

PORTFOLIO OF THREE PROJECTS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF EDUCATION (EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND
MANAGEMENT) of Rhodes University

by

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that this project is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated or acknowledged by means of complete references.

L. Thomas

Durban

January 2000

DEDICATION

This Research Portfolio is dedicated to all the street children of South Africa who have been deprived of a formal education and more especially to those street children who have triumphed in the face of adversity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I record my indebtedness to the following individuals:

1. My daughter Kerensa Selene and my son Stuart Marvin for contending with my absences, both in body and in mind.

The following are recorded in alphabetical order.

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3. Ashika Lutchmana for being a surrogate mother to my children and her unstinting belief in me.
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7. All those respondents involved in the research whose co-operation made this study possible.
8. Hennie van der Mescht and Clive Smith my lecturers and supervisors for having made all of this (my degree) attainable.

RATIONALE

I want someday soon to be an educational leader. Studying for this degree in Educational Leadership and Management has armed me to a certain degree with information and some of the requisite skills that is essential for this daunting task.

I am becoming increasingly frustrated and demotivated in my job at school. I want to make sense of all that is happening around me. i.e. in my school as my school is a subsystem of the education system which is a suprasystem. By attempting to stand aside from/outside of this obligation and striving to look at what is happening around me I feel I can accord it some objective reality.

Research that I have undertaken by way of the following three projects further equips me to be an effective as well as efficient leader and manager:

- * A Situational Analysis of my school Cray Valley High (pseudonym)
- * The use of Organisational Development as a Tool to bring about Effective Change in my school – Cray Valley High

* The Characteristics of a Perceived Good Leader

I think that the purpose of a situational analysis is grounded in its usefulness. A situational analysis can be a means to an end. But more importantly a situational analysis of my school has foregrounded the aspects that require attention and backgrounded others that seem to be going well.

With the completion of the situational analysis it dawned on me that my school required intervention by way of Organisational Development (OD). That being so I then proceeded to diagnose the current school milieu and propose how the educators at my school can use the principles underpinning OD to bring about effective change in my organisation.

The goals of OD include improving both the quality of the life individuals as well as organisational functioning and performance with a direct or indirect focus on educational issues. I hope that I have achieved this to some degree.

In the motivation I had submitted for my wanting to read for this degree I stated that good education i.e. teaching and learning begins with good

management and leadership which can be achieved by a good leader. Attempting to define a good leader and more importantly experiencing this good leader at work is what prompted me to research the characteristics of a good leader (my third project) as some of my colleagues have experienced them. A further prompt is that at my school there is an absence of good leadership.

Lastly, the common thread linking these three projects is that they were undertaken at my school.

A Situational Analysis of my Organisation – Cray Valley High*

PROJECT ONE of Three

* pseudonym

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PREAMBLE

My organisation is a state secondary school, Cray Valley. Cray Valley Secondary was administered and maintained by the ex House of Delegates. Cray Valley is named after the farm on which it is situated. Cray Valley Secondary is thirty one years old. It serves the community of Croftdene, which is a low socio-economic area. The school is conveniently situated in that there is a hall fifty metres away (the school does not have a hall), and the municipal library (school library closed – personnel utilised elsewhere), swimming pool (school does not have one) and a shopping centre neighbours the school. Places of worship are within a one kilometre radius.

I am the guidance counsellor cum home economics teacher (level one).

I am becoming increasingly frustrated and demotivated in my job as at my school. I want to make sense of all that is happening around me i.e. in my school and consequently the education system, as my school is a subsystem of the education system, which is a suprasystem.

I feel that conducting an analysis of my organisation will give me some idea of what the strengths and more importantly what the weaknesses are. Our strengths need to be maintained and the weaknesses must be remedied. All too often one is confined, by virtue of the workload that one has, to performing one's job. By attempting to stand aside from/outside of this obligation and striving to look at what is happening in the environment around me I feel I can accord it some objective reality.

With that I hereby quote Douglas McGregor's (Owens 1991:1) definition of a professional.

The professional draws upon the knowledge of science and his colleagues, and upon the knowledge gained through personal experience. The degree to which he relies upon the first two of these rather than the third one is one of the ways in which the professional may be distinguished from the layman.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern society is a network of social systems growing increasingly complex, overlapping, competitive, sometimes co-operative, in which as individuals we find ourselves enmeshed (Berrien, F.K. in Owens 1991:51).

A major theme, perhaps a dominant one, in organisational theory for at least half a century has been the interaction between organisational structure and people. It can be argued, for example, that the structure of an organisation is the prime determinant of the behaviour of people in the organisation. Charles Perrow points out that

... one of the persistent complaints in the field of penology, or juvenile correctional institutions, or mental hospitals, or any of the “people-changing” institutions is the need for better workers. Their problems, we hear, stem from the lack of high-quality personnel. More specifically, the types of individuals they can recruit as guards or cottage parents, or orderlies typically have too little education, hold over-simplified views about people, tend to be punitive, and believe that order and discipline can solve all problems (Owens 1991:52).

He goes on to describe a study in which applicants for positions in a juvenile correction institution were when tested, found to be quite enlightened and permissive, whereas after they had worked in the institution for a while they had become less permissive and took an unenlightened view regarding the causes of delinquency and the care and handling of delinquents. Perrow offers this as an illustration of the power

of organisations to shape the views and attitudes and thus, behaviour – of participants.

On the other hand much of the literature of organisational theory is devoted to the view that the people in the organisation tend to shape the structure of the organisation. Much attention is given to the impact of the behaviour of people in the process of making decisions, leading and dealing with conflict, upon the structure, values and customs of organisations. Much attention has been devoted to the possibilities of improving organisations by means, not of changing their structures as a way of inducing more effective organisational behaviour, but of training participants in more effective group processes as a way of bringing about desirable changes in organisational structure.

2. THE ORGANISATION OF WHICH I AM PART WITH REFERENCE TO THEORIES

The formal analysis and diagnosis of organisations always rests on applying some kind of theory to the institution, for theories are interpretations of reality. We theorise about situations as we attempt to formulate explanations that help us to make sense of their fundamental nature. And an effective analysis rests on being able to do this in ways

that take account of rival theories or explanations rather than being committed to a fixed and unshakeable point of view. Organisations are complex and paradoxical phenomena that can be understood in many different ways.

This paper shall be looking at a range of criteria with reference to some of the theories that have been propounded.

2.1. ORGANISATION STRUCTURE INCLUDING HIERARCHY AND ROLES

Max Weber's discussions of bureaucracy and authority have provided present day behavioural scientists with a starting point in their conceptions of organisations as social systems that interact with and are dependent on their environments.

