

Leadership Qualities of an Effective Principal

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Abstract

Like the captain of a ship, the principal of a school is always at the helm; designing, managing and executing ideas and concepts. To many of us, a principal's job is a child's play. How much fun it would be to sit on a fancy chair and get things done, we must think but as they say, "the grass always looks greener on the other side". It is not how it appears to be and it takes a lot of qualities combined together to come out not only as an effective but as an efficient principal. The purpose of this study is to analyse Reports, Performances, and output from Personal Experiences of a school leader, and study in detail the components in the making of a 'good principal'. The following article aims at highlighting the qualities of an effective principal of a school. And secondly, it elucidates the leadership aspect of being a principal. It further analyses the challenges of being a principal and ways to overcome those challenges. Altogether, the paper presents and showcases a compact study of the leadership qualities of an effective principal. This research paper encapsulates distributed leadership implied to the role of a principal and show how working collectively as a whole lead to a better institution and greater heights are achieved. It aims at proving that challenges can be easily overcome through distributed or delegated leadership.

The research methodology is mainly qualitative which is best for gaining in-depth insights into specific concepts. It aims to produce contextual and real-world knowledge and is interpretative. Hence, undertaking the same, the existing archival data was collected for analysis from publications and journals. Not only that, a case study was carried out by interviewing people who were capable to provide real life examples to prove the aforementioned statement. Furthermore, the interviews were transcribed and secondary data was referred to and thematic analysis was conducted. Principal need to manage multiple things at the institute.

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In order to foster leadership that concentrates on what is essential, what should be done, and how to do it in today's society, which is swiftly moving toward model-based transformation and accountability, a new perspective has evolved that draws inspiration from contemporary corporate life. The obligations of principals will change dramatically as a result of this alteration. Due to the requirement to follow district standards, put them into practise, and guard against errors, they must now do more than just maintain buildings. They must be (or develop into) learning leaders capable of managing a team and providing excellent training. (IECS on “Preparing leaders for the future learning society.”)

Keywords: Principal, leadership, qualities, students, effective.

Introduction

Like the captain of a ship, the principal of a school is always at the helm; designing, managing and executing ideas and concepts. To many of us, a principal's job is a child's play. How much fun it would be to sit on a fancy chair and get things done, we must think but as they say, “the grass always looks greener on the other side”. It is not how it appears to be and it takes a lot of qualities combined together to come out not only as an effective but as an efficient principal.

Objective

The purpose of this study is to analyse Reports, Performances, and output from Personal Experiences of a school leader, and study in detail the components in the making of a ‘good principal’. The following article aims at highlighting the qualities of an effective principal of a school. And secondly, it elucidates the leadership aspect of being a principal. It further analyses the challenges of being a principal and ways to overcome those challenges. Altogether, the paper presents and showcases a compact study of the leadership qualities of an effective principal.

Research Methodology

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The principal- a manager

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A school principal is a manager or front-runner who emphasizes on higher performance standard of everyone.

Following are the qualities a school principal should possess to be called an effective leader:

1. The envisioned– an effective leader should have a clear vision and purpose. They are expected to be highly focused and ambitious for both, the students and the school and must be someone who enacts the vision.
2. The communicator- interpersonal skills are a must. It is an essential quality of an effective school leader to be easily approachable i.e. have an open door policy to their employees and the students. Communication is the strength of a leader hence he should be someone who can connect and interact.
3. The activator and producer- the head of a school must be passionate and should be able to motivate by providing new opportunities and promoting professional development. Should be result driven and aim at maximum productivity. Distributing responsibility and accountability is also needful.
4. The innovator- a leader should be the master of change with a futuristic perspective and should be open to new ideas and to be able to create and innovate himself.
5. The educator- all of the above qualities combined together with being an educator makes a great leader.

