

**O Draighneain, Micheal, 2004, *Teacher Perceptions of Effective Leadership at Primary Level.***

## **ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION**

This study considers teacher perceptions of effective leadership at primary level. It aims to examine what constitutes effective leadership in this sector, and explores what traits and interventions are required by the contemporary leader. A further aim includes an examination of the extent (if any) to which the views of teachers in different categories of school differ from each other, regarding effective leadership.

To this end, the study initially examines contemporary definitions of leadership and outlines a number of 'models' such as transformational and instructional leadership, before proceeding to a consideration of the many approaches, strategies and skills encompassed by many of these aforementioned models, which are deemed by the established writers to be fundamental to effective leadership.

The study presents the findings of a research process which elicited the views of over one hundred teachers (both male and female) working in small, medium and large schools. This process centred upon the dispersal of questionnaires and the holding of a number of interviews.

The study offers analysis of the findings, which revealed a number of interesting conclusions, amongst which the significant difficulties (in the delivering of effective leadership) faced by teaching Principals and the lack of leadership training afforded to all Principals ranked as some of the most striking. In addition, the low- priority accorded to *staff development* by some teachers, and the reluctance of a number of same to embrace aspects of the leadership role of the Principal such as *risktaking* and the maintenace of *high expectations* of staff are also noteworthy.

In this regard, the study makes a number of pertinent recommendations which include the introduction of a mandatory leadership development programme for Principals, access to support services which will allow leaders to reflect upon and improve their leadership, and a package of measures to allow teaching Principals deliver the leadership that is expected of them. Other recommendations centre upon the introduction of an effective staff development process and the development of enhanced understanding of teacher responsibilities in the overall achievement of effective leadership.