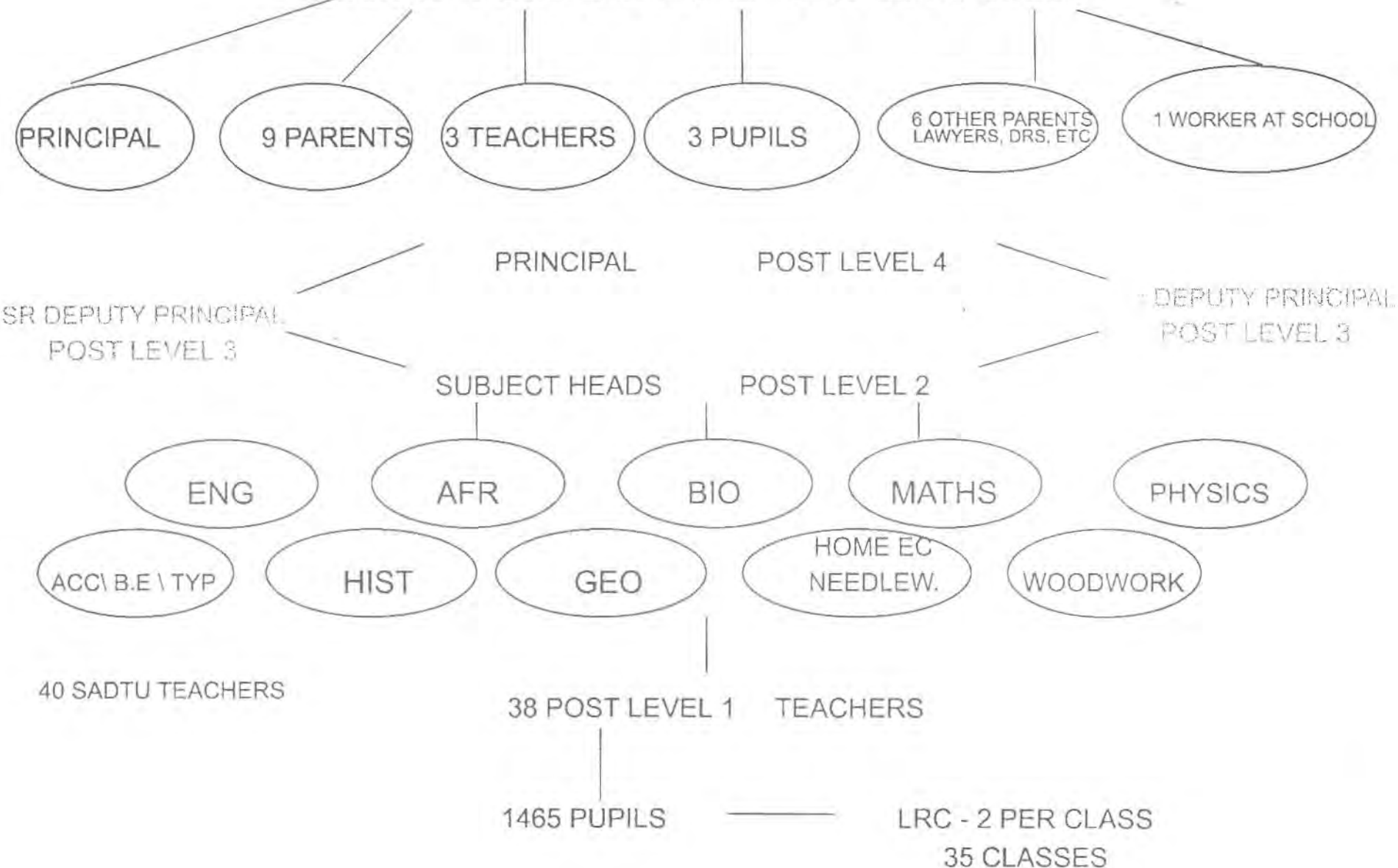
Weber (Hughes, Ribbins and Thomas 1985:5) characterised the structure of organisations in terms of bureaucracy as follows: -

- a. a clear division of labour leading to specialisation;
- b. a hierarchical authority structure, the scope of such authority being specified;
- c. a comprehensive set of rules and regulations to ensure uniformity and continuity in organisational decisions;
- d. impersonal relationships among officials and between officials and clients; and
- e. employment and advancement based on objective criteria.

My institution can be analysed in terms of the above criteria underpinning bureaucracies. Different post levels (see organogram overleaf) characterise the school as a distinct hierarchical structure. Each educator, by virtue of the subject/s he/she has been trained to teach is a specialist in his/her field. This leads to mastery and not a jack of all trades type of labour requirement.

CURRENT ORGANOGRA.A OF THE SCHOOL A. ORGANISATION

GOVERNING COUNCIL



The principal's handbook and various circulars are the documents that have a comprehensive set of rules and regulations that ensure uniformity and continuity in the school's organisational decisions as well as amongst the different schools. The roles played by the different stakeholders as prescribed by the Schools Act 84 of 1996, ensure the smooth functioning of the school.

Since the implementation of this Act the governing body of a school is accorded the status of being the highest decision-making body in the school. The governing body at my school comprises the following personnel as per the Act: -

- two educators at the school;
- one non-educator at the school (clerk);
- the principal, in his official capacity;
- two learners attending the eighth grade or higher; and
- seven parents of learners at my school (one more parent than all the elected members).

When observing this composition one will note that there is representation from all the stakeholders involved in the education system of the school.

The scope of the authority of the governing body is laid out in the Schools Act. The governing body at my school has been responsible thus far for the implementation of the following tasks: -

- determining the admissions of the school;
- adopting a code of conduct for the learners;
- determining times of the school day;
- administering and controlling the school property; and
- recommending to the Head of Department the appointment of educators and non-educator staff.

Weber's point d., that of impersonal relationships between officials and clients on a macro-level viz. between the education department and personnel at school certainly does pertain. When these officials attend school to conduct a duty or dispense advice it is done in a fairly cold, distant manner. They merely attend school to perform their functions and are away.

A lack of clarity and guidelines from the Education Department – on teacher appraisal and evaluation – has served to disillusion my colleagues who do not foresee immediate advancement possibilities. The above statement I make with reference to Weber's point e., which states ...employment and advancement, based on objective criteria....

Relationships, especially amongst my colleagues, are certainly not impersonal. The relationships that are fostered amongst all levels of staff are warm. I feel compelled to cite the following case in point.

Our deputy principal was recently voted out of her acting position as principal of my school by a motion of NO CONFIDENCE, which was passed by the staff as a result of the numerous inconsistencies that she had perpetrated. As a result of this she had alienated herself from the staff and relocated her office to a remote part of the school. But, when she received a message at school that her mother passed away, virtually the whole staff rallied to her assistance thereby indicating that we cared about her in a very personal manner. From this behaviour I concluded that the staff is very professional, in that, they were able to differentiate between a purely personal matter and a business matter.

There is an element of the subjective model by Bush (1986: 71) that bears relevance in this instance is as follows: -

1. They tend to focus on the beliefs and perceptions of individual members of organisations rather than the institutional level or interest groups.
2. Subjective models are concerned with the meanings placed on events by the individual members of organisations.

In my organisation, a selection committee comprising five members of the governing body are now responsible for appointing personnel to vacancies that may arise at my school. This system in itself is severely flawed, as the education department had not presented the selection committee with a document or instrument, which would dictate criteria for assessments and interviews of applicants. This appraisal is highly

subjective as the selection committee at each school is left pretty much to their own devices. This subjectivity is borne out by the following occurrences at most schools in the area. Personnel that were in acting positions in these schools filled virtually all of the vacant principalship posts and deputy principalship posts. A great deal of resentment, bitterness and disappointment was expressed by personnel that applied for these positions who were not members of staff at the schools to which they had applied.

The point that I lamented above was certainly the case at my school. When the deputy principal was voted out of her office as acting principal, a level one teacher, Mr. R Pillay* was appointed after having been the only level one educator to have applied for the position, by the selection committee. The heads of department had not applied, as they were in sympathy with the ousted deputy principal.

* pseudonym

Ten educators were short-listed for the position when it was advertised. The ten educators comprised five members of staff from my school and five externally. After the interviews were conducted most of the applicants made statements to the effect that “ the committee had already made up their minds as to who was to fill the post”. Reasons that they had forwarded were “when asked a question some members of the panel were

not paying attention to my response, “they exhibited an air of diffidence,” interviews were very short and not comprehensive, some of the members of the panel were shuffling papers instead of listening.