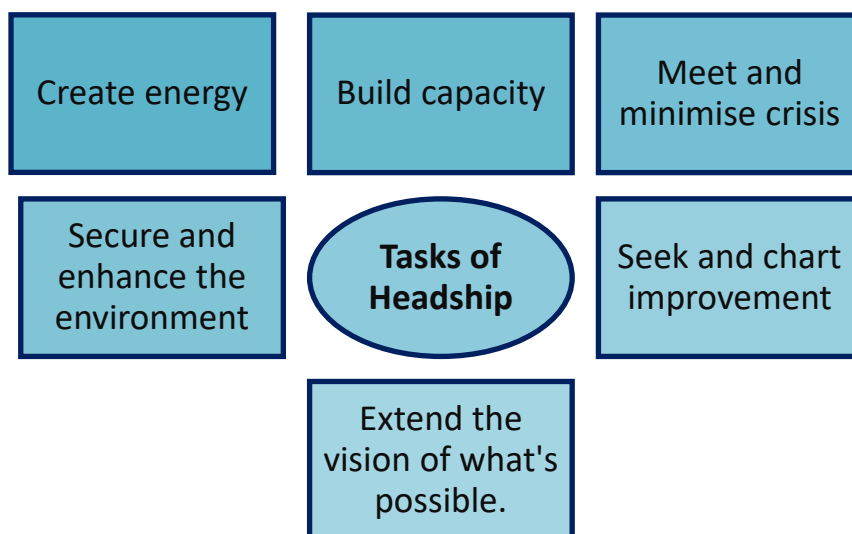


Figure 1. Responsibilities of a principal are listed below

Source: <https://indiaschoolleaders.org/development-of-school-leaders-in-india-concerns-and-challenges/>

Training for Professional Development

An effective principal should be able to bridge the gap between becoming ‘guide on the side’ from being ‘a sage on the stage’.

Training of employees is one of the major responsibilities of a principal. It can be done through various teacher training programmes such as the EOS and organising seminars and webinars for their growth. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is a way to enhance a teacher’s personality in today’s time. And that will only be possible if the principal himself is tech-savvy.

http://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/LeadershipMatters.pdf?utm_source=William+D.+Parker+Newsletter&utm_campaign=6f91e149de-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_06_05_03_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_43cf67799e-6f91e149de-435012897

The Challenges and Overcoming Them

Undoubtedly, the principal enjoys an enviable position in an educational institution but he/she has to face the innumerable challenges that come with it. In a home environment, all the members have different moods at all times. Likewise, school is a similar macrocosm where people of all hues are a part. There are many adult mindsets at school that a principal needs to think alike with. A good leader must possess excellent PR (Public Relations) and interpersonal skills. Besides these, a principal must be a good orator and should be able to diffuse situations by infusing

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spirits. Most of all, he/she should be result oriented as that is the ultimate goal. Running a school is like running a nation but at a smaller level and indeed it can be a roller coaster ride.

Making all of the decisions- the principal is very much like the head of a family. Ultimately, he has to take all the decisions from trivial to the major ones. And at times, the burden and pressure that comes with it is difficult to deal with.

Being surrounded by some and not reaching out to all- since a principal is the highest in the hierarchy and the management is such that the top level cannot directly reach out to the last level, there is a gap in the communication.

Delegating responsibility- delegating responsibility is one of the biggest challenges that a principal faces. There are situations that bring lack of trust. Hence, it becomes very challenging to delegate responsibility without delegating unnecessary authority which could be misused.

These challenges can be overcome if one depicts all the organizational skills well:

1. Planning- setting up a target is important.
2. Implementing- after you've set up a goal, it is time to involve the faculty to implement the plans you've made.
3. Supporting- now, your employees need your constant support and guidance.
4. Advocating- do the needful.
5. Communicating- communication is the key. Hence it is mandatory to inform all the stakeholders about your goals.
6. Monitoring- keep a track of all the activities being done.
7. Establishing community relations- maintaining both, internal and external constituencies is helpful in building relations with the community.
8. Delegating- delegating responsibility by delegating authority when needed is an ideal trait of a true principal.

There is requirement of good teacher for every student. Similarly, there is need of good principal for every teacher and ultimately, there is a prerequisite of good management for a good principal (Figure 2)

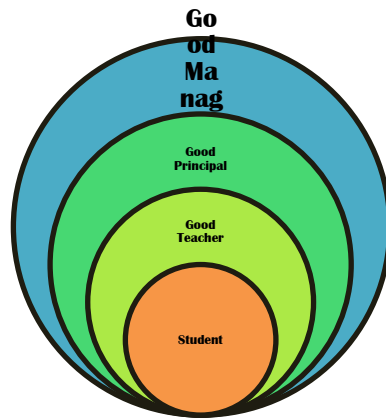


Fig. 2.

