

# Instructional Leadership

## Quadrant D Leadership Practices



**International Center**  
**for Leadership in Education**

## Acknowledgments

The International Center for Leadership in Education wishes to thank  
the author of this resource kit:

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## Instructional Leadership — Quadrant D Leadership Practices

Understanding the Quadrant D Leadership Framework gives schools leaders a mental model for attacking the adaptive challenges of instructional leadership. Instructional leadership involves developing a common vision of good instruction; building relationships; and empowering staff to innovate in instruction, give one another feedback, and share best practices.

This kit is organized around three aspects of instructional leadership: context, target, and practices.

### Context

Discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, *context* describes the work to build the elements of a strong collaborative school community that is eager to innovate and share. These practices are similar to the strategies to move to the quadrants B and D side of the leadership framework.

Context skills involve:

- analyzing of data about student achievement and school culture
- reflecting about school practices that influence school culture and relationships
- applying strategies that promote innovation and change in the school culture
- developing the perseverance to overcome obstacles and challenges
- identifying supportive behaviors that build positive relationships
- becoming familiar with a broad range of effective strategies and organizing them into a pyramid of intervention for addressing the needs of every student
- understanding the need to develop a positive school culture so that learning opportunities, both in and out of school, are available to all students
- developing data systems to monitor student reading progress
- reviewing curriculum and research data to identify high-priority standards and benchmarks for the state

## Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership involves developing a common vision of good instruction, building relationships, and empowering staff to innovate.

### Target

A detailed discussion about target is in Chapter 5.

*Target* is about setting the strong vision of instructional leadership and building agreement among school community members about the specific aim and purpose of instructional improvement efforts. Focusing on “increasing student achievement” is a measurement of results but not an appropriate target for instructional leadership, because it does not inform teachers how to adjust their instructional practices. Chapter 5 presents a detailed discussion about target. Target focuses on:

- identifying a specific objective for instructional improvement initiatives rather than simply embracing a broad objective to improve instruction
- aligning all instructional practices with the agreed upon target
- recognizing that having a target is more important than what the target is
- realizing that it is easier to “get all staff on board” when you introduce the target before introducing a practice, such as professional learning communities or classroom walk-throughs
- creating multiple professional learning activities aligned with the target
- selecting among several optional targets that have been successful in rapidly improving schools in increasing student achievement

### Practices

*Practices* are the total of programs, activities, and strategies that leaders use to influence instruction. Practices are only effective if leaders address the context and have a clear target. Good practices help leaders:

- get the right teachers in the right places
- foster development of teacher leadership
- ensure that leaders across all levels are focusing on instructional leadership
- develop and use effective classroom walkthrough procedures

## **Instructional Leadership — Quadrant D Leadership Practices**

- select questions and activities that stimulate teacher reflection on instructional practice
- make difficult decisions about staff
- develop teachers into effective instructors through ongoing professional learning
- reflect about current conditions and practices of professional learning
- create and implement coaching and mentoring practices
- evaluate the effectiveness of professional learning

### **The 25 Major Practices**

There is no single approach to improving instruction, but there are 25 major practices that are identified as contributing to instructional leadership:

1. Academic intervention
2. Balanced assessments
3. Celebrations
4. Classroom walk-throughs
5. Co-teaching/team teaching
6. Grading
7. Individualized professional learning
8. Instructional coaching
9. Instructional technology
10. Leadership teams
11. Mentoring
12. Needs assessment/strategic planning
13. Peer review of student work
14. Personnel and budgets
15. Policies and procedures
16. Professional development workshops
17. Professional learning community
18. Rigor/Relevance Framework
19. Master schedule/teacher assignments

