

## Praise for *Instructional Leadership*

Peter DeWitt's book is clearly written from the heart, based on his own research and his extensive experience (and challenges faced) in many leadership roles. It is a book that will resound with, and be of immense value to, all existing and aspiring school leaders who attempt to balance the complexity of tasks and the demands of accountability and compliance, while also attempting to be leaders of learners.

—Kenneth Muir, Chief Executive and Registrar  
General Teaching Council for Scotland

So much has been written on the topic of instructional leadership, but too little is known about how to implement it. DeWitt once again finds a balance between research and practice by focusing on implementation, developing program logics, and evidence of impact. He is offering a road map to help leaders put their focus on learning and build credibility with staff while doing it.

—John Hattie, Author, *Visible Learning*, and  
Director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute,  
University of Melbourne, Australia

The practical tips and reflections are highly informative. Continually DeWitt brings us back to the perception-reality gap that makes the day-to-day processes of educational leadership far more reactive than we think. As the author explains, what we *think* we do as educational leaders is often neither what our colleagues observe nor how time stacks up.

By following this practical recipe for instructional leadership, busy leaders can adjust their current practices to focus on that which matters most: improving the life chances of learners through increased impact in learning. Leadership will never be easy in an increasingly complex world, but the clarity with which this book unpacks the key ingredients will certainly make it easier.

—Steven Cox, Owner, Osiris Educational

*Instructional Leadership* is the nexus between the key instructional leadership research and the practical day-to-day role of the school leader. For the first time, here is a book that addresses and provides the “why” and “how” underpinned by an implementation framework that can successfully be adopted to support the learning of all school stakeholders when addressing any school improvement. The book identifies and provides clear examples for leaders on “what” instructional leadership, based on research and practice, can look like on a day-to-day basis that is effective for all leaders—from the classroom to district or regional roles. This should be a book read by all aspiring leaders; and by experienced leaders as a reflection of our current leadership and in response to the key questions DeWitt asks in each chapter. As he says in the beginning of the book, “This book is about defining a common language and common understanding” about instructional leadership. He has achieved what he set out to address.

—Helen Butler, Educational Leader, Melbourne, Australia

Principals have the potential to magnify and multiple effective instruction. But far too often, this potential is not realized. Peter DeWitt provides a pathway to get the job done. This thoughtful and practical guide will help you become the instructional leader you have always wanted to be. And, if you take his advice seriously, the students in your school will learn more and learn better. I promise.

—**Douglas Fisher Author, Consultant, Professor**  
**San Diego State University San Diego, CA**

This book is long overdue! It is time instructional leaders heed the tools in this book to begin walking the walk of true instructional leaders. DeWitt clarifies that common language does not always equate to common understanding—it requires purposeful planning and design. He does a masterful job of defining instructional leadership and applying it through relatable situations throughout the book. This book alone would help to prevent what I refer to as SOS, Shiny Object Syndrome, in education. We have tended to consistently react to the newest and shiniest program or promise in education, and this has led to initiative overload and reactive leadership as opposed to proactive leadership and creating evidence of impact. The program logic model DeWitt demonstrates is a great way for leadership teams to create evidence of impact through dialogue and action and allow instructional leaders to shift their focus to how learning works and the concepts of learning.

—**Todd Wiedemann, Co-Director, Kansas MTSS and Alignment**

This book will help leaders to overcome the challenge of operationalizing instructional leadership. The six areas identified by DeWitt provide a clear and practical route map for developing the practice of instructional leadership. The mindful moments are timely and effective punctuations that help you to stop and think, process, and apply the learning. Likewise, the student voice questions ensure that we calibrate what we think with what our students say, do, and experience. As we move into an age with even greater focus on implementation and the fidelity of implementation, DeWitt's work will support leaders in developing and delivering clarity and action that will improve the life chance of our children and young people.

—**Sarah Philp, Director of Learning Scotland**  
**Osiris Educational, Edinburgh**

Peter DeWitt tackles the topic of instructional leadership head-on as a researcher, consultant, coach and former school administrator. As is his style, he shares his findings as if the reader were having a personal conversation with him about the hard work of being an instructional leader and at the same time managing the day-to-day operation of the building. This work provides administrators with a road map in understanding this complex topic but, more importantly, identifies six areas of implementation. DeWitt provides a complete workshop wrapped up within the pages of this book. It is a must-read for school administrators who seek

to understand how to implement improvements effectively, build collective efficacy and focus on student learning.

**—Jim Verlengia, Adjunct Instructor,  
Leadership School of Education, Drake University, Des Moines, IA**

Peter DeWitt draws on research and personal experience as he skillfully unpacks the complexities involved in the practice of instructional leadership. School leaders will find the ideas in this book relatable, practical, and significant in relation to improving student outcomes. If you aspire to lead school improvement by strengthening the quality of classroom instruction and reaching deep levels of implementation, this book will provide the guidance you seek.

