4
I have the ability to see long-range implications for our work and, if necessary,	1	2	3	4

to voice my concerns calmly over the direction we are headed.				
I communicate regularly with my colleagues, parents, and community members, clearly explaining our vision, values, efforts, and rationale for those efforts.	1	2	3	4
I demonstrate persistence in accomplishing our goals.	1	2	3	4
<b>Total of all self-assign scores: (56 points possible for component 3)</b>				

**Component 4:** Effective instructional leaders have the **ability to build relationships** with all stakeholders by valuing and establishing trust and rapport with all contributors.

*Circle the appropriate score: 1 – low; 3 - high*

<b><i>Valuing Stakeholders</i></b>				
I value and respect each stakeholder as a contributing individual, having a reservoir of knowledge and experience from which others may benefit. I see the value of all contributors and their various roles within the system.	1	2	3	4
I have the ability to make conversation and find common ground in my efforts to build relationships with all of my stakeholders.	1	2	3	4
I work to create sense of shared investment by all those who will be involved in or impacted by the realization of the vision.	1	2	3	4
I can work with difficult, angry, or demanding stakeholders. I give audience to their concerns (repeatedly if necessary), and invite them into process in meaningful ways.	1	2	3	4
<b><i>Establishing Trust and Rapport</i></b>				
I demonstrate my genuine concern for others as 'unconditional positive regard'.	1	2	3	4
I create a “safe” space for stakeholders to express their concerns and needs.	1	2	3	4
I maintain the confidences of all who come to me with concerns. I will not retell their concerns but instead encourage them to retell the concerns if they need to be shared with another audience.	1	2	3	4

I communicate in a manner that creates consistent messages between my nonverbals and my words (I avoid sarcasm, I use relaxed body language, etc.).	1	2	3	4
I am able to move people, read the feelings of those with whom they are communicating, and be empathetic.	1	2	3	4
<i>Total of all self-assign scores: (36 points possible for component 4)</i>				

**Component 5:** Effective instructional leaders demonstrate a **willingness to help others succeed** by collaborating with, inviting, and inspiring others during the change process.

*Circle the appropriate score: 1 – low; 3 - high*

<i>Inviting</i>				
I invite my colleagues to see opportunity and not threat as we explore change.	1	2	3	4
I am sensitive to helping other people succeed, and intent on enabling the performance of others as well as my own.	1	2	3	4
Whenever possible, I use my voice to support, encourage, and emphasize the positive with colleagues who might be struggling to implement a change.	1	2	3	4
<i>Collaborating</i>				
I am enthusiastic about the goals of the group and willing to work for their accomplishment. I am a part of a team and am emotionally and physically committed to the team's success.	1	2	3	4
I actively and creatively look for ways to give members the opportunity to participate in the process of setting and carrying out the goals of the group.	1	2	3	4
I accept new ideas from colleagues as an optimist. I choose to acknowledge how their ideas can be done, not why they can't be done.	1	2	3	4
I can attend to the welfare of the group and the individuals within it and I reach out in appropriate ways (technical support and creative problem-solving, peer coaching, etc.) when I sense a need for support.	1	2	3	4



<i>Inspiring</i>				
I am highly motivated and I have the power to inspire others around me. I can create excitement and momentum in others. I can provide opportunities for people around me to follow my example and take personal responsibility for changing.	1	2	3	4
I openly share my success and the learning from my failures with language that is focused on our “possibilities.”	1	2	3	4
I help to create an environment that promotes individual contributions to the organization's work. I celebrate their successes.	1	2	3	4
<b>Total of all self-assign scores: (40 points possible for component 5)</b>				

**Component 6:** Effective Instructional Leaders nurture their **continual desire to learn** with on-going study, direct application, and reflective practice.

*Circle the appropriate score: 1 – low; 3 - high*

<i>Desire to Learn</i>				
I create and adhere to a compelling vision for my life’s work in and outside of my classroom or office.	1	2	3	4
I feel committed to refining my practice and I take responsibility for my own learning needs.	1	2	3	4
I constantly work to update, adapt, or revise my understanding the teaching and learning process.	1	2	3	4
I remain open to new ideas and practices in the field of education. I work to support and integrate those ideas.	1	2	3	4
I support a climate of personal growth and organizational change. I understand my role as a learner in creating the overall environment conducive to change as I know it would be essential to the future success of the school / district.	1	2	3	4
<i>Applied Learning</i>				
I base my decisions to select appropriate professional development on the findings from data about the needs of students closest to my circle on	1	2	3	4

influence.				
In a positive way, I put forth my intellect, imagination, and passion to all of my learning efforts and experiences – even in times when I may not value the learning experience.	1	2	3	4
I apply my learning within my context by setting meaningful goals, acting with intention to study the application of my learning, and evaluating my progress toward that end.	1	2	3	4
I recognize and value mistakes or failures as learning tools for future success. I am not discouraged by setbacks – I work to try again.	1	2	3	4
<b><i>Reflecting</i></b>				
I set aside time to reflect about what I am learning before, during, and after individual learning experiences.	1	2	3	4
I study the “best practices” of teaching and learning so that I can describe my efforts and my thinking behind my efforts in order that others might learn as well.	1	2	3	4
I share my new learning or findings in dialogue with my colleagues so that we may learn from each other.	1	2	3	4
I seek or create a variety of avenues for collaborative learning with my peers (study groups, learning communities, action research projects, book clubs, reflection round tables, etc.)	1	2	3	4
<b><i>Total of all self-assign scores: (52 points possible for component 6)</i></b>				

**Component 7:** Effective instructional leaders have the **ability to communicate** effectively, honestly, and purposefully.

***Circle the appropriate score: 1 – low; 3 - high***

<b><i>Effective Communication</i></b>				
I practice active listening with all stakeholders in order to understand others before I ask to be understood.	1	2	3	4
I am able to use expressions, gestures, voice inflections, and other nonverbal skills to communicate my ideas with persuasion.	1	2	3	4

I strive to express my ideas and concerns with conciseness. I can remain focused on the key issues in a discussion.	1	2	3	4
I am able to explain the thinking behind my actions and decisions.	1	2	3	4
<b><i>Honest Communication</i></b>				
I speak accurately and openly – without over-emphasis or inappropriateness – identifying my thoughts, emotions, and needs and the impact they have on my work.	1	2	3	4
I assess my motives realistically and then express truth using both candor and tact.	1	2	3	4
Through reflection and multiple checks on my motivation for acting and speaking, I am confident that I am not operating off of my own agenda or an “axe to grind” and I am not promoting my views and options over the rest of the group’s.	1	2	3	4
I know when and how to step out of my role as a leader (perceived or appointed) to offer my opinions.	1	2	3	4
I try to take a clear position on issues and avoid apparent indecisive shifts in thinking and decision making.	1	2	3	4
<b><i>Purposeful Communication</i></b>				
I am clear about my purpose. I understand both my beliefs and my values and can hold them in check during a conversation.	1	2	3	4
I speak with intention – I think carefully about what needs to be said and I consider the possible consequences of my saying it prior to using my voice.	1	2	3	4
I communicate – often, accurately, and thoroughly – the rationale behind the school’s vision, mission, and school improvement efforts to all stakeholder groups.	1	2	3	4
I give voice to the things that need to be said for the benefit of student learning – even though they may be considered as challenging the status quo or politically incorrect things to say.	1	2	3	4
<b><i>Total of all self-assign scores: (52 points possible for component 7)</i></b>				

## *Instructional Leadership Inventory Reflections*

“Instructional leaders view every opportunity to lead in at least two ways:

1. as an opportunity to model quality teaching and learning; and,
2. as an opportunity to focus the decision making on student learning.”

**Directions:** Simply fill in the number you scored yourself on the inventory in the appropriate box.

<b>Component</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Total Possible</b>	<b>Total Assigned</b>	<b>Divide by # of ?s</b>	<b>Average Score</b>
Component 1:	Excellence in the field	48		___ /12	
Component 2:	Self-knowledge	60		___ /15	
Component 3:	Strategic Thinking	56		___ /14	
Component 4:	The ability to build relationships	36		___ / 9	
Component 5:	Willingness to help others succeed	40		___ / 10	
Component 6:	A desire to continually learn	52		___ / 13	
Component 7:	The ability to communicate	52		___ / 13	

What are your areas of strength?

What are your opportunities for growth as an instructional leader?

What are you willing to do to become an instructional leader in your current role? (goal setting for areas of growth)