Mr. R Pillay was subsequently appointed in a permanent capacity. One of the reasons that was uppermost in the minds of many of us educators at Cray Valley High for this appointment was that should an educator external to the organisation be appointed then a member of staff would have been misplaced, this in accordance with the education department staffing norms and pupil teacher ratio. And the fear is that should a teacher be displaced then who would that person be.

I feel that a suitably qualified educator from outside of my institution would have been better able to fill this post. Cray Valley High requires a principal from outside of the school to restore the culture of teaching and learning as I feel that there isn't a member of staff that is able to conduct same as none are suitably qualified. A person at the helm such as a principal is, ought to have gone through the ranks so that he/she can be properly equipped to lead and manage a school. Ensuing discussion in this paper will indicate why I feel so strongly about this.

The principles underlying Mr. Pillay's appointment is grounded in the ambiguity and subjective models. The major features of the ambiguity model that are prevalent here are:

1. Ambiguity models assume that organisations have a problematic technology in that their processes are not properly understood. Institutions are unclear about how outcomes emerge from their activities.

Whilst our mission statement is the end to which we ought to be working the manner in which this is achieved is fraught with problems. Not everyone understands all of the processes all of the time and this culminates in our poor results.

2. Ambiguity models suggest that organisations be characterised by fragmentation. Institutions are broken down into groups which have internal coherence based on common values and goals. Links between the groups are more tenuous and unpredictable.

The school is composed of subgroups. Common features that characterise these groups could be one or a group of the following, same sex, similar interests similar age range, the length of their stay at the school, same religion or allegiance to a particular of management.

3. Within ambiguity models organisational structure is regarded as problematic. There is uncertainty over the relative power of the different parts of the institution (Bush 1986:110).

Given that there is no job description for the different levels of the school staff members are at odds with what is expected of them. Many of them

have resorted to wrest power from the principal in order to achieve their own ends.

In the subjective model:

When observing the organogram (page 16) of the personnel at Cray Valley High one would note that it is strictly hierarchical. This bureaucratic official structure subscribes to the hierarchical structure as theorised by Max Weber. Organisation charts emphasise vertical professional relationships between and amongst staff. In educational institutions staff are responsible to heads of department who, in turn, are answerable to heads and principals for the activities of their departments. The hierarchy thus represents a means of control over their staff.

However at my school the heads of department are adopting a policy of non-cooperation. This policy reared its ugly head when the new principal took office. Despite reduced workload i.e. they teach for thirty-five out of forty three periods; do not have form classes and earn a level two salary, they do not perform administrative tasks. They have abdicated their responsibilities. They do not supervise the educators in their departments and are concerned only about themselves and their advancement.

Examples to cite would be: 1) The English head of department teaches two of four matric English classes, the other two are taught by two English teachers, but he turns out worksheets only for his classes; 2) I am

teaching standard Afrikaans for the first time and I am not getting much support from the Afrikaans head of department despite repeated requests for same; 3) My record books have not been examined once this year; and 4) I have not had a single classroom visit from any one in management i.e. the heads of department, deputy principal or the principal.

Whilst organisation charts emphasize a vertical hierarchy one might argue that schools are not truly bureaucratic structures. In a bureaucracy there are clear divisions of labour. However, in schools the only distinction is amongst subjects. Given that Outcomes Based Education shall be the teaching approach in the near future there is a further blurring of the line between subjects. Outcomes Based Education stresses integration amongst the subjects which are being categorised into learning areas.

I think that the subjective model can be applied to the organogram of my school in the following manner:

Subjective models treat structure as essentially a product of human interaction rather than something, which is fixed or pre-determined. The organisation charts which are characteristic of formal models are regarded as fictions in that they cannot predict the behaviour of individuals. Subjective theorists reject the view that people have to conform to the structure of organisations. Structure is simply a description of what people do and how they relate; organisation structure is a grossly simplified description of jobs and relationships. A structure cannot be imposed on an organisation; it can only derive from what people do (Bush 1986:91).

Subjective models emphasize the significance of individual purpose and deny the existence of organisational goals. The view that organisations have no existence independent of their members leads on naturally to the assumption that individuals, and not organisations, have objectives (Bush 1986:92).

In subjective theory, because organisations have no corporeal existence apart from the experience members have of them, there can be no 'objectives' for an organisation only objectives for individual members. Furthermore, the nature of organisations as associations of people means that they are at best means to an end; that is they serve purposes, however, are individual purposes – whatever members require the organisation to do in order that something or other may be achieved (Bush 1986:92).

In the five years that I have been at Cray Valley High I have not heard the principal make any reference to the goal of the institution. The institution has simply deteriorated into each of us striving to achieve our personal goals. Neither collectivity nor group coherence is emphasised.

PEOPLE are essential to and responsible for achieving the objectives of the organisation.

The following features of Political models find application here.

1. They tend to focus on group activity rather than the institution as an entity. The emphasis is on the basic unit not the school or college level.
2. Political models are concerned with interests and interest groups. Individuals are thought to have a variety of interests which they pursue within the organisation (Bush 1986:70).

Each person enters the institution with their own set of values and aspirations and would attend to achieve these aspirations before achieving those of the organisation. Further, as this is the case the values of the institution or interest groups may vary from that of the individual.

The more permanent interest groups, such as departments, are cohesive because of the shared values and beliefs. The individuals within such groups have common attitudes towards many of the central issues in schools and colleges. Because these interest groups have different goals and values, institutions tend to be fragmented rather than the united organisations portrayed in formal and democratic models. On particular issues groups may form alliances to press for policies which relate to their joint interests. These coalitions may well be temporary, disbanding when certain objectives have been achieved, while the interest groups often have long-term significance (Bush 1986:70).

The lack of supervision by members of management at my school is but one reason why our public education system has reached an all time low.

Sibusiso Bhengu, National Minister of Education and Vincent Zulu, the

MEC for education in KwaZulu-Natal have repeatedly requested educators to restore the culture of learning and teaching (COLT). This plea has fallen on deaf ears of many of our educators.

Robinson in a nutshell summarised up the purpose of the school (1992:54):

1. The *raison d'être* of a school is to promote its pupils' learning, within a curriculum acceptable to its stakeholders. Schools therefore, are typified as goal-seeking organizations. The institution has an official purpose, which is accepted and pursued by members of the organization.
2. A school organization should meet these ends efficiently and cost-effectively. In such an organization tensions will arise between professional autonomy and managerial control, individuality and hierarchy, structural authority and participative decision-making, the head's dual.
3. Roles of "leading professional" and "chief executive", the educational good of many and the self-interest of the few, high principle and pragmatic expediency – and many other dilemmas that sometimes require a decision, as to the lesser of the two evils, e.g. being cruel in order to be kind.
4. Striking the correct balance in these dilemmas entails difficult judgements, which have to be referred to a set of values outside of and greater than those of the individuals in the organization do.
5. At the highest level of abstraction, such values apply to, and often drive, all successful organizations be they educational or commercial and they act as bridges between the two.

It saddens me that although we as educators recognise that the alpha and omega of our education system is its learners, many of us tend to have only our own interests and not those of the learners at heart. Further, as the majority of us educators are parents we ought to be universal parents, with its concomitant responsibilities. I am annoyed that we treat our learners differently. Many of the educators at my school have children

that attend the privileged ex model C schools and private schools where they report that the education is superior to that at our schools. We ought to remind ourselves time and again that the education of the learner is central to our employment.

Presently there are two major sub-groups at my organisation. The one is that of the level one educators and the principal and the other is that of the heads of department and the deputy principal. These groups have resulted since Mr. Pillay has taken office (as acting principal and his subsequent appointment as principal). The deputy principal does not attend staff meetings while the heads of department do. However, they are not party to decisions made at these meetings as they maintain on silence on all issues. These members of the management of my school decline nominations by members of staff, to sub-committees citing their “heavy” workloads as the reason. Many of us level educators find this reason to be unsound as the heads of department have eight fewer periods than us and are not form-teachers.