**—Jenni Donohoo, PhD, Author and School  
Improvement Consultant**

Peter DeWitt has been a learner from day one since he first became a teacher, and especially shortly thereafter when he became a principal. In 2006 he enjoyed being a leader in a small rural community. Then he had a growing and compelling realization that something was wrong, and became what I would call a “positive rebel,” devoting himself to making a difference. Now we have a short, focused book on what he has been learning over the past decade. “Instructional leadership” is a crystal-clear treatise on “mindful moments” organized around six principles. If you want to know what instructional leadership is—and, equally importantly, what it is not—this is the book for you. Clear models, guiding questions and insights, and a to-do list will have you leaning toward action from page 1. Read it, use it, and tell your friends.

**—Michael Fullan, OC, Professor Emeritus  
OISE/University of Toronto**

Instructional leadership is something that we strive to foster in ourselves as well as those around us because we know, as leaders, it is the type of leadership that leads to the most significant impact on student success. This is not an easy task, as many of us do not fully understand what it means to be an instructional leader or how to successfully grow in that area. In this book, highly acclaimed author and consultant Peter DeWitt guides readers down the path to understanding and becoming an instructional leader through ideas that are grounded in research and presented with the aid of outstanding practical examples and models. If you are ready to begin your journey toward instructional leadership, this book is an excellent place to start!

**—Heath Peine, Executive Director of Student Support Services  
Wichita Public Schools**

DeWitt brings the heart of a true leader to every sentence in this book. He illuminates important leadership concepts about instruction, social-emotional learning, and collective efficacy with a humanity that allows us to see the potential we hold.

DeWitt matches the courage to lead with the tools to do so and, in the process, lets readers see how coherence and clarity drive the growth of students and adults.

—Nancy Frey, Author, Consultant,  
Professor San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

Blending personal experience, research, and observations acquired through coaching others, DeWitt offers important insights and practical guidance to school leaders aspiring to improve their students' life chances.

—Kenneth Leithwood, Educational Researcher and Professor,  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education,  
Toronto, Canada

DeWitt's *Instructional Leadership: Creating Practice Out of Theory* provides practical solutions to the challenges of being an instructional leader within an educational system not designed to meet the needs of all students. It provides a clear and concise program logic model that I will be using to broaden the impact of our initiatives. This book inspires us and gives us tools to engage teachers and students to co-create inclusive and supportive learning environments that will support our efforts to achieve equity in our schools.

—Blanca Baltazar-Sabbah, Associate Superintendent,  
Instructional Services, Salinas Union High School District

*Instructional Leadership* provides actionable research-based methods to help teams move the needle as instructional leaders in a concrete way. It feels as though Peter is coaching you through the process as you learn to utilize the tools provided to make your schools successful. A perfect choice for principals, assistant superintendents, and superintendents!

—Mary Ann Bryan, Assistant Superintendent  
Instructional Services and Support, Weymouth Public Schools

Peter DeWitt's conversational writing style will engage all leaders. He is knowledgeable and confident in writing about leadership, as he has been there, done the work successfully, and now writes about "living in" the instructional leadership role. DeWitt challenges us to be reflective about the strategies that we collaboratively discern make a difference to attain *all* students' growth and achievement. His thinking is clear about what leaders must do to move *all* students forward. Most importantly DeWitt gives us the tools, like his comprehensive logic model, pithy myth-busters, real-life vignettes, reflective questions and mindful moments, to do the work together. This inspirational book is a must-read for all aspiring and seasoned leaders. DeWitt convinces us that leadership that makes a difference is doable, personalizing his content with narrative from his own lived experiences as a leader.

—Lyn Sharratt, Internship Supervisor  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Canada  
International Consultant, Author and Practitioner

This book is well-timed in a world where school leaders are expected to be instructional leaders but also building managers. Peter DeWitt understands that being an instructional leader is complicated, and this book has both challenged and reinforced my thinking around my leadership practices. His experience as a principal allows him to identify the many challenges and the important impact of instructional leadership on student achievement. He recognizes that, due to our competing responsibilities as leaders, we cannot be expected to focus solely on instructional leadership, yet we can set aside some time to focus on it. As leaders, we decide how much and when, but we need to commit to it to make it a part of our leadership time. This book helps identify the key components we need as leaders, as well as structures that will help us make a positive impact. It is a fantastic read if you are looking to find ways to balance the competing challenges of a leadership position. Thank you, Peter, for inspiring my instructional leadership as I begin my 17th year as a principal.

**—Dave Westaway, Principal, TVDSB  
Vice President of Ontario Principals' Council**

Peter DeWitt sets out to connect research and practice—and he has succeeded! The two are interwoven superbly, resulting in a book that is both practical and wise. The chapters dig deeper into the meaning and practices of instructional leadership in ways that are relevant to an international readership.

**—Elaine Munthe  
Dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Humanities  
University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Norway**