

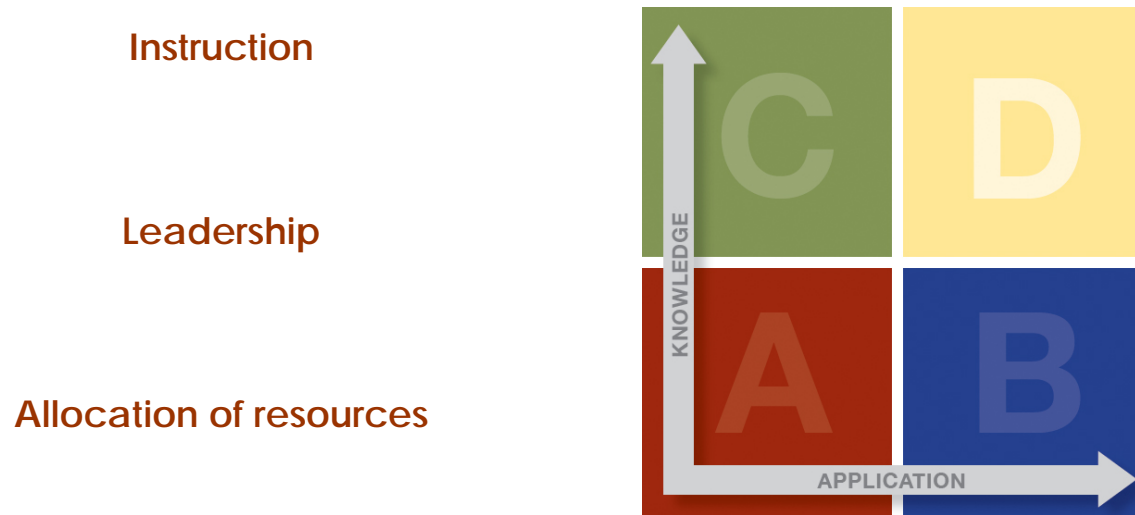
## Living in Quadrant D

Willard R. Daggett, Ed.D, CEO and Raymond J. McNulty, President  
International Center for Leadership in Education  
July 2010

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An analysis of the nation's highest performing and most rapidly improving schools points to the special way they address three areas:



The International Center for Leadership in Education has coined a phrase to describe how these schools operate: "They live in Quadrant D."

The term Quadrant D derives from the Rigor/Relevance Framework®, created by the International Center in 1996 to guide schools on how to deliver a curriculum that is both rigorous and relevant. Quadrant D signifies the highest level of rigor and relevance and is thus the most desirable in terms of instruction and assessment.

Over the years, the concept of Quadrant D as the highest level has been expanded to encompass other aspects of school operation, such as leadership and resource allocation.

## Instruction in Quadrant D

Instruction in highly successful schools enables students to know what to do when they don't know what to do. To gain that competence, students need to acquire depth of knowledge and a rich set of skills and then be taught how to apply their skills/knowledge to unpredictable situations in the world beyond school.

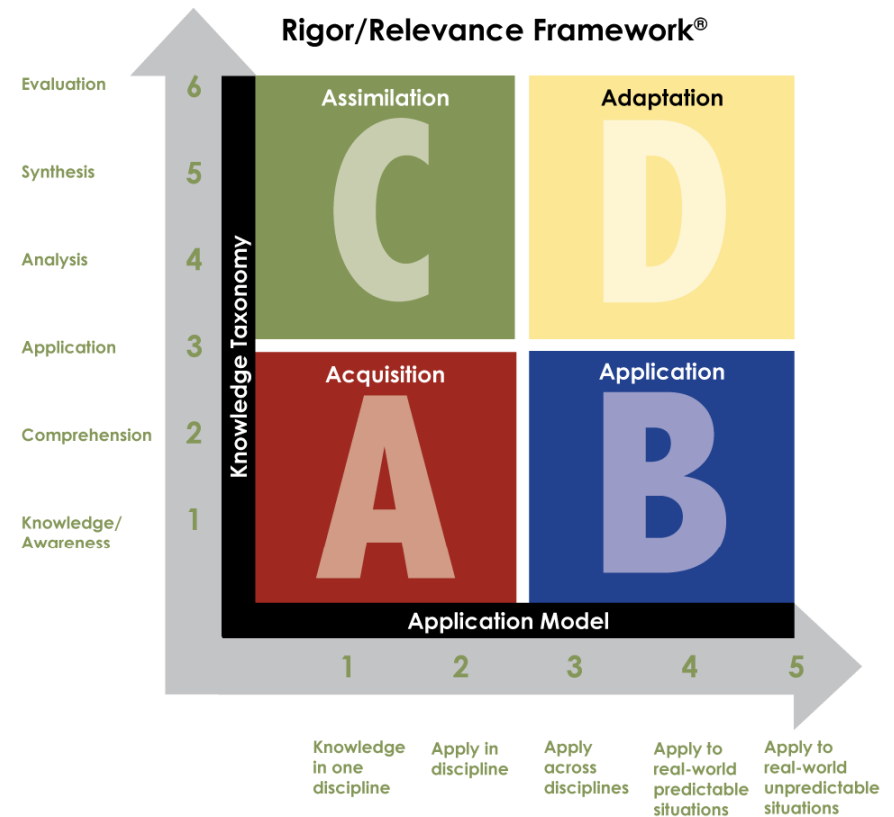
Learning in Quadrant D is demanding and requires the student to think and work. Roles shift from the teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning. Students who operate in Quadrant D have the competence to think in complex ways and to apply their knowledge and skills.