Source: The Wallace Foundation

- Link - <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/overview-the-school-principal-as-leader.aspx>

From a principal's desk- A case study

Submitted by Prabjeet Kaur, teacher and author

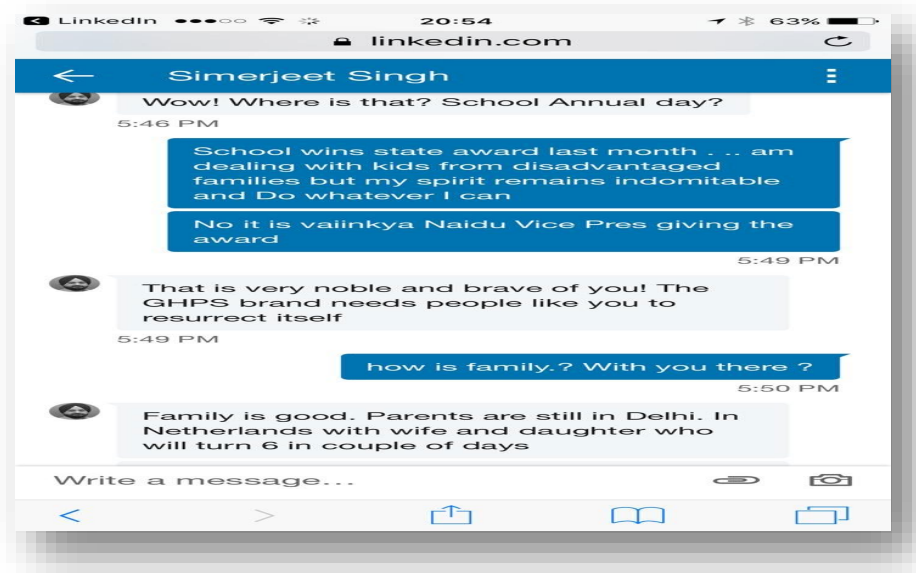
The following case study is of Mrs. K. Kaur who has had hands on experience of heading 3 inclusive schools. She talks about how challenges are part and parcel of life and it goes likewise when she is a principal at school. But a clear vision and an utter passion towards one's work can beat it all, she adds. The belowmentioned account is all first- hand information, collected upon interviewing the principal herself.

Mrs. Kaur has been a teacher for 19 years now and believes in exploring education beyond the confines of bookish knowledge. She got an opportunity to do honorary work to assist in opening of school in a remote village of Bhatinda, Punjab by a religious congregation. Since, she was working in the capacity of head there, she decided to take on the charge of recruiting good teachers. Failing to do so due to lack of educated individuals, she started to teach the students herself and gradually taught them how to read and write. Not only that, but to increase the percentage of attendance, she started providing langar (free meal) to the students and help to build an actual school from a ramshackle hut. She continued serving the Institution as an advisor and helped in making the parents & students of that area aware about the importance of good quality education. Many students from first generation families of a minority community have cleared IELTS & have settled abroad.

Later, she came to be the head mistress of a school in Central Delhi and she was faced with newer challenges where students and parents were being rigid in coming forward in the field of education. The then Principal was very supporting and encouraging. The school had been

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recently upgraded. Mrs. Kaur was given the first batch of class X along with her administrative duties. She gave 100% result. Despite the challenge, she brought forward students under her guidance and made them recipients of C.B.S.E. scholarships. Simerjeet Singh, is one such student who had then received a scholarship for being a C.B.S.E. topper under her support and guidance and is now settled in the Netherlands. She has not only changed minds but lives as well.



Mrs. Kaur gives the credit to her then Principal who believed in her abilities, gave her liberty to work, gave her opportunities to show her talents, brought her forward and groomed her for the role she is playing today i.e. of a Principal. She narrated another incident at that school where the school was invited to send a student representative to Japan for participating in Hiroshima Day programme. Mrs. Kaur helped the only passport holding 12th class girl who had recently lost her father, to visit there. Although her family and the principal were reluctant but Mrs. Kaur convinced them that it was a once in a lifetime opportunity. The student was interviewed by Japanese and Indian newspapers. The girl after coming back Japan thanked her saying that “I have got hope and courage to continue with my life despite having lost my father at such an early age”.

Mrs. Kaur took over another school in the North Delhi and was the founder principal here as well. The students here came from economically handicapped backgrounds. Some were even parentless. The real struggle here was to motivate the already laid back employees who were previously not given enough recognition. Just like her previous principal would, Mrs. Kaur instilled pride in her teachers by polishing the existing talent. She initiated an improvement plan titled ‘my favourite teacher programme’ for children with special needs and asked them to choose their favourite teacher who would spend extra time with them for their betterment. The teachers

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shortlisted by the students took keen interest in their personal & academic issues. The good vibes and feel good among the staff and students helped to increase the strength from 600 to 1200.