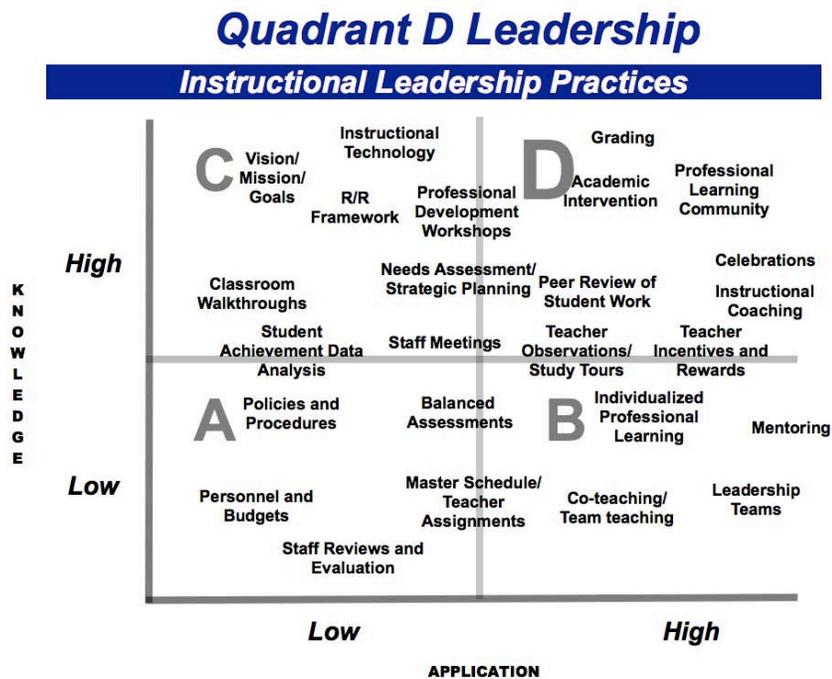
Tools for each of these 25 practices can be found in Chapter 6 through Chapter 9.

- 20. Staff meetings
- 21. Staff reviews and evaluations
- 22. Student achievement data analysis
- 23. Teacher incentives and rewards
- 24. Teacher observations/study tours
- 25. Vision/mission/goals

These practices can be grouped into four areas — (1) management, (2) empowerment, (3) vision, and (4) culture — which are described briefly in the following sections and in greater detail in Chapters 6 through 9.

Leaders will use many, of the 25 practices depending on particular circumstances. All of the practices are aligned with the mental model of the Quadrant D Leadership Framework, which guides leadership in deciding which processes will work best in a given situation.

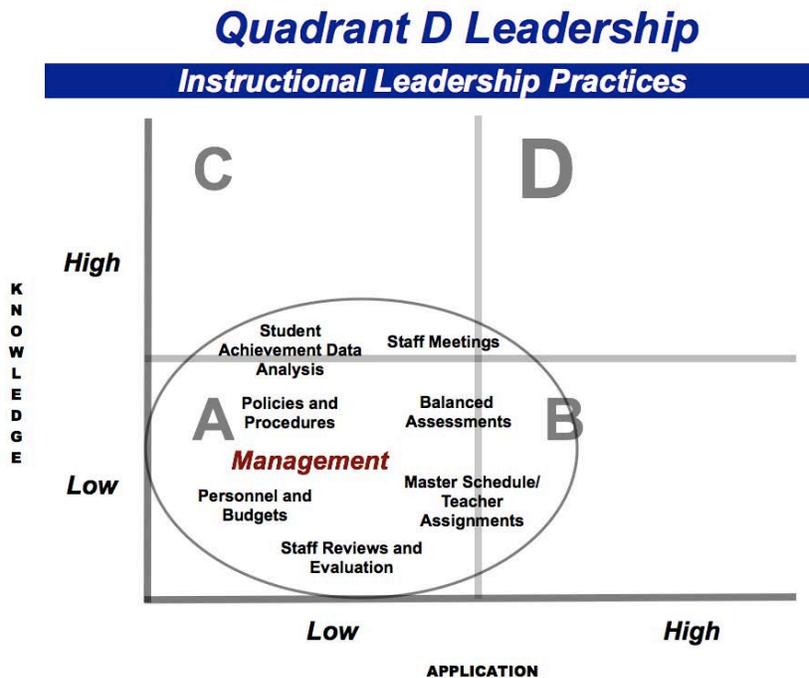
The graphic that follows shows how the 25 practices are organized along the continuums of the Quadrant D Leadership Framework. Some of these practices are connected to lower levels of leadership described as



## Instructional Leadership — Quadrant D Leadership Practices

Quadrant A, while others are connected to the characteristics of Quadrant D. Leaders must balance multiple initiatives to improve instruction.

