

Key Words: Educational leadership, challenges, indicators, effective, copers, transformers, head/heart balance, instructional leadership, conflict resolution, presence, dealing with ambiguity, optimistic outlook, focus on student learning, mentoring teachers, ethically based leadership, differentiation, layering, effective communication, students, teachers, parents, community members, stakeholders, emerging themes, identified path, developmental process, innovation, approaches

The study *Innovation and educational leadership challenge: A developmental approach* aimed at deriving the challenges faced by educational leaders and developing an instrument to measure the performance of school administrators on these stated challenges. Following this, the performance of administrators in sample schools was measured and the results calibrated. Next, the researcher developed approaches or paths for the improvement of each of the ten challenges using the results of the study and the input of experts combined with a review of documents relating to research in this area. These paths were developed for each of ten challenges. The researcher then took the specific results achieved in schools and developed a training process for each of the five challenges where these schools were found to be ineffective.

Ten challenges were derived and these were developed into thirty measurement indicators for looking at leadership practices and calibrating challenge response performance. Experts reviewed these indicators, a pilot study was conducted and enhancements were made to increase reliability. This instrument, now with thirty-four indicators, was then used in schools and challenge performance was measured.

Ten challenges were measured with the result that schools were found to be effective in mentoring teachers, optimistic outlook, ethically based leadership and focus on student learning. Sample schools were found to be marginally effective in differentiation. Schools were found to be ineffective in conflict resolution, the head/heart balance, dealing with ambiguity, presence and instructional leadership.

A series of paths were determined to allow for school improvement in terms of administrative practices in each of these ten challenges. Further, for the five challenges where schools were found to be ineffective, a generalized training process was developed to facilitate improvement along with questions to help process each stage of the six stage training cycle envisioned.

Findings were reviewed and recommendations concerning future research concentrated on developing a knowledge base around these challenges to educational leaders while practical recommendations concentrated on improving effectiveness in schools and using challenge based research to enhance teacher professional development.