Too often, educators get caught up in the pressure to prepare students for the next test, next grade, and next level of education rather than doing what they inherently understand that they should: prepare students for the world in which they will live and work. A 2010 survey of 40,000 public school teachers by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Scholastic, *Primary Sources: America's Teachers on America's Schools*, shows that most teachers believe the purpose of school is deeper than that.

### Teachers' View of Most Important Goal of School and Teaching

To prepare all students so they are ready for careers in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century	71%
To prepare students to be successful in two- or four-year colleges	11%
To prepare students with life skills, such as managing a bank account, applying for a job, and understanding a mortgage	11%
To graduate from high school	6%

*School should be a means to an end, not an end in and of itself. Moreover, for students to be prepared for the work world, the typically necessitate a more rigorous and relevant set of skills than most schools require.*



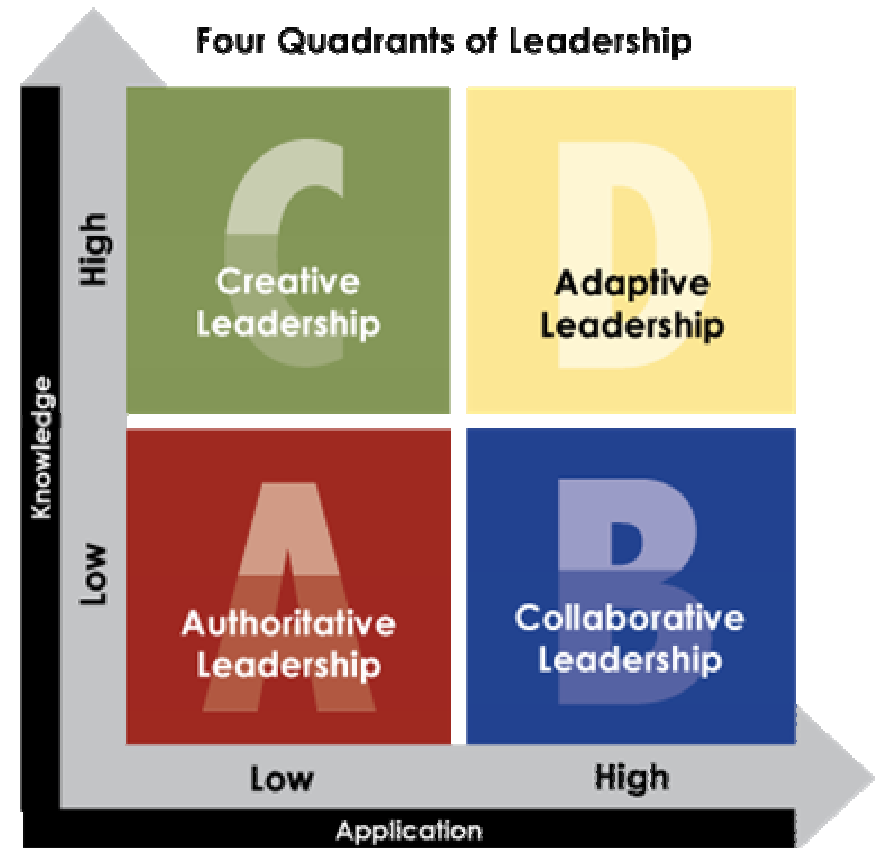
A	B	C	D
Students gather and store bits of knowledge and information. Students are primarily expected to remember or understand this knowledge.	Students use acquired knowledge to solve problems, design solutions, and complete work. The highest level of application is to apply knowledge to new and unpredictable situations.	Students extend and refine their acquired knowledge to be able to use that knowledge automatically and routinely to analyze and solve problems and create solutions.	Students have the competence to think in complex ways and to apply their knowledge and skills. Even when confronted with perplexing unknowns, students are able to use extensive knowledge and skill to create solutions and take action that further develops their skills and knowledge.

## Leadership in Quadrant D

Leadership in high performing and rapidly improving schools is driven by a common vision and empowerment of staff. Quadrant D Leadership does not reside in a single individual but rather is highly collaborative. Administrators, teachers, and students all act every day in ways that support the school's mission. At the highest levels of Quadrant D Leadership, students are taking a significant leadership role in the school as well as responsibility for their own learning. Leadership in Quadrant D allows a school to adapt to change more easily through collaboration, because everyone shares the same vision and commitment to preparing students for their future.

The International Center has created a leadership framework to describe what we have found in the nation's most successful schools: four quadrants of leadership.

The strongest leaders live in Quadrant D and bring others into Quadrant D Leadership with them. A comparison of a Quadrant A leader to a Quadrant D leader shows the following:



### Quadrant A Leader focuses on

rules
control
teaching/teachers
compliance
input

### Quadrant D Leader focuses on

results
empowerment
learning/students
engagement
output

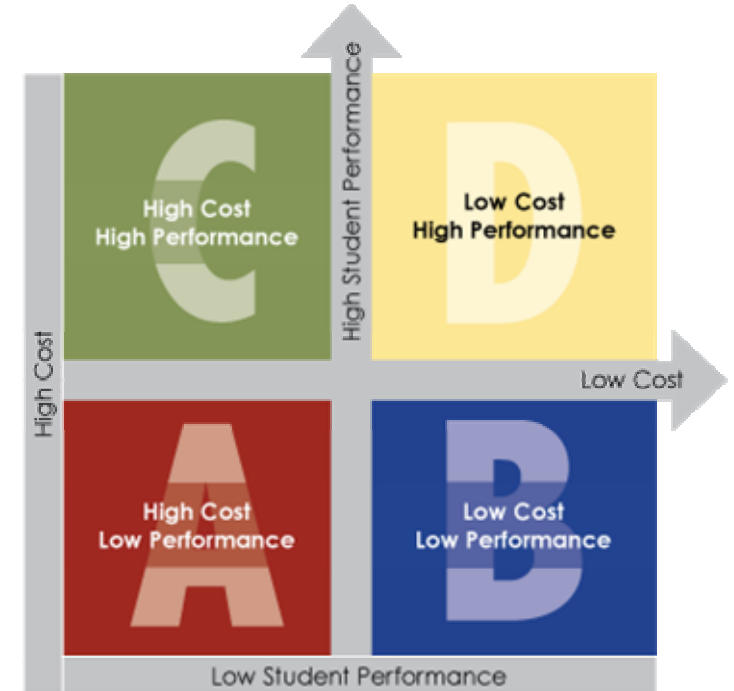
## Allocation of Resources in Quadrant D

In the most successful and rapidly improving schools, decisions about how to allocate resources are carefully analyzed from both an effectiveness and efficiency perspective. The International Center's Effectiveness and Efficiency (E/E) Framework was developed to guide decision making about resources.

Resources should be allocated as much as possible to programs, organizational structures, etc. that fall in Quadrant D. Unfortunately, many schools and districts make decisions based upon the organizational structures, practices, and personnel that are in place rather than on the best use of resources to meet new and future needs. Using the E/E Framework can demonstrate that many popular short-term decisions and many programs that schools/districts have worked hard to maintain and expand are not in Quadrant D. Using the framework can also reveal that programs and approaches that schools/districts may have resisted are highly effective and efficient. Focused and sustained professional development around a single concept, such as literacy or bringing relevance to instruction, is an example in Quadrant D, as are looping, creating interdisciplinary department chairs, and certain technology-based programs.

The long-term consequences of decisions that are not high performance/low cost can be counterproductive to improved student and school performance.

### Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework



### Summary

From instruction to leadership to use of resources, highly successful schools live in Quadrant D. A school living in Quadrant D is adaptive and on a clear path to sustained improvement. If you would like more information on any aspect of Quadrant D please contact us.

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