At my school the tail is “wagging the dog”. I say this because the level one educators are managing the school. They are performing the administrative tasks that the members of management are to be performing as they are allocated administration periods for it. The level one educators perform these administration tasks often during their

instruction time. The following are some tasks that the level one educators have undertaken. 1) The sub-committee for the internal examinations (standards six to nine) is made up of three level one educators. When the heads of department were nominated to these tasks they declined. I am proud to say that this sub-committee has done a sterling piece of work despite none of them having had any previous experience. 2) The same can be said for the acting deputy principal who is a level one educator, for organising the external examination (matric). To date it has gone on without a hitch. His organisational skills are excellent.

The principal Mr. R. Pillay is considered by many of us (level one educators) to be one of us as he has only recently been appointed to principalship from post level one. He has maintained good relationships with all of us. Moreover he has been at this school for all of nineteen years. I feel strongly that Mr. Pillay should leave his relationship as friend to the staff at the school gate and enter the school bearing the relationship of authoritative professional. Mr. Pillay has not as yet changed his caps. He is allowing these friendships to interfere in his duty as principal. Some examples to substantiate these claims are: - 1) The acting deputy principal had cause to upbraid some members of staff for addressing the principal by his first name; 2) Teachers barge into the office whilst the principal is

in consultation with parents discussing delicate matters; and 3) Recently there was a vociferous disagreement between the acting deputy principal and a teacher regarding the use of a classroom. Whilst it was clear that the acting deputy principal required the room more urgently than the teacher as he needed to prepare the room for the matric examinations, the principal found it difficult to rule in his capacity as principal. He allowed his relationship as friend with both of these teachers to dictate by stating, “It is difficult to make a decision when two friends are involved in a dispute”. Mr. Pillay must extricate himself from this impasse in order that professionalism be maintained at school.

An unwritten policy of non co-operation prevails at my school if the principal or the governing body thrusts unilateral decisions upon us. Earlier this year a group of level one educators informed the acting principal Mr. Pillay that they would boycott the Speech and Awards Ceremony if he went ahead and announced the list of prefects including that of the head prefect and the deputy prefects. A sub-committee drew up the list after having interviewed each applicant. The pupils that had not made the list regarding some of the pupils that had made the list expressed dissatisfaction. The list was made public by being pinned to a notice board at school. One of the reasons that was forwarded was that some of the prefects had committed grave misdemeanors. The educators

concluded that the non-prefects' grievances were legitimate. The acting principal eventually agreed that he would not announce the list at the Speech and Awards Ceremony. He also agreed to appoint an educator to conduct an investigation.

2.2. LEADERSHIP

At my school, Cray Valley High there is an absence of clear leadership. I am of the opinion that "the tail is wagging the dog". My reason for this reference is that the level one educators are performing the tasks of the members of management of the school. When one looks at Schein's Organisational Cultural Theory one observes that the leader initiates the culture of an organisation and ensures that it is built up. At my school this culture is totally lacking. The principal who is our leader does not have the ability to foster a climate of positiveness and to establish an organisational culture in the school.

Many of the problems that are arising have been stemming from the principal's inability to lead the school. He has a laissez faire type of leadership style.

I feel that as a leader he must have a VISION and be VISIBLE. His visibility is not a problem as he walks around the school regularly despite having a spinal injury, which hampers his movement. However, I do question his vision. To assist in this regard I, in my personal capacity have taken it upon myself to draw up the year plan for next year, 1999. This I feel is one of the blueprints according to which our organisation should be run. The necessary sub-committees must be constituted at the beginning of the year and given their brief so that they have sufficient time to see all tasks to completion. Much time at my institution is spent on needless meetings that could certainly be dispensed with if some time is taken at the beginning of the year to put all these structures in place. A factor I consider being essential is to have evaluation meetings. As and when a function/sports event is held a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) ought to ensue. This feedback will serve as motivation as well as provide a means of remedying weaknesses, which will empower incumbents. Sub-committees must be reconstituted from year to year, which should include one member from the previous year to ensure continuity.

The second blueprint ought to be a formally constituted policy regarding all manner of matters at school. Many matters at my school are conducted on an ad hoc basis. The process to draw up a policy document was

instituted but was put on hold when the principalship changed hands. This Important issue of three years ago needs to be urgently revisited.

The third blueprint is that off job profiles for all educator levels. We (level one educators) have taken it upon ourselves to workshop the job profiles when it was derailed by members of management for lack of attendance by them.

There is an absence of leadership at my school. To say that my principal is a leader is a misnomer he is merely a manager. He does not provide us any direction or display any initiative in administering the school. We are merely plodding along, drawing from past experiences. When you approach him about any matter requiring a decision he gives you carte blanche by telling you to use your discretion in deciding. He delegates duties but does not provide us with the requisite knowledge and skills that will empower us to perform the task.

2.3. MISSION STATEMENT

The main task of Cray Valley High is encapsulated in its Mission Statement, which reads thus: -

The staff of Cray Valley High is committed to: -

1. developing in its learners a sense of moral and social responsibility;
2. providing opportunities for its learners to develop their potential to the fullest so that they may realise their ambitions; and
3. working in liaison with the parents and the betterment of the corporate life of the community, and in so doing is committed as professionals to the Teachers' Code of Ethics as laid out by SACE (South African Council of Educators).

I must admit that we (educators at my school) have erred in not including all the stakeholders of our school in the compilation of the Mission Statement. My fear is that it may not be owned by all the stakeholders because of the aforementioned reason.

Contingency theory tries to identify the conditions that are likely to lead to effective management. Basically this theory says that organisations should be different from one another and from part to part. The style of management and the structure of each (e.g. school or college) is CONTINGENT upon what the organisation has as its main task.

Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch made a comparative study of ten industrial organisations during 1967 (Donald and Slocum 1967:33) and constructed a “contingency model” which purported the following: -

The more turbulent and uncertain the environment, the greater the tendency for a high level of performance to be associated with high differentiation among sub-units – committees, subject departments at school – coupled with effective integration achieved by means of shared information, flexible procedures and open decision-making.

Contingency Model is based on the idea that no one way of organising your school can be best in all circumstances. This model suggests that we cannot accept the simplistic view that X causes Y under all conditions. Many variables have to be taken into account, such as the importance of the environment, the way a system is studied (by research) etc...

The structure depends on the problems it has to live with e.g. one dilemma is that it may be better to let staff specialise in the subject (Home Economics, Typing, etc.) so deeply that they achieve mastery over it ... OR do you want a “jack of all trades” who can do any school task? So you can postulate that the departmentalisation of secondary school by subject discipline may contribute to academic excellence but is it effective in developing the whole (“gestalt”) person? Recent moves have tried to alter this scheme by taking special topics across the curriculum. This is also being advocated in the implementation of Outcomes Based Education whereby educators would be required to teach a range of subjects across the curriculum.

At my school educators are encouraged to teach subjects apart from those that they have been trained for. Opportunities to implement it had arisen when temporary teachers were relieved of their positions earlier in 1998. Permanent teachers from within the school were then required to teach

other subjects, as each of us did not have a full load. The ratio of pupils to teacher increased therefore class sizes increased and the services of few teachers were required.

2.4. RELATIONSHIPS

At my school relationships are not cordial and harmonious all of the time. This is true in the main. Relationships and groupings are based chiefly along the lines of sex, common interests, the length of time educators have spent at the school etc.

