

## Towards New Instructional Leadership

Effective professional learning of teachers and the role of the school leader.

Eric Verbiest

Antwerp University, Instituut voor Onderwijs- en Informatiewetenschappen (IOIW)

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Eric Verbiest. E-mail:  
e.b.verbiest@gmail.com

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## Abstract

In the first decennium of this century, one can notice a revival of the concept of instructional leadership. Research points to the necessity and importancy of instructional leadership. Less clear is what is meant by instructional leadership. In this paper we elucidate a rather new concept of instructional leadership. Starting point is the concept of shared instructional leadership, i.e. the school leader who promotes the professional development of the teachers. Based on recent ideas about professional development of teachers, we describe the main tasks of the school leader as instructional leader. This contribution can be seen as a first step towards an operational definition of instructional leadership, to be used in investigation and in the development of school leaders.

*Keywords:* school leadership, instructional leadership, professional learning

## Introduction

School leadership has become a priority in education policy agenda internationally (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008). This growing interest in school leadership can be understood against the background of increasing expectations at the school in the context of a knowledge society, more autonomy for schools and school leaders but also greater accountability and the idea that school leaders can make a difference for students. Also the (threatened) shortage of school leaders in many countries plays a role.

The support for a considerable impact of school leaders on teaching and learning stems mostly from qualitative research. Quantitative evidence at the other hand points to a rather weak and indirect effect (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). But also this effect cannot be underestimated. In the Dutch situation the quality of the school leader in primary education can make the difference in the type of school in which pupils will continue their education.

### Concepts of effective leadership in schools

So the question of effective school leadership remains. One influential approach of school leadership is *instructional leadership*. There are ‘narrow’ and ‘broad’ conceptions of instructional leadership (Sheppard 1996). The narrow definition focuses on those actions that are directly related to teaching and learning – observable behaviors such as classroom supervision – where the latter also involves variables, such as school culture, which may have important consequences for teacher behavior. In the broad view, instructional leadership entails all leadership activities that affect student learning. In this contribution, we restrict instructional leadership to the narrow view: instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning and on the behavior of teachers in working with students (Bush & Glover, 2003).

Instructional leadership models emerged in the early 1980s from early research on effective schools. The effective school movement stresses a strong, directive leadership focused on curriculum and instruction from the principal (Hallinger, 2003). There are different descriptions of instructional leadership. For example, Hallinger (2003) propose a model of instructional leadership that consists of 10 specific functions within three broad categories: defining the school mission (with functions as framing the school’s goals and communicating the school’s goals); managing the instructional program (with functions as supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student progress) and promot-

ing school climate (including protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, providing incentives for learning). And Blase & Blase (1999) found eleven strategies of effective instructional leadership, grouped around two themes: talking with teachers to promote reflection and promoting professional growth. The strategies include giving feedback, modeling, using inquiry and soliciting advice and opinions, emphasizing the study of teaching and learning, encouraging and supporting redesign of programs and applying principles of adult learning in staff development.

Instructional leadership was criticized, among others, for conceptual vagueness. Leithwood & Duke (1999; see also Kelchtermans & Piot, 2010) point to the lack of explicit descriptions of instructional leadership in the literature and suggest that there may be different meanings of this concept. The examples of instructional leadership, given above, illustrate these differences in meaning.

In the nineties of the twentieth century the interest in instructional leadership decreases. More and more the concept of *transformational leadership* became important. For one reason, the top-down character of instructional leadership was considered as less suited for the development of school organizations, stressing the professionalism and involvement of the teachers. As a transformational leader, the school leader inspire teachers to be engaged in their work by developing and articulating a vision; shows concern and respect for the personal needs of teachers; stimulates a culture of collaboration; improves the processes of problem solving in the school and challenge teachers to develop themselves in the context of the development of the school (Leithwood, 1992; Leithwood, Tomlinson & Genge, 1996). Transformational leadership focuses on developing the organization's capacity to innovate, rather than focusing specifically on direct coordination, control, and supervision of curriculum and instruction. Transformational leadership is to distinguish from transactional leadership (Yukl, 2006). In this last type of leadership there is some exchange between leader and follower, for example exchange of productivity to income.