**Management practices** are essential for addressing necessary tasks, but they demand lower levels of leadership. When leaders are using these practices, they generally are operating in Quadrant A, as shown:



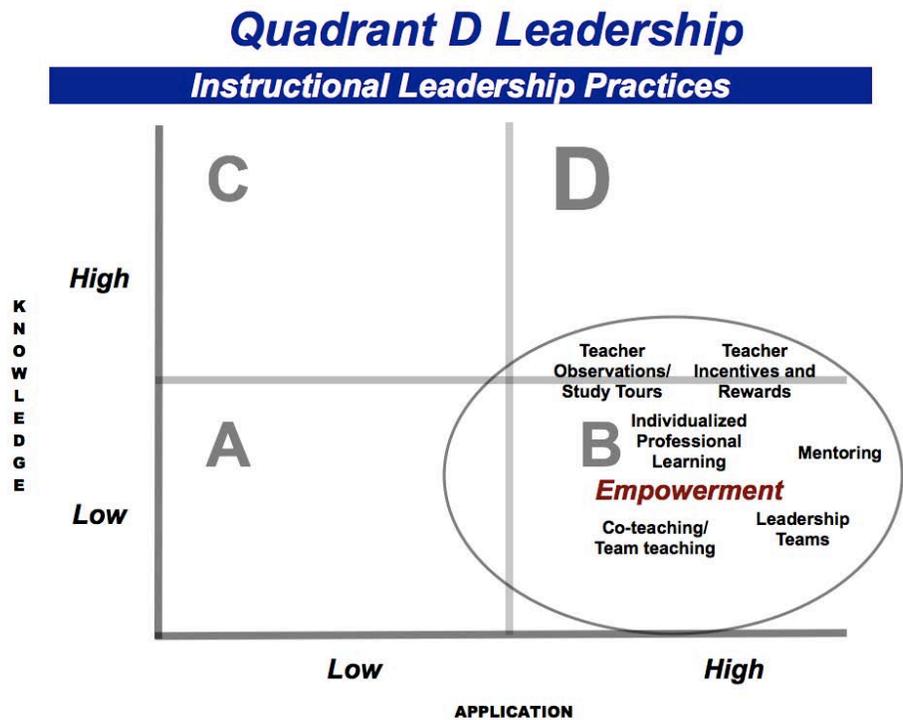
Management practices include:

- Policies and procedures: Schools, as systems, must have common, clear, and practical ways of operating to ensure consistency of instruction while taking care not to stifle innovation.
- Personnel and budgets: Hiring decisions and the allocation of limited resources are at the administrative core of high-quality learning.
- Master schedule/teacher assignments: It is essential for leaders to create school master calendars that ensure that time is being used wisely and that instructional assignments enable teachers to apply their talents toward greater school success.

## 2 Quadrant D Leadership

- Staff meetings: Staff meetings are more productive and have a greater impact on school success when agendas focus on instructional issues rather than on administrative ones.
- Staff reviews and evaluations: Staff improvement results from periodic, high-quality staff reviews, evaluation, and feedback.
- Balanced assessments: Students and teachers benefit from a cohesive system of formative and summative assessments to measure progress toward learning goals.
- Student achievement data analysis: High stakes, standardized tests provide valuable student data to inform areas of instruction in need of improvement.

**Empowerment practices** reflect high levels of leadership application and empowerment but suffer from the lack of a fully defined common school vision. They appear as part of Quadrant B on the framework.



## Instructional Leadership — Quadrant D Leadership Practices

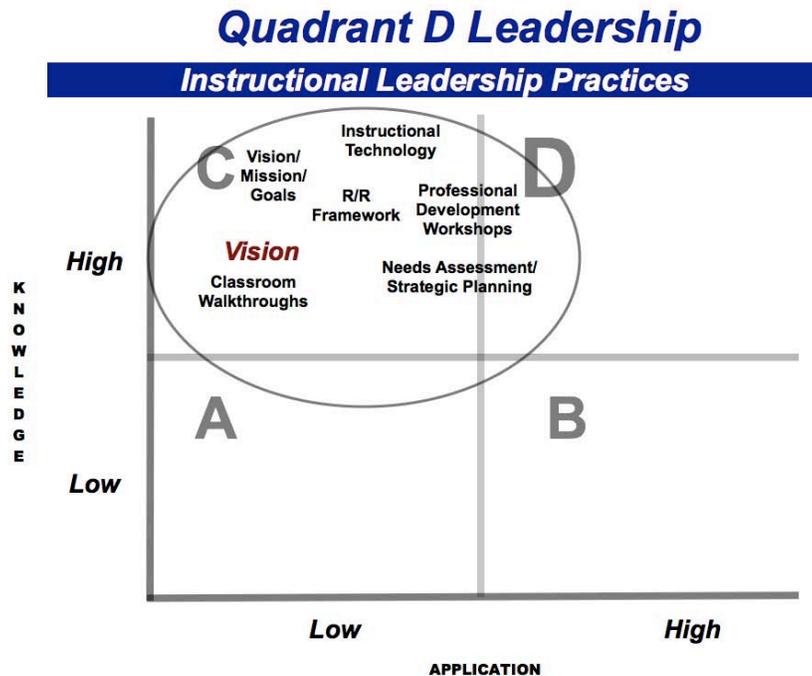
Empowerment practices include:

- Leadership teams: Collaborative teams build a common focus, enhance schoolwide problem solving, embrace data-based decision making, and share best practices.
- Mentoring: Beginning teachers or those who are new to a school learn from master teachers through ongoing personal conversations.
- Co-teaching/team teaching: Teachers working collaboratively build on strengths and share best practices to benefit students.
- Teacher incentives and rewards: Individual recognition and other incentives encourage teachers to take the steps necessary to improve.
- Teacher observations/study tours: Actually observing good instructional practice in action is an extremely powerful tool for teachers to improve their own instruction.
- Individualized professional learning: Self-directed learning offers professionals learning opportunities that relate directly to their needs.

**Vision practices**, which are associated with Quadrant C Leadership, may reflect high levels of knowledge of leadership and creativity, but also indicate a less fully developed approach to empowerment.

Vision practices include:

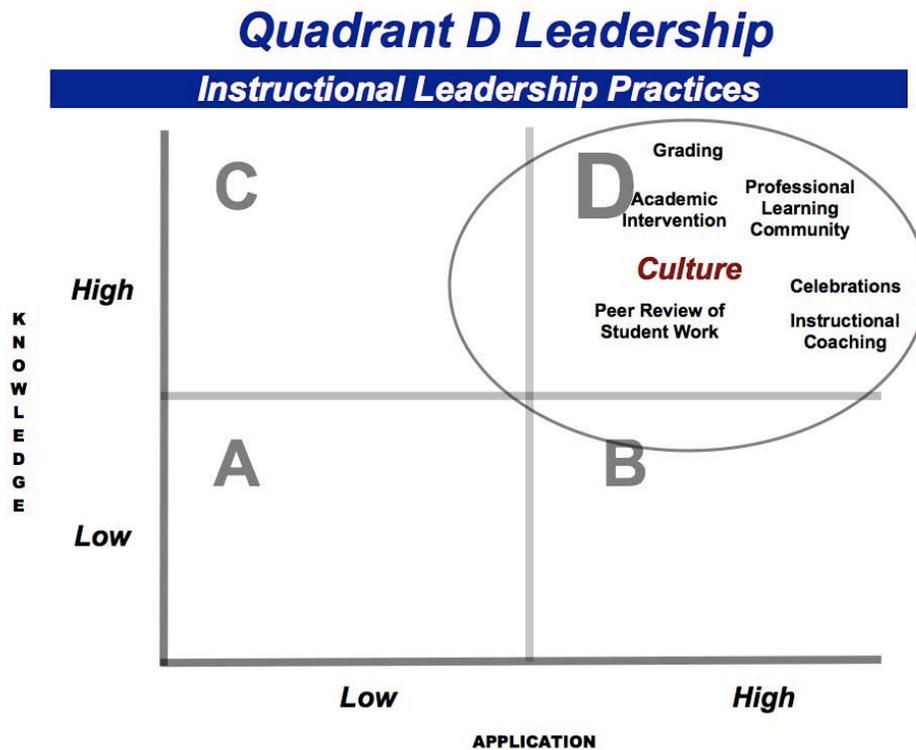
- Vision/Mission/Goals: When a leader establishes a vision for change that is based on new or revised goals, the school community begins to see the possibility of improvement.
- Instructional technology: Using current instructional technology in the classroom helps to introduce 21<sup>st</sup> century learning as well as engage students. Instructional technology conveys a vision that schools are up to date with contemporary society and relevant to preparing students for their future.
- Rigor/Relevance Framework: This is the most powerful tool for quantifying aspirations for rigorous and relevant instruction and assessment.



- Needs assessment/strategic planning: To achieve success and provide targeted improvement, leaders must help staff carefully craft strategic actions based on observed needs.
- Classroom walk-throughs: Short, frequent classroom observations reinforce expectations, create opportunities to engage and support staff, and build a rich culture that supports quality instruction.
- Professional development workshops: High-quality group learning by professionals from experts is a key strategy for improving instruction.

**Culture practices** help establish an environment that supports improvement. These Quadrant D practices reflect high levels of knowledge and the application of leadership that will sustain significant instructional improvement.

## Instructional Leadership — Quadrant D Leadership Practices



Culture practices include:

- Academic intervention: Ensuring that every student succeeds frequently requires timely intervention to provide personalized, alternative instruction.
- Instructional coaching: Onsite peers stimulate teacher reflection and change through regular observation, frequent support, and personal advice in implementing proven instructional practices.
- Peer review of student work: When teachers share high-quality student work with one another, they support the development of high-quality instruction.

**Context for Instructional Leadership Checklist:  
Is Your School Ready to Work on Improving Instruction?**

Pervasive	Considerable	Partial	Initiated	Absent	
<b>Staff Relationships</b>					
					Staff know one another.
					Staff support one another when needed.
					Staff take a proactive interest in developing relationships.
					There is open communication and high levels of trust across a school staff.
					New staff are welcomed and mentored into the school community.
					Staff respect one another and frequently share ideas and solve problems collaboratively.
<b>Collaboration</b>					
					Team structures are in place for groups of teachers and administrators to solve problems related to specific school functions.
					Team members are highly committed to goals, placing less priority on individual goals or interests when necessary.
					Teams have specific goals and responsibilities.
					Teams have regular meeting times when all can and do attend.
					Teams have access to data and information needed to make decisions.
					There are convenient and comfortable areas in which teams can meet.
					Teams have established operating norms, including an emphasis on positive reflection and problem solving.
<b>Sense of Purpose and Urgency</b>					
					There is a collective responsibility among all staff toward the success of each student.
					There is a focus on preparing students for a future in which skills and knowledge change.
					There is a sense of urgency that improvement must occur sooner rather than later.
					There is a commitment to provide instruction consistent with the ways the brain learns.
					There are comprehensive sets of data indicators for student achievement.
					Data indicators are consistent with the core beliefs of staff in regard to a well educated student.
					Each teacher sees how his or her instruction relates to the data indicators for student achievement.
					There are specific goals for student achievement.
					Staff conversations focus positively on student achievement and high expectations.



Instructional Policies Checklist		
Yes	No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies reflect the school's vision, mission, and goals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies reflect the school's beliefs regarding rigorous and relevant instruction, positive student relationships, and highly engaged learning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies are broad enough to permit administrators and teachers to interpret and adjust according to changing conditions, but without the need to make basic changes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies are written and published in a manner that is available to all staff and the public.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies are written in a clear, simple language that is readily understood by all members of the school community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies are reviewed on at least a biennial basis.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies are included in the orientation of all new staff.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Procedures are in place for staff to suggest changes in policy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Procedures allow for all staff to have input when new policies are created or when current policies are revised.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies establish minimum expectations without stifling creativity in instruction.

- Effective Meetings Checklist
- Meeting Roadmap
- Sample Meeting Ground Rules
- Minutes of Meeting Sample Format
- Success Analysis Protocol for Leadership Teams



### Team Effectiveness Inventory

The following survey can be used to obtain feedback from team members as to the effectiveness of teams.

5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Clear Common Purpose</b>					
We have a clear sense of our collective goals and priorities.					
Our goals are challenging yet achievable.					
Team members are highly committed to our goals, placing less priority on individual goals or interests when necessary.					
<b>Team Processes</b>					
We have effective processes for sharing information.					
We have effective processes for solving problems, making decisions, and running meetings.					
We have effective processes for ensuring individual accountability and coordinating individual efforts.					
<b>Group Dynamics</b>					
Team members listen to, respect, and understand each other.					
Conflict is dealt with openly and is considered important to decision making and personal growth.					
We are a supportive, cooperative, and cohesive group.					
<b>Interpersonal Relationships</b>					
I trust the members of my team.					
Members feel their unique personalities are appreciated and used well.					
Team members contribute equally.					