The early twentieth century saw the development of the Human Relations Movement where Barnard (Hughes et. al., 1985:7) looked at the informal part of organisations as the “aggregate of personal contacts and associated groupings of the people”. Many theorists who are the proponents of these human relations perspectives stress that belief systems and worker relations at institutions influence the success of those organisations. A clear leaning towards the importance of human resources is becoming more significant in organisations in South Africa.

2.5. MEMBER REACTION

My institution is mirroring the uncertain that is prevailing in our country during this unpredictable, transitory period. The personnel at my school are not performing optimally as they are caught up in the uncertainty of whether they have job security or not as teaching positions are in a constant state of flux. A lack of distinctive goal setting by all stakeholders in education and related vision has led to feelings of apathy and frustration which seems to be the reason for this below par performance. Our provincial education departments are in shambles. All personnel - administration staff, educators, management personnel do not have job descriptions. There is no system of appraisal to constantly monitor teachers. Guidance from superintendents and on going service is non-existent. When decisions and urgent matters is requested from departmental officials they are always tardy. Continuity is disrupted as there is a constant turnover of staff at departmental level. There is a lack of clear policy directives and guidelines. This lack is having a negative effective on the professionalism of the personnel at my school.

Some of Bush's political, ambiguity and subjective models find application here.

Political perspectives assume that the goals of organizations are unstable, ambiguous and contested. Individuals, interest groups and coalitions have their own purposes and act towards the achievement of these objectives. Certain groups succeed in establishing their goals as the objectives of the institution while other interests seek to supplant the official purposes with their own objectives (Bush 1986:71).

2.6. POWER

Power may be regarded as the ability to determine the behaviour of others or to decide the outcome of conflict. Where there is disagreement it is likely to be resolved according to the relative resources of power available to the participants.

The 1976 Soweto student uprising has spawned a breed of student that has become increasingly militant. This has subsequently resulted in a group of new teachers that have entered the teaching profession with the same mindset. This is one of the factors that has contributed to the crippling apathy, low morale and general malaise that is all pervasive in our education system presently. This attitude (by no means the only factor) on the part of the students and educators has brought about a

debilitating breakdown in teaching and learning that characterises our education system at present.

This militancy was recently displayed at my school when rioting, toyi – toyiing pupils brought the school to a standstill. The riot police were called in to restore order. Pupils alleged that the then acting principal, our present deputy principal was racist.

From the foregoing then one can see that the personnel of the school wield power.

The concept of power is central to all political theories of organizations. The complex decision-making process is likely to be determined ultimately according to the relative power of the participating individuals and groups. These participants mobilize resources of power, which are deployed in support of their interests and have a significant impact on policy outcomes, as Mangham (Bush 1986:72) demonstrates:

[...] what underpins the decision and produces the action [...] is the direct result of the power and the skill of the proponents and opponents of all the action in question. Decisions and actions within organizations may be seen as the consequence of the pulling and hauling that is politics.

There are many sources of power but in broad terms a distinction can be made between authority and influence. Authority is legitimate power, which is vested in leaders within formal organizations. Authority involves a legal right to make decisions, which may be supported by sanctions. Influence represents an ability to affect outcomes and depends on personal characteristics and expertise.

2.7. DECISION-MAKING

In Cray Valley High decision-making is shared and collective. Many organisational theorists start from the proposition that what is desirable in management is maximum feasible participation. However, political theorists suggest that this view may be misleading. It is wrong to presume that participation and classical democracy are synonymous. Political theorists such as Gaetano Mosca and Robert Michels (Bolman, Lee and Terrence 1984:190) that in every society and organisation an elite must rule, and democracy is mainly involved in the process of selecting the elite. Michels in his famous iron law of oligarchy says that an elite must emerge to take control even of a democracy, as happens in democratic trade unions (Bolman, Lee and Terrence 1984:197).

The reality is that most people are just not interested in participating in everything. And, contrary to the views of many unrealistic social scientists, this is just as it should be. If everyone was involved in all matters that require decisions then negotiation for action would be tremendously time consuming and complicated.

Another curious difficulty of democracy is the tyranny of the majority. Democracy is typically defined as government by the majority, taking into consideration the interests of the minorities. In modern organisations, however, frequently the vociferous members of the majority take over the command of the organisation and may terrorise the minority. Depending on the decisions that have to be made at my school the various persons that have a stake therein participate. We have staff meetings quite often. Often emergency staff meetings are called. On the average emergency staff meetings are called one and a half times per week. These meetings are convened so as to take collective/consulted decisions. There is a dominant group of staff members aided and abetted by the principal who take decisions. Irrespective of the reasons for and consequences thereof these decisions are carried as they are in the majority.

2.8. COMMUNICATION

Communication at my organisation is characterised by openness and transparency. Our previous acting principal was voted out of office because one of the things that she was guilty of was taking bilateral decisions with the chairperson of the governing body. When these decisions were communicated to us (the staff) by her we found that the decisions were conducted in a very autocratic, authoritarian manner. We regularly demanded consultation which was seldom granted. Our present principal has an open door policy.

2.9.CONFLICT

As a result of the open door policy that is fostered conflict is minimised. Whenever there is conflict the principal calls in the respective parties and mediates between them. During a staff meeting a disagreement resulted between two members of staff, the principal called them to order and held discussions with them after the meeting to resolve the issue. The matter was resolved amicably.

Political models (Bush 1986:70) stress the prevalence of conflict in organizations. Interest groups pursue their independent objectives which may be in contrast to the aims of the other elements within the institution and lead to conflict between them. A key aspect of political perspectives

is the view that conflict is a normal feature of organizations. Formal and democratic models have a strong harmony bias where the possibility of disagreement is ignored or assumed away. In contrast, Baldrige et al (Bush 1986:70) regard conflict in educational institutions as both inevitable and welcome:

In a fragmented, dynamic social system, conflict is natural and not necessarily a symptom of breakdown in the academic community. In fact, conflict is a significant factor in promoting healthy organizational change.

2.10 LEVEL OF COMMITMENT

When looking at the level of commitment of the staff of my organisation I am disappointed to note that it is below average.

In my opinion the most dedicated educator at Cray Valley High is The English head of department and the least dedicated is the Humanities head of department. Arguments in support of these statements are as follows:

The English head of department works from the first day to the last, from the minute the pupils enter the class until they leave, works some weekends and some holidays and most importantly, the pupils especially

the matric pupils have been noted to say that he is a GOOD teacher. The Humanities head of department stays absent on average three and a half times per week, comes to school carrying only his lunch, carries no pens as he borrows some from members of staff who complain that he does not return them, does not attend his subject classes, receives and makes phone calls at odd times with regard to the printing business he runs, the whole matric class of 10E pupils of 1997 failed his subject, history, pupils writing the internal examination complained that questions contained in their scripts was not covered in the course of the year, submitted marks for the standard 7D class that he takes for Industrial Arts, that were false as he had not given them any tests, that the form teacher refused to enter in the pupils' progress reports.

I think that the principal performs well below average. Herein, I think lies a major source of the backsliding of my school. In the motivation I submitted for my wanting to read for this Educational Leadership and Management course I stated that good education i.e. teaching and learning begins with good leadership and management. And, according to my reckoning the management personnel at my school ought to shoulder much of the blame for the poor academic performance of most of the pupils.

As the guidance counsellor at my school I am privy to information from pupils. They complain that some teachers give them notes on the board that they must copy or on printed sheets but do not teach them. Instead one of the teachers sits at her table and merely watches over them to ensure discipline. This teacher uses her illness of arthritis as a reason for not standing and teaching during her lessons. Many of the teachers know and have seen her go for ballroom dancing lessons. I myself have seen her at a ballroom dance after having said that she had taken a cortisone injection in her knee that day and had not attended school.