She initiated and facilitated three international exchange programs with Russia, Japan and Kenya. She was the first to have undertaken The Russian- Sikh culture programme in Delhi, India and that too in a primary school where students couldn't recite nursery rhymes well.

All the programmes were conducted in the langar hall as the infrastructure was inadequate but her spirit took over the structures and she was not only able to facilitate brand building but also confidence building of the otherwise English shy teachers and students.

Mr. Simerjeet Singh, <https://nl.linkedin.com/in/simerjeetsingh?trk=p> www.researchgate.net

○ **And Interview of Ms. Kaur by Prabjeet Kaur.**

Here are some pictures from the Russian Exchange Programme;



I have worked under many heads and I can proudly say that I have had the best experience and enjoyed the most while working with her”, says one of her primary teachers.

Mrs. Kaur is currently the principal of ABC School, New Delhi where most of the students are from families of riot victims, migrants and socio economically disadvantaged families : another highly inclusive school. The biggest challenge was that the teachers were not aware of the means

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and methods of dealing with such students. It took her practically 4 years to create a holistic academic environment. Like minded leaders among the staff were identified & armed with passionate associates she slowly succeeded in transforming the culture of complaints, blame game, misleading statements and side tracking of issues by insisting that all work-related discussions and correspondence was to be done in writing. .

Mrs. Kaur said she believes verbal arguments can never be won written evidence can never be refuted.. Thus she was able to modify, rectify and manage vocal and irresponsible faculty members without altercation or loud discussions. Restorative and reformatory practices helped her to sensitize the power-connected staff toward the students. The teachers complained that it was difficult to deal with them due to their difficult and different backgrounds. Mrs. Kaur reiterated that missionary zeal and passion is the only answer to dealing with these students. They cannot be neglected just because they were born in a less provident family. More attention was paid to co curricular activities, talents and interest were identified, swot analysis was rigourously done. Wage Analysis (W-weak, A-average, G-good, E-excellent) was introduced on monthly basis where the students rated themselves in all subjects. A scrutiny committee was formed who assessed wage analysis proformas every month and identified problems shared by the students. Some samples of wage analysis and reports are being attached :

The image displays three examples of 'Wage Analysis' forms used for student self-assessment. Each form is titled 'WAGE ANALYSIS PRE SA(I) FOR DIAGNOSTIC CONTINUUM SELF ASSESSMENT SHEET NO. - I, II, or III'. The forms include fields for Name, Class, and Roll No., and a subject rating scale (W - Weak, A - Average, G - Good, E - Excellent). The second form (II) features a central box with the number '321' and instructions for students to list things they remember from the lesson, give examples of what they learned, and write a question they are confused about. The third form (III) shows a completed form with handwritten answers and a rating table.

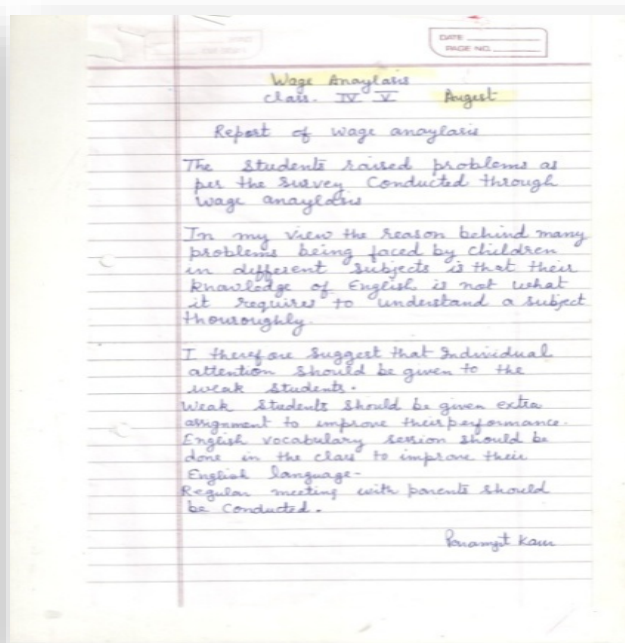
Sub/Rating	W	A	G	E
English			✓	
Political			✓	
Industrial		✓		
Account		✓		
Maths			✓	

(Wage Analysis for class assessment)

Self Assessment Proforma prepared by Ms. Kaur wherein the students assessed themselves fortnightly on the basis of W-WEAK, A- AVERAGE, G – GOOD, E-EXCELLENT

IX B		Wage Analysis - I					Remarks (Problems in subject)	
Sl. No.	Student Name	Hindi	Maths	Sci	SS	Eng		Phys
1	TN-2229	ANUPREET SINGH	N	N	N	A	N	To make him understand in simplifying. Needs to understand quadratic eqn. clearly.
2	TN-2328	ANUPREET SINGH	G	G	G	G	G	Sci - Double displacement Reaction. Needs more practice.
3	TN-2328	ANUPREET SINGH	E	E	E	E	E	Sci - Double displacement Reaction. Needs more practice.
4	TN-2342	GANANDEEP SINGH	A	N	N	N	N	Sci - Double displacement Reaction. Needs more practice.
5	TN-2407	ANUPREET KAUR	G	A	G	A	G	Maths - Chap 02. Revision Hand list.
6	TN-2442	GURDEEP SINGH	G	G	G	G	G	
7	TN-2515	ANUPREET SINGH	N	N	G	A	A	Chem his doubts in every subject.
8	TN-2583	HARJEN KAUR	G	G	G	G	G	No problems in any subject.
9	TN-2623	JASLEEN KAUR	G	G	G	G	G	Maths - Chapter 2 and Chapter 14. Needs Hand list.
10	TN-2699	HANDEEP SINGH	A	A	A	A	A	Maths - Linear equation of two variables.
11	TN-2701	PARSHOT SINGH	A	A	A	A	A	Maths - Chap 2 and Chapter 14. Needs Hand list.
12	TN-2846	ANUPREET SINGH	A	A	A	A	A	Maths - Law of Linear eqn and polynomials.
13	TN-3106	HARJAS KAUR	A	G	G	A	G	Sci - Electricity. Needs to solve more problems.
14	TN-3188	ANANDEEP KAUR	G	G	G	G	G	Sci - Electricity. Needs to solve more problems.
15	TN-3342	CHANDANDEEP SINGH	A	G	A	A	A	Sci - Problem in balancing. Needs to solve his queries.
16	TN-3343	PARANDEEP KAUR	A	G	G	G	G	Maths - Quadratic equation.
17	TN-3433	ANANDEEP KAUR	G	G	G	A	G	Sci - Electricity. Sci - Balancing in simple. Needs to discuss problem after chapter.
18	TN-3523	PUNJEET SINGH	N	N	N	N	N	
19	TN-3530	PARANDEEP KAUR	G	G	A	A	G	Sci - Electricity. Sci - Balancing in simple. Needs to discuss problem after chapter.
20	TN-3704	ANUPREET SINGH	A	G	G	G	G	Sci - Chapter 4. Maths - Chapter 2. Needs to discuss problem after chapter.
21	TN-3704	ANUPREET SINGH	A	G	G	G	G	Sci - Chapter 4. Maths - Chapter 2. Needs to discuss problem after chapter.
22	TN-3783	JASLEEN KAUR	G	G	G	G	G	Maths - Chapter 2. Needs to discuss problem after chapter.
23	TN-3794	HARJAS SINGH						
24	TN-3901	GANDEEP SINGH	A	A	A	A	G	Maths - Chapter 2. Chapter 14. Needs Hand list.
25	TN-3908	SUSHANT SINGH	A	A	A	A	A	Maths - Chapter 2. Chapter 14. Needs Hand list.
26	TN-4219	SARAL SINGH SANDHU	A	N	A	N	A	Maths - Chapter 2. Chapter 14. Needs Hand list.
27	TN-4290	JAYE KRISHNARAJ	G	A	G	G	G	Maths - Chapter 2 and Chapter 14. Hand list.

N = Nil
 A = Average
 G = Good
 E = Excellent



(Assessment Report)

Qualitative and quantitative improvement of result was another serious concern. Intensive study and result audit was done to identify the reasons for poor academic performance. Some of the surveys are appended below:

Result IX – XII **RESULT - 2014-15**

CLASS	70% & ABOVE	69% TO 41%	BELOW 40%	TOTAL
IXA	NIL	19	11	30
IX B	2	10	25	37
IX C	NIL	19	17	36
X A	4	18	11	33
X B	1	16	19	36
X C	3	9	18	30
XI A	3	17	1	21
XI B	5	30	9	44
XI C	1	24	19	44
XI D	5	4	18	27
XII A	NIL	23	2	25
XII B	4	24	19	47
XII C	3	1	36	40
TOTAL	31	214	205	450
	31/450	214/450	205/450	
PASS%	7%	47%	46%	

XI C HUMANITIES

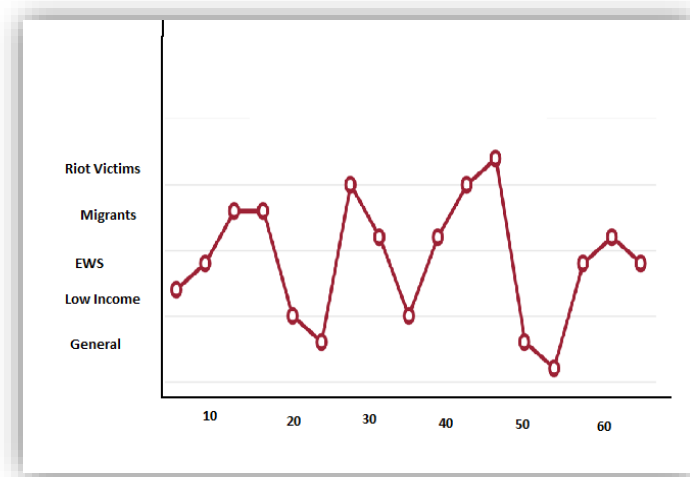
SUBJECT	TOTAL	DETAIN IN U.T.	DETAIN IN TERMINAL	DETAIN IN FINAL
ENGLISH	43	10	24	6
HINDI	10	1	1	
PUNJABI	33	9	7	
HISTORY	43	15	15	
POL. SCIENCE	43	2	18	
PHY. EDU.	36	15	28	
ECONOMICS	7	1	2	
SUBJECT	TOTAL	DETAIN IN U.T.	DETAIN IN TERMINAL	DETAIN IN FINAL
ENGLISH	38	3	16	3
BUSINESS STUDIES	38	6	17	
ACCOUNTS	38	19	19	
ECONOMICS	19	5	2	
HINDI	4	-	-	
PUNJABI	17	-	7	
I.P.	6	2	1	
PHY. EDU.	32	10	11	

The result audit revealed that the students were unable to perform in subjects where the medium of instruction was English. All subjects were taught in English. Discussions with faculty, parents, and students were held and methods and practices were shortlisted to improve listening, speaking, writing.

Media before “Chalk and Board” OHP (Overhead projectors and power points and by equipping their classrooms with charts, models, projectors and videos. Peer grouping, buddy system, adopt a friend, adopt a teacher are various strategies used as innovative practices by the teachers in an inclusive class room. Grouping students of different abilities or language skills is very useful as opportunity is not confined to brighter students.

It was also found that lack of understanding of English attributed to low performance of the students in all English-based subjects but also resulted in behaviour problems, disinterest, and lack of concentration, school dropout, and many other issues. (**William D. Parker on ‘Principal Matters’**

http://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/LeadershipMatters.pdf?utm_source=William+D.+Parker+Newsletter&utm_campaign=6f91e149de-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_06_05_03_08&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_43cf67799e-6f91e149de-435012897)



(Source – Research analysis derived from student’s performance of minority school compiled by Ms. Kaur.)

Many initiatives were taken to improve fluency comprehension and expression in the medium of instruction i.e. English. She started taking regular English conversation classes in the morning and slowly the change was observed.

She has many such more experiences to share. The Management introduced a parenting app, which the teachers were reluctant to use. Two of those teachers were also made incharges to supervise uploading of homework and attendance of whole school. Mrs. Kaur believes that building positive discipline with restorative practice helps to provide effective leadership. It restores relationships and repairs harms.

She says the job of a Principal is becoming more complicated and complex day by day. The pay commissions have brought the salaries at par clearly indicative of a distributive leadership setup. Professional programmes are mandatory so that the principal continues to learn and is updated with contemporary educational practices and norms. She believe that there is no one specific method for becoming an effective principal. It is a everyday challenge and ability to rise to the occasion as per the need of the hour.

Conclusion

This research provides a perception regarding the role of the principal in the professional development of all faculty. Principals have to take responsibility and accountability for the growth of the institution and ensure teachers’ and students’ growth as well. Principals have to evaluate teachers’ performance along with students’ performance to ensure expectations meet the goal of a sustainable institution. Principals have to implement all new policies and ensure inclusive education through qualified teachers. Principals should play a multi-tasking role in the

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development of institutions In conclusion, principals need to manage all necessary and multiple things for the smooth functioning and development of the institution.

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