Hallinger (2003) mentions three important distinctions between the instructional leadership and transformational leadership. Instructional leadership is top-down, emphasizing the principal's coordination and control of instruction. It is characterized as transactional in the sense that it seeks to manage and control organizational members to move towards a predetermined set of goals. And it targeting first-order variables in the change process, influencing conditions that directly impact the quality of curriculum and instruction delivered to students in

classroom. Transformational leadership focuses, on the contrary, on stimulating change through bottom-up participation. It seeks to envision and create the future by synthesizing and extending the aspirations of members of the organizational community. And it seeks to generate second-order effects, increasing the capacity of others in the school to produce first-order effects on learning.

Despite the popularity of transformational leadership there are also critical comments. The concept has different meanings and it is not always easy to differentiate between the different components of the concept. Also, there is some overlap between components of transformational and of transactional leadership (Bush & Glover, 2003; Yukl, 2006; Kelchtermans & Piot, 2010). Furthermore, the concept of *transformational leadership* neglect processes of mutual influence and distributed leadership (Gronn, 2003a, b). Probably the most important critical comment on transformational leadership in education points to the absence of an explicit focus on the process of instruction, the primary process in the school. Even, strong transformational leadership could hinder the teaching duties of the teachers (Barnett, McCormick & Conners, 2001; Marks & Printy, 2003).

This conceptual neglect of mutual influence and leadership by others than the formal leader, stimulated the development of the concept of *distributed leadership* (Gronn, 2003a, b; Hargreaves, 2003a; Spillane, 2006; Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons & Hopkins, 2008). Different terms are used, like *distributed leadership*, *shared leadership* and *teacher leadership*. Distributed leadership is more than leadership by others than the formal leader. Distributed leadership points to the production and distribution of leadership activities in an interactive web of leaders, followers and situational aspects like instruments, procedures and routines. Also the concept of distributed leadership is criticized. Just as in the case of instructional and transformational leadership, distributed leadership has different meanings, some of them not just descriptive but prescriptive (Mayrowetz, 2008). Furthermore, the concept seems to exaggerate and to neglect the formal and individual leadership (Kelchtermans & Piot, 2010). And Leithwood *et al.* (2006) fear that emphasizing distributed leadership strengthens the idea that everybody, without specific preparation, can be a good leader.

### **Integration necessary...**

The lack of an explicit focus on the instructional process in transformational leadership theories stimulated the revival of instructional leadership. Apart from that, the recent large interest in the improvement of the learning and the results of students in the education policy in many countries stimulates this revival also. Recent research points to the effectiveness of instruc-

tional leadership Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe (2008). But this “new” instructional leadership is affected by theories of transformational and distributed leadership. In other words, in the conception of leadership one can see a growing integration of the main theories about leadership. As said, Marks & Printy (2003) point to the lack of an explicit focus on the instructional process in transformational leadership. At the other hand, they agree that the hierarchical orientation of instructional leadership can conflict with the discretionary authority of teachers to make their own curricular and instructional decisions. Although school leaders experience more then before the cold winds of accountability and of the pressure to produce good results, strong hierarchical instructional leadership can be contraproductive. The authors re-conceptualize instructional leadership into *shared instructional leadership*. This leadership involves the collaboration of principles and teachers on curriculum, instruction and assessment. The school leader stimulates the involvement and development of teachers and work together with them to improve the instructional process. The principal is not the sole instructional leader but the leader of instructional leaders. Research of Marks & Printy (2003) show that transformational leadership is a necessary condition of instructional leadership. Principals, not acting as transformational leaders, will not succeed in collaboration with the teachers in improving the instructional process. School leaders with a high score on instructional leadership have also a high score on transformational leadership. But transformational leadership is not sufficient. A high score on transformational leadership do not imply a high score on instructional leadership. Shared instructional leadership will not develop unless it is intentionally sought and fostered.

Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe (2008) propose that a theory of transformational leadership is not longer necessary. Although transformational behavior of the school leader is necessary, instructional leadership measures are increasingly integrating an interpersonal and task focus in their indicators.

Also from a contingency theory of school development and leadership one find arguments for an integration of transformational and instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Hopkins, 2001; Hargreaves, 2003). A more directive, strong instructional leadership style might be more suitable in contexts that are less well organized around effective models of teaching and learning. But long-term, sustained improvement will ultimately depend upon the staff assuming increasing levels of ownership over proposed changes in the school.

Kelchtermans & Pilot (2010) outline an integrated conceptual framework of school leadership. In this framework, attention is paid to the context that is determining leadership and is

determined by leadership, for interaction between leaders and followers and for the task and emotional dimension of leadership.

**... but starting with the building blocks.**

Integration of various theories of school leadership can contribute to a richer concept of leadership. The various approaches can be complementary to each other. But the question remains what will be integrated. Above, we have pointed to the conceptual vagueness of each of the three concepts of leadership we discussed. Instructional leadership, transformational leadership and distributed leadership each contain different meanings. Integration of these concepts does not remove this conceptual vagueness but let continue to exist this ambiguity. In other words, before a desirable integration, more conceptual clearness about the components of an integrated concept of school leadership is necessary.

In this contribution we focus on instructional leadership. How the school leader can improve in a rather direct sense the quality of the primary process in the school? How the school leader can influence the behavior of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students, in order to improve the learning and the learning results of students? But the critical remarks about the “old” instructional leadership make clear the top-down, hierarchical and controlling characteristics of that instructional leadership and, connected with those characteristics, the contra-productive results of this leadership. Also became clear the necessity of co-operation between school leader and teachers in improving the primary process and spreading the leadership functions. Against this background we shift our focus to the question: *how school leaders foster student learning by improving directly the professional learning of teachers<sup>1</sup>, related to the learning and the learning results of students?*

An important source for answering the above question is the work of Timperley and colleagues (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007; Timperley, 2008; Robinson & Timperley, 2007; Robinson, 2007; see also Denis & Van Damme, 2010.) They put together in an extended review - about more than hundred studies - the most important findings about effective teacher professional learning and development. In these studies we hope to find important clues for the role of the school leader as instructional leader.

It must be said that Timperley *et al.* (2007) pay a lot of attention to the role of the school leader. And Timperley & Robinson (2007) formulate lessons for the leadership of the improvement of teaching and learning, based on the studies in Timperley *et al.* (2007). But there remain some reasons to go into more detail into instructional leadership. The authors are look-

ing for all kinds of leadership, not only instructional leadership. Robinson and Timperley (2007) come to five broad dimensions of leadership that were critical in fostering teacher and student learning: providing educational direction, ensuring strategic alignment, creating a community that learns how to improve student success, engaging in constructive problem talk and selecting and developing smart tools. In this rather general approach instructional leadership is not specific and in a detailed way investigated. Furthermore, the conclusions of the authors are based on the analysis of studies of professional learning and development initiatives that have made a demonstrable impact on the students of the teachers involved. Of course this gives these conclusions a firm empirical ground. At the other hand, those studies of professional learning and development not always go into detail about the role of the school leader of about leadership functions, promoting professional learning. In this sense, the results about leadership can be rather limited. In this contribution we will look for instructional leadership functions that are not only explicit mentioned. We will look also to those functions who – in the different factors that are of influence on professional learning –rather implicit promote professional learning. The result of this analysis is, of course, more theoretical and hypothetical. In the future this theoretical description will be subject to empirical testing. In other words, this contribution can be seen as a step towards an operational description of instructional leadership.

### **Professional learning and development of teachers**

The work of Timperley *et al.* (2007) is very rich in content and can hardly be summarized here. In this section we describe some of the important ideas behind the work of Timperley. In the next section, where we describe the instructional leadership functions we will reveal also some of the relevant findings.

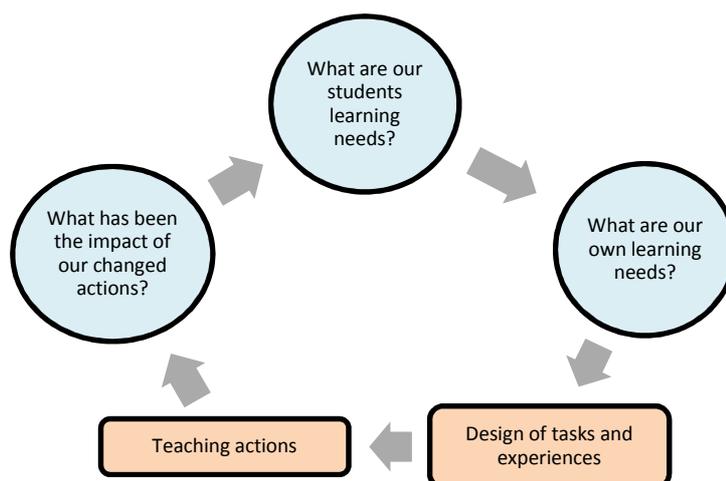
From our point of view it is appropriate to take the learning processes of teachers as a starting point for elucidating instructional leadership. Just as there is no direct relationship between teaching inputs and student learning, there is no direct relation between professional learning opportunities of teachers and teacher learning. The same professional development activities can result in different learning experiences of teachers. Both the prior learning, skills, and dispositions of individuals and groups, and the demands of their current teaching context play a role. A major challenge in the study of Timperley *et al.* (2007) is to unpack the black box between professional learning opportunities and teacher outcomes that impact positively on student outcomes. A major factor (in the black box) to be considered is the extent to which new information is consonant or dissonant with existing understandings.

Timperley *et al.* (2007) make a distinction between three professional learning processes, each with specific outcomes.

- *Cueing and retrieving prior knowledge* with the associated outcome of consolidating and/or examining prior knowledge.
- *Becoming aware of new information and skills* resulting in adapting or adopting new knowledge. This process may occur at a superficial or a deeper level of learning.
- *Creating dissonance with a teacher's current position*. The associated outcome of this process is the resolving of the dissonance by accepting or rejecting the new position<sup>ii</sup>.

The three processes are not mutually exclusive but rather iterative. Effective professional learning implies sense-making by teachers of professional development messages. Sense-making is not simply a matter making these messages clear to teachers or to leave teachers to make their own professional judgments without first having had the adequacy of their existing theories challenged. Sense-making is a complex process involving interaction between a teachers' existing position, the situation in which he practice, and the professional development messages. Deeper learning typically requires repeated cycles of engagement with learning processes, practice, and outcomes In practice however, not many of the learning opportunities in which teachers engage allow for this iterative process.

**Figure 1: Teacher inquiry and knowledge-building cycle (Timperley *et al.*, 2007: xliii)**



Sustainable professional learning, resulting in ongoing student achievement once intensive provider support was withdrawn, asks for co- and self regulated learning. This include grounding learning in the immediate problems of practice, deepening relevant pedagogical content

and assessment knowledge<sup>iii</sup>, and in an ongoing inquiry process challenging existing theories of practice. Co- and self-regulatory learning implies that teachers, in repeated cycles, collectively and individually identify important issues, become the drivers for acquiring the knowledge they need to solve them, monitor the impact of their actions, and adjust their practice accordingly. Figure 1 shows this inquiry and knowledge-building cycle.

So, next to the learning processes Timperley *et al.* (2007) already described, co- and self-regulatory learning is a fourth process in professional learning.

### **The functions of instructional leadership in improving professional learning**

In analyzing the functions of instructional leadership, we link up with the different learning processes and challenges in these processes. We start the discussion with a brief indication of main findings and formulate the consequences for instructional leadership.

Before, we remark that we restrict ourselves to the functions of instructional leadership. We do not pay attention to conditional functions for this instructional leadership. For example, Robinson (2007; see also Robinson *et al.*, 2008) points to the fact that the participating of the school leader in formal and informal professional learning of teachers is a very effective way of improving professional learning. Robinson (2007) give two possible reasons to explain this. Participation in teacher professional learning can be an indicator of a focus on the quality of teachers and teaching. Or leaders who participate with teachers learn more about what their staff are up against, and thus provide them with more real support in making the changes required to embed their learning in their daily practice. Participating in the learning processes of teachers can be effective for another reason to. Instructional leadership, as described here, make high demands on the context expertise of the leader. Participating in the professional learning processes of teachers can help the leader to develop the knowledge necessary for being an instructional leader. But because participating in the learning processes of teachers is conditional for being an instructional leader, we will not pay attention to it.

### **Clear goals, aligned with wider curriculum trends**

Effective professional learning asks for clear and shared goals, specific for the subject about which one is learning. These goals are about student outcomes. Approaches focusing more on general pedagogies are lesser effective. Furthermore in effective professional learning, the goals refer to the learning results of students. Also more cross-curricular, school-based goals (not subject-bounded) goals, such as improving teacher questioning skills, can contribute to effective professional learning, as long as the learning content is seen to be relevant to the

teachers. It appears also that alignment of the goals of professional learning with directions advocated by policy makers, research and influential bodies such as subject associations were important in promoting effective student learning.

*Instructional leadership means:*

- *Formulating clear and specific goals for professional learning.*
- *Formulating goals in terms of student outcomes.*
- *Aligning the goals of professional learning with broader policy and research.*
- *Developing a shared understanding of the goals.*

### **A specific and strong theoretical (pedagogical) content**

Effective professional learning opportunities imply a strong and clearly communicated theoretical basis for the teaching practice of the specific subject. For example for mathematics, the content of the learning was far and away the most influential factor in improved mathematical outcomes for students. It is not sufficient for teachers to simply learn how to implement prescribed teaching practices. The content served to develop teacher understanding of the theoretical basis for the practices being promoted, as well as the complex relationship between the key elements of teacher subject knowledge, pedagogy, assessment, and how students learn. This implies a high level of pedagogical content knowledge, including knowledge about student's conceptual (mis)understandings of the subject, their problems-solving strategies and how they learn the subject (like mathematics). Less theoretical approaches, approaches focusing on generic pedagogy or approaches more focused on the implementation of prescribed practices are less effective. It is not realistic to expect that school leaders (or other persons in the school) as instructional leaders can provide this theoretical basis. But they can select providers who emphasize this theoretical basis. In fact, effective professional learning mostly involved expertise from outside the participants' own school environments.

*Instructional leadership means:*

- *Communicating a strong theoretical basis of a specific subject to teachers.*
- *Developing in teachers a high level of pedagogical content knowledge.*

### **Using assessment in various ways**

In effective professional learning assessment of information is used variously: to determine the content of the professional development, to provide evidence for existing and alternative practices, to analyze the teacher – learner relationship, and as a catalyst for teachers to engage in professional development. A major component in effective professional learning is the development of assessment skills, allowing teachers to judge the impact of changed practice on

students and to make ongoing adjustments to practice. These assessment knowledge and skills are important for professional learning when new strategies were applied back in the classroom. Assessment strategies must be aligned with the teaching purposes and are (at least partly) subject-specific.

*Instructional leadership means:*

- *Collecting and analyzing assessment data to determine the content of the professional development.*
- *Confronting teachers with assessment data to engage them in professional development.*
- *Using assessment data to provide evidence for alternative practices.*
- *Collecting and analyzing assessment data to test the effectiveness of teaching practice*
- *Collecting and analyzing data to identify issues or problems in the teacher – learner relationship.*
- *Learning teachers assessment skills, related to the teaching purposes.*

### **Engaging teacher's prior position**

Teachers, as all adult learners, do not approach learning situations as empty vessels. They have ideas about what and how students learn and have to learn, and about what and how to teach. These – mostly implicit – theories of action of teachers have a powerful effect on the learning of teachers. New information that is dissonant with teacher's existing position can easily be rejected. The process of cueing and retrieving prior knowledge serve to lay a foundation for the other learning processes, so that the learner can negotiate the meaning of new information in relation to existing knowledge and skills. Topics in these theories of action are beliefs about student's willingness and capacity to learn, about how to manage and engage students, how to teach particular content, and how to do it all within the available time and resources. Instructional leadership in this respect means helping teachers to make explicit their theories of practice in ways that equip them to make comparisons between existing and new practice.

*Instructional leadership means:*

- *Learning teachers to explicate existing ideas about student's willingness and capacity to learn.*
- *Learning teachers to explicate existing ideas about how to manage and engage students*
- *Learning teachers to explicate existing ideas about how to teach particular content*
- *Learning teachers to explicate existing ideas about how manage the lessons within the available time and resources.*

### **Learning teachers to integrate new information into the current position**

New information, consistent with the current position of the teacher, need to be integrated into the current theories of action of the teacher. Here is a risk of so called over-assimilation, where teachers, believing that they are already enacting new practices, in reality made only superficial changes. Important in this process of integration are understanding how new knowledge fits into the existing conceptual frameworks and translating what is learned into a teacher's particular teaching context. Effective professional learning implies also contributing to the integration of the pedagogical content knowledge of a subject, the knowledge about how students learn that subject and the ability of the teacher to assess students' understanding of the subject.

*Instructional leadership means:*

- *Learning teachers to obtain a substantive insight of new information, including the theoretical background of this new information.*
- *Learning teachers to relate new information to their current knowledge, values and beliefs.*
- *Learning teachers to put new information into a coherent theory of action.*
- *Learning teachers to explicate the practical consequences of new ideas for their own practice.*
- *Learning teachers to relate pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of how students learn a subject and assessment of students' subject understanding.*

### **Creating dissonance and helping teachers to dissolve this dissonance**

New information is not always consonant with the current position of teachers. For that reason, not seldom professional learning implies dissonance between the existing position of the teacher and new information. Dissolving this dissonance in a way that leads to professional learning is difficult. The tacit character of existing ideas, and the fact that those positions forms part of the identity of the teacher, can easily lead to dissolve the dissonance by rejecting new information. Challenging teachers' beliefs – for example showing videotapes of students who are doing very well - and in doing so creating dissonance about the beliefs teacher have about students' capacities, can be an effective activity in professional learning.

*Instructional leadership means:*

- *Learning teachers to see the differences between existing knowledge, beliefs and values and those incorporated into new information.*
- *Challenging teachers' beliefs about (pedagogical) content knowledge of a subject.*
- *Challenging teachers' beliefs about what their students were capable of.*

- *Presenting reachable alternative practices.*

### **Developing co and self-regulated leaning competencies**

As said before, sustainable professional learning asks for co- and self regulated learning, requiring teachers to test the impact of their practice on the diversity of students so that improvement in practice continues. This involves inquiry skills so that the teacher can detect when practice is not having the desired outcomes and need changed. This implies also the understanding the impact of what the teaching practice on students. Moreover, it requires theoretical insights in the learning processes in a specific curriculum area, including possible misconceptions and how to approach these. Maybe one cannot ask of school leaders as instructional leaders that they master every subject in this way. But is may ask of instructional leaders to help teachers to pay attention to the specific pedagogical content knowledge of the subject at hand.

*Instructional leadership means:*

- *Learning teachers to develop inquiry skills.*
- *Learning teachers to test the impact of their practice on students learning and results.*
- *Learning teachers to understand what is going on in a student's mind in response to the teaching process.*
- *Directing the attention of teachers to the specific pedagogical content knowledge of the subject.*

### **Applying a range of learning activities**

Many activities – some already discussed before – promote effective professional learning. One of the characteristics of these activities is a clear alignment between those activities and the learning goals of teachers. Effective professional leaning involved some form of direct instruction by an expert, stressing theoretical underpinnings of the subject at hand. But listening to an expert is not in itself sufficient to change practice. A very typical overall structure of effective professional learning consist of a rationale or catalyst to engage, some direct teaching of new content, including the theoretical principles, by an external professional development provider in a workshop-type situation early in the professional learning experience followed by multiple learning opportunities where teachers could translate theory into practice. Activities related to this translation process are enabling teachers to see examples of the program in practice; professional discussions to negotiate the meaning of the new learning and its practical implications; feedback to teachers, based on classroom observations of their implementation of new approaches; providing student activities and materials; teachers participated

in activities positioned as students; analyzing student outcomes and understandings; participation in a professional learning community. But none of these activities in themselves are more effective than others and are not in itself effective.

*Instructional leadership means:*

- *Aligning the activities for professional learning with the learning goals of teachers.*
- *Stimulating teachers, by a variety of iterative activities, to negotiate the meaning of the new learning and its implications for practice ( for example, presenting examples of the program in practice; giving feedback, based on classroom observations; stimulating professional discussions about the new learning, about student outcomes and understandings; providing student activities and materials)*

### **Concluding remarks**

In this contribution, we offer a description of new instructional leadership. This new instructional leadership is a component of a more integrated concept of leadership, with elements of transformational and distributed leadership too. Although such an integrated concept can enrich our thinking about leadership, it remains necessary to be obvious about the components of this integral concept.

At the other hand, it must be clear that instructional leadership is not the only function of the school leader. Being an instructional leader asks also for other leadership functions, such as creating a structure and a culture for professional learning. Reversely, leadership functions will not affect the effectiveness of the school in terms of the learning and the results of students, if the instructional leadership function is absent. The role of the school leader as an instructional leader in the context of professional learning communities can illustrate this point.

In a professional learning community school leaders and teachers learn as individual and as a collective in a sustainable way, in order to improve the learning and the results of the students (Verbiest, 2008; Verbiest & Vandenberghe, 2002). There is some, be it weak, systematic evidence for the claim that a professional learning community facilitates factors that foster changed instructional practice and promote student learning (Toole & Louis, 2002; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas, 2006; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Also Timperley *et al.* (2007) reported that the opportunity to process the meaning and implications of new learning with one's colleagues appears to be fundamental to the change process, where that change impacts positively on student outcomes. However, in sev-

eral studies, participation in structured professional groups was also associated with neutral or negative outcomes for students. The authors identify two key qualities of an effective professional learning community. The first condition relates to support the participants to process new understandings and their implications for teaching. But in order to avoid the danger of support that maintain the status quo in the school, there need be a dialogue that challenged the problematic beliefs of teachers, bring in new ideas and tested the efficacy of competing ideas. This dialogue asks for an inquiry habit of mind and for external expertise. This external expertise can bring in new perspectives and assisted in developing these dialogical norms. Although in the studies of Timperley *et al.* (2007) not mentioned, one can suppose that also a school leader as instructional leader can play this role. The second condition stresses an unrelenting focus in the professional learning community on analyzing the impact of teaching on student learning. Also here, the school leader as an instructional leader can assure this focus. So, both conditions for an effective professional learning community show the necessity of instructional leadership in professional learning communities. At the other hand, it will be clear that instructional leadership without a structure and culture of learning will not be effective, as is also shown by the fact that transformational leadership activities (like developing and articulating a vision and stimulating a culture of respect and collaboration) is a necessary condition for instructional leadership.

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## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Timperley et al. (2007) make a distinction between professional learning and professional development. Professional learning implies an internal process through which individuals create professional knowledge. Professional development points to the delivering of some kind of information to teachers in order to influence their practice. Professional learning is an umbrella term under which professional development of the "delivery" kind is just one part.

<sup>ii</sup> Timperley *et al.* (2007) are using the more inclusive term, 'position', instead of 'knowledge' because knowledge is only one component of possible dissonance. Also attitudes, beliefs and values can produce dissonance.

<sup>iii</sup> Timperley *et al.* (2007) define pedagogical content knowledge as within each content area, the combination of knowledge that teachers need to have about curriculum content, how to teach it, and how to understand students' thinking about that branch of knowledge.