Another teacher writes the notes on the board in very small writing in order that all the notes fit so that she does not have to rewrite the notes each time a different class comes into her classroom. And, whilst the pupils are copying the notes she sits at her table completing work for a B. Com. Degree that she is studying. This same teacher borrowed white chart paper from me at the beginning of the year to cover her textbooks. With hindsight I realise that she was trying to make them look nondescript.

The former teacher has both her children, two boys attending a privileged ex Model C school and the latter teacher's only child, a girl attends a private school where the fees alone cost R20 000 per year.

A male teacher that is regarded as a “one man army” as quoted by a matric pupil. He walks around the school with a stick in his hand attempting to enforce discipline. As and when crises arise, irrespective of what the matter may be or where in the school it might be occurring he is the first to appear on the scene. This suggests that he is rarely in his classroom, which is borne out by the following statement by a matric pupil, “Ma’am whenever we go to his classroom he is not there.

A short while ago I had a free period, as the matrics were busy preparing for their examination. I decided to utilise that period to do extra work with my standard 6D Afrikaans class. The pupils suggested that I use their English period, as they were not doing any work then. When I asked their English teacher, the ousted deputy principal, for the use of that period she said quite sternly that she had work to do. I subsequently asked the pupils whether they had done any work in that period and on pupil replied, “Ma’am we did not do any work, we merely sat and made a noise”. I feel sad that she could waste forty one multiplied by thirty minutes, which amounted to twenty, and a half pupil hours. I could very well have done constructive work with them. She is bitter with the staff and she is allowing this bitterness to affect the pupils’ education.

2.11. MOTIVATION

My experience of the principal using factors to motivate the staff is the following: - 1) Thanking me personally for assistance I volunteered to a teacher who was assisting another teacher compile the reports of the pupils in her form class. This form teacher had to go on emergency accouchement leave. The teacher that I was assisting brought my deed to the attention of the principal. 2) Thanking the internal examination committee for the laudable manner in which they had organised the internal examinations. In the main extrinsic factors such as monetary rewards, tokens of appreciation etc. is what motivates staff.

2.12. CHANGE

In this transitory period that South Africa is finding herself in the changes are far reaching. Education is one of the institutions that has undergone wide-ranging and profound changes. Roles of the various stakeholders in education are being constantly redefined. Once finality is reached stability will ensue.

There are many changes that are occurring in our education system at

present. Examples would be: - 1) the shift of educational management from national control to provincial control, 2) the devolution of power to the school governing body, 3) the admittance of pupils from various cultural backgrounds, 4) curriculum content etc.

There is a need for all the personnel in our education institutions to accept these changes and adapt in order to keep pace with progress. At my institution this change is being met with an “adapt or die” kind of attitude, fortunately it is not being met with resistance.

Umans (1972:39) said that in the totality of planning a school’s development it is possible to fix generalised aims which perhaps it is intended should remain reasonably static, or at least recognizable for the duration of the school lives of all the pupils currently on the roll. Changes will come, but, in general, it is desirable that they should not be so radical as to alter the aims beyond recognition. Educators should plan for orderly, rational, meaningful change.

Umans divides the study of planned change into three major facets. One is the study of the problem of the need for change, a process that includes the gathering of data, the analysis of these data, and the alternatives available as a result of analyzing the data. The second is the anatomy of

change, that is, how one induces changes of attitudes or initiates other means of creating change. The third is how one evaluates change.

Planned change may be called a deliberate and collaborative process of analyzing the problem and involving the change agents (the person or group of people) who are causing the change.

Since the dismantling of apartheid change has been filtering through to every facet of our education system. Apartheid education (Nkomo 1990:2) sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To produce a semi skilled black labour force to minister to the needs of the capitalist economy at the lowest possible cost.
2. To socialise black students so that they can accept the social relations of apartheid as natural.
3. To forge a consciousness and identity accompanied by a sense of “superiority” among whites.
4. To promote the acceptance of racial or ethnic separation as the “natural order of things”.
5. To promote black intellectual underdevelopment by minimizing educational resources for blacks while maximizing them for whites.

Nkomo (1990:2) uses the term “black” to refer to all of the oppressed groups, namely: Africans, coloureds, and Asian/Indians. He goes on to say that the political and social consciousness of the oppressed classes in South Africa produced the self-definition which is descriptive of their desire to unify in the common project of dismantling apartheid. By no means are these classifications employed in the same manner as the racist state.

In his reflections on post-apartheid education Nkomo (1990:304) made

the following suggestions:

Education must be universal (that is, extended to all in urban and rural areas, old and young and to all racial and ethnic groups equally).

The various racially inspired curricula must be discarded.

Serious efforts to immediately improve the quality of black teachers must be undertaken.

Science and mathematics instruction and the necessary programmatic support will have to be implemented.

A massive literacy campaign must be undertaken.

The teacher at the chalkface and the pupil in the classroom are the ultimate change agents in the face of the above-mentioned liberating practices to ensure democracy in education.

The personnel (all the stakeholders) in my school are keen to adopt and embrace these changes to bring about equity for all. An example to cite would be, the staff went on a massive recruitment drive to admit pupils from all racial and ethnic backgrounds to our school. Our school now has a 60% Indian pupil population.

2.13. COMPLIANCE – ON WHAT BASIS DO PEOPLE DO THINGS

In the days of yore it used to be said that teaching was a noble profession. This magnanimity is certainly all but lost when one looks at the growing apathy and general malaise one finds in the teaching corps. Some reasons for the decline in this nobility has previously been mentioned. However, I must stress that this decadence has manifested itself in my organisation and to state that the majority of teachers teach because it is their calling and that they like to is erroneous. I might add that external motivators seem to be what compels educators today.

This external motivating force is akin to McGregor's theory Y of motivation. The motivating factors that guide many of us educators today including those at my school are:

- housing subsidies
- pension contributions by the state
- medical aid benefits
- 7 hour working day
- sick and study leave
- school holidays

The governing body of my school at a public gathering awarded tokens to members of staff who had served the school for ten years and more. The

governing body felt that by these educators having spent this period of time at Cray Valley High they have made a significant contribution not only to the school but also to the community.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The need to become an effective team of teachers is paramount to redeeming the slow but real eradication of discipline at school. As a result of ill discipline by teachers – in the daily preparation and imparting of their knowledge in the different subjects, and pupils – lacking the drive, motivation and the will to succeed academically serious problems are ensuing. Incentive schemes and merit considerations for teachers at my institution are non-existent which leads to decreased performance levels. Teachers are not willing to spend more time at school with the children that are experiencing problems (e.g. learning difficulties etc.) and this ought to change. Parental involvement is minimal and the perception is that the school is the dumping ground for their children.

Most importantly, however, there is a need for an effective at my school. A leader who is professional, efficient, fair and just, skilled and knowledgeable.

Lastly a shared vision and mission for the school has to be collectively and democratically drawn up to take the school through this transitory period that South Africa is finding herself with the wide-ranging changes into the new century.

4. CONCLUSION

Jay Gailbraith in Morgan (1986: 8) stated the following:

Uncertainty requires more information and greater communication and decision-making flexibility... the more difficult it is for organisations to rely on hierarchy, rules and procedures and the more they rely on values and vision ... the need to process information... provide a range of means whereby organisations can help to reduce and cope with uncertainties generated by the environment.

I have painted a bleak picture of my institution but there are role players in my organisation with foresight, energy and knowledge to make my organisation an effective one and successful one.

I sincerely hope that my school, in the not too distant future will make the Sunday Times Top 100 Schools.

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The Use of Organisational Development as a tool to bring about
Effective Change in my School – Cray Valley High*

PROJECT TWO of Three

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* pseudonym

1. INTRODUCTION

“ A teacher and three sixteen year old boys have been arrested after the boys allegedly made hoax bomb threat calls to the police.”

“ Rishad Ismail, 22, a teacher of mathematics at the Dundee Secondary School in northern Kwazulu – Natal, was charged with defeating the ends of justice and being an accessory after he was allegedly given a cellphone for safekeeping by the teenagers while police were searching pupils at the school.”

Prega Govender, Sunday Times, 6 September 1998.

“ Hundreds of children at a Gauteng primary school have had no lessons since January. Teachers sit in the sun while pupils climb through windows or run about aimlessly outside.”

Victor Khupiso and Cornia Pretorius, Sunday Times, 6 September 1998.

“ Busing to disaster, the flight is reaching epic proportions. Panic hovers over the public sector as pupil numbers fluctuate wildly, in tandem with parental neurosis.”

Phillipa Garson, Sunday Times, 6 September 1998.

The above three articles were the only ones on education that appeared in the September 6th issue of the Sunday Times.

These articles express the gloom that is prevailing in our public education system presently.

In a report of the Task Team on Education Management Development in December 1996 (Department of Education, South Africa: p.33) it was emphasised that one of the strategies that South Africa’s education management must embrace would be:

the development of organisations: developing and sustaining effective structures, systems and procedures for improved management

If as an educator one is committed to ensuring the restoration of the culture of learning and teaching in educational institutions one should view the above recommendation as being crucial.

The following quotation by Lindaman and Lippit in Weisbord (1988: 81) illustrates adequately that it is the small projects that are undertaken that contribute greatly to the larger picture of the sustenance and entrenching of change, especially in an educational institution.

On the way to the moon the Apollo astronauts made tiny mid-course corrections that enabled them to land at an exact predetermined spot. The corrections were small, but because the moon was so far away they made a big difference. It is like that with us. Some of the changes we make in society, in our lives or in our organisations seem insignificant, but over the years they can make a major impact.

Implicit in the afore-mentioned observations and comments is the necessity to undertake organisation development (OD) in our institutions.

This project will seek to diagnose the current school milieu and propose how educators can use the principles underpinning OD to bring about effective change in my organisation, Cray Valley High.

In the course of my reading on OD as preparation for this project I have encountered numerous definitions, some early and others more recent. I have found the following definition by Fulan, Miles and Taylor as cited in Schmuck and Runkel (1995:5) to be the most comprehensive.

Organisational development is a coherent; systematically planned, sustained effort at system self-study and improvement, focusing on change in formal and informal procedures, processes, norms or structures, and using behavioural science concepts. The goals of OD include improving both the quality of life of individuals as well as organisational functioning and performance with a direct or indirect focus on educational issues.

This broad definition of OD above embodies different techniques such as:

- * process observation and feedback – observing norms, attitudes and the way members behave in meetings,
- * training – looking at how one can train staff in skills of communication, problem-solving and decision-making,
- * constructive confrontation – uncovering disagreements and conflict and helping members to collaborate and work effectively together,
- * survey-data-feedback – using information (data) gathered from members to analyse the current situation, report back and elicit aspects for effective change (Schmuck and Runkel 1994: 2-5).

This project will utilise the survey-data-feedback technique above. The technique is part of action research. Melanie Walker (Unterhalter 1991: 157) defined action research in the classroom as-

a strategy for teachers to evaluate the extent to which their educational values are implemented in practice. In other words, addressing the quality of curricular experiences in schools. It also assumes that school quality is crucially determined by teacher behaviour.

A simple characterisation of action research, that stresses its importance for managing change, is that “ action research is an intervention in practice to bring about improvement” (Lomax in Bennet, Glatter and Levacic 1994: 156). The action researcher puts the values guiding her choice of action up front. These are addressed in a special kind of research question, a “ How can I improve?” question, which fundamentally affects the relationship between the researcher and her data, and the choice of levels of data appropriate for analysis.

This is very different from social science, with its expectation that the researcher’s values are kept separate from the data and do not influence its collection or interpretation.

Action research is usually a cycle rather than a single intervention, with each intervention evaluated in order to inform the next stage of planning, so that technical change and increased understanding go hand and hand.

The following is Stephen Kemmis’ definition of action research

Action research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situations in order to (a) improve the rationality and justice of their educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations in which the practices are carried out. (Kemmis and Taggart 1982: 177).
177)

Action research is illuminated by five principles. (Lomax 1994: 159)

1. Action research is about seeking improvement by intervention.
2. Action research involves the researcher as the main focus of the research.
3. Action research is participatory and involves others as co-researchers rather than informants.
4. Action research is a rigorous form of enquiry that leads to the generation of theory from practice.
5. Action research needs continuous validation by “educated” witnesses from the context it serves.

My organisation is a public secondary school, Cray Valley High. It is a mainstream school and caters for learners from grades 8 to 12.

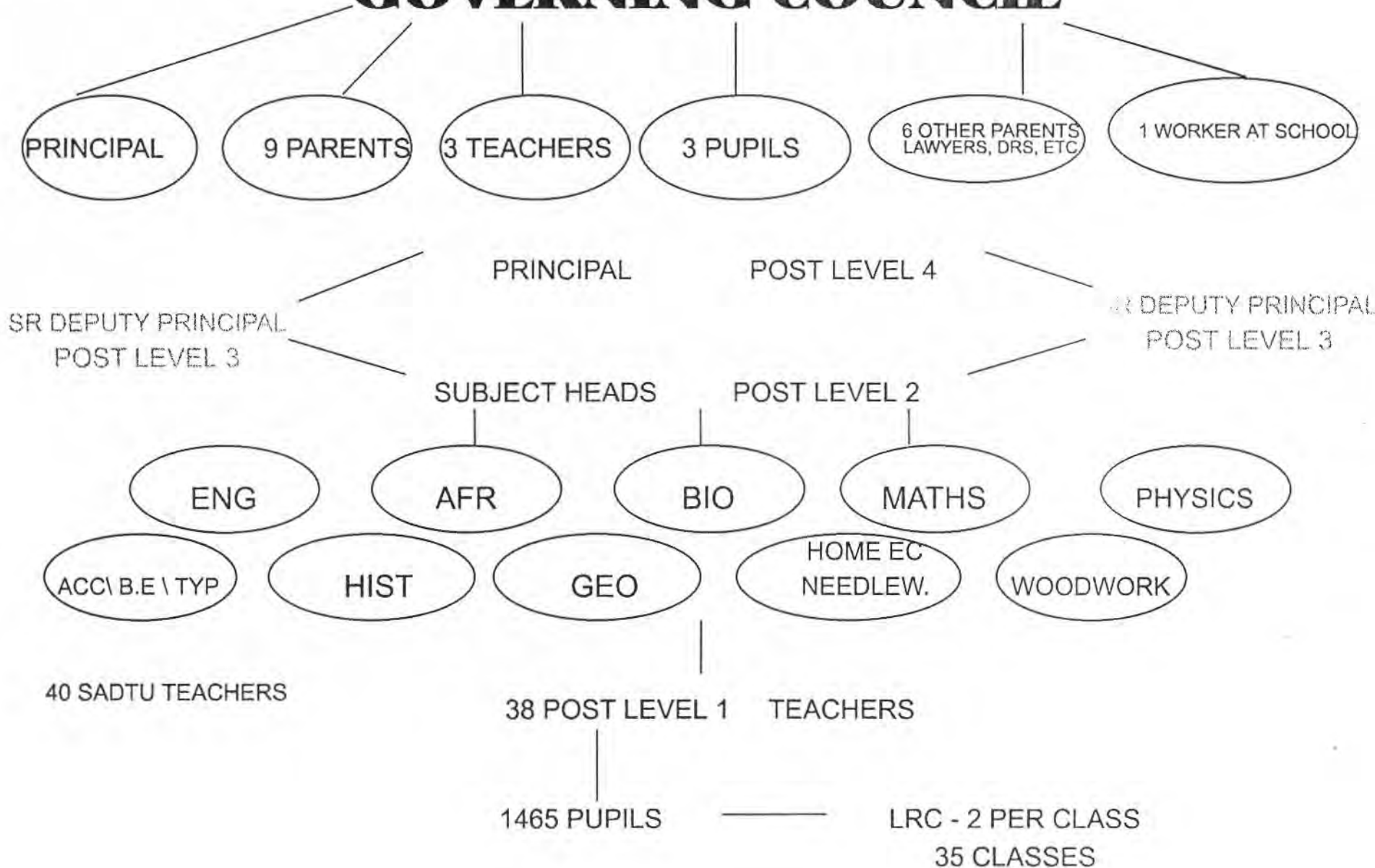
Cray Valley High is a co-educational school with an enrolment of 1465 pupils. It serves the community of Croftdene, which is a unit in Chatsworth, Durban.

I am the guidance counsellor cum home economics teacher (level one).

Overleaf is an organogram of the school.

CURRENT ORGANOGRA M OF THE SCHOOL A₁ ORGANISATION

GOVERNING COUNCIL



3. METHOD

3.1. START UP PHASE AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

For Organisational Development to be implemented an influential person or group of people “acknowledges the problem” (Schmuck and Runkel 1994: 30). I have recognised and realised the need for urgent OD in my institution. This urgency resulted from a situational analysis I had conducted at my school.

I sought permission for conducting an OD diagnosis in my organisation from the principal as he holds crucial gatekeeping power and he could control subsequent contacts with members of staff. Further, I gained his confidence by intimating that as his tenure as principal has only just begun (August 1998) it is essential that a diagnosis of this nature be

conducted so that he would be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the institution. And, he could start from that point on to remedy the weaknesses and build on the strengths. It was certainly helpful that the principal become an ally rather than an enemy. It was vital that I subsequently communicated with the entire staff to seek permission so as not to allow them to believe that they are less important to the OD project than the principal. The staff at my school value democracy, transparency and openness and demand to be consulted on all matters. This project was included on the agenda of a staff meeting held on 21st September 1998. The decision to conduct this OD was a resounding YES.

The dynamics of start-up can arouse intense feelings ranging from suspicion to trust, dissatisfaction to well being, caution to willingness to invest, and reserve to complete openness. Directly acknowledging those feelings is a prime requisite for starting up well.

It is also critical for the OD practitioner to establish rapport, credibility and legitimacy at the outset, and to arrive at clear statements about motives, competencies and shared expectations. I had explained to the staff my role; that of an OD practitioner in the making; the goal of the exercise, i.e. to compile information for a project which would benefit

them and that they could participate in; and, the time and effort required of them.

The following were the fears I had:

- * that members may feel that I'd utilise the information further than the purpose for which it was intended,
- * that the staff may not be truthful/honest, but participate merely for the purpose of my obtaining information for my project,
- * that members would feel that I would not be objective, and
- * that deliberations would not impact to the same extent as if I were a member of management – who were fortunately supportive, some of them were first to submit their completed questionnaires.

As an insider (member of staff) as opposed to an external OD practitioner

I deemed the following to be to my advantage:

- * awareness of the different staff groupings and thus being able to perceive if decisions arrived at are consensual or group based, and
- * awareness of patterns of communication amongst members of staff.

I met with the staff on 28th September 1998 at 14:00. I outlined to the staff what Organisational Development was by projecting the following excerpt from Schmuck and Runkel (1994:67) on an overhead projector transparency.

Handout number 1 for Start-up Demonstration

What is OD?

Organization development (OD) is a planned and sustained effort at system self study and improvement, focusing on change in norms, structures, and procedures, using behavioral science concepts and methods. OD engages system members themselves in the active assessment, diagnosis, and transformation of their own organization.

Organizational development enables the educational system to solve its own educational problems more effectively – by using the consultative strategies of

- training in skills, exercises and procedures
- data collection, feedback, and action planning
- constructive confrontation and problem solving
- process observation and feedback

1. to improve its capabilities to modify its own roles, norms and procedures
2. build more effective communication patterns, group meetings, and joint decision making
3. through systematic group-solving processes.

If there were any uncertainties I allayed them by implementing the following:

- admitting that in the first instance the survey-data-feedback was for the purpose of compiling an assignment,
- assuring the members of staff that all the information is confidential,
- staff would benefit from the exercise by implementing change in those areas that are found wanting, and
- given the bad publicity that our school is getting from pupils and their parents in our feeder schools and should the survey reveal inconsistencies, then we need to implement problem solving strategies.

I provided the following explanation as per Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 29) on survey-data-feedback to the staff. I wrote out an overhead transparency.

In survey-data-feedback, information is collected systematically through questionnaires, interviews and observations and then reported back to appropriate work groups as a basis for diagnosis, problem solving, and planning. Three aspects of survey-data-feedback are central to its success. First, the OD practitioner must

be adept at collecting data and at putting the data into a feedback form that will be understandable and energizing to the participants. Second, the practitioner must strive to show essential significance in mundane data to capture participants' interest. Third, the practitioner must find ways of incorporating data feedback into the ebb and flow of larger OD designs.

A teacher, Mr. J. Pillay* suggested we commence the survey-data-feedback when we return to school the next term. The reason was that, at the time of the information imparting meeting we were going into a holiday.

I emphasised their role and their power i.e. it was within their control to participate in and choose whether to act on the survey-data-feedback.

I completed an oral agreement with the staff which went thus:

1. Members of staff would have to complete a questionnaire and to return same within two weeks of their receiving the questionnaire.
2. I would then take a further two weeks to collate and compile the information and provide feedback.
3. A meeting date for the feedback was decided for the 3rd of November 1998.

4. A teacher on staff, Mrs. K. Naidoo* deemed the feedback meeting to be an important exercise and requested that all the educators be present.

Given that I assured the staff that the information they provided in the questionnaire was to be confidential I felt that there was no need for an OD team. I decided to undertake the collation of the data on my own.

I then proceeded to draw up a questionnaire for the educators at my school. I felt that the educators at my school would be responsible for changing and developing the organisation which is why the questionnaire was designed for them. Garth Carelse (M.Ed. student at Rhodes University) assisted me with the drawing up of the questionnaire. The use of questionnaires was the best method of ascertaining information from the educators as they were under pressure preparing for their individual final examinations as well as for the school pupils' examination. Whilst a workshop is the method I would have preferred to hand out and explain the questionnaire, time was not permitting.

Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 29) stated that

In survey-data-feedback, information is collected systematically through questionnaires, interviews, and observations and then reported back to appropriate work groups as a basis for diagnosis, problem solving and planning.

3.2. DESIGNING THE SELF-COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRE

An ideal questionnaire possesses the same properties as a good law:

It is clear, unambiguous and uniformly workable. Its design must minimize potential errors from respondents ... and coders. And since people's participation in surveys is voluntary, a questionnaire has to help in engaging their interest, encouraging their co-operation, and eliciting answers as close as possible to the truth (Davidson 1970: 93).

Some points I had to bear in mind were:

- * The appearance of the questionnaire is important, it must look easy and attractive. A compressed layout is uninviting; a larger questionnaire with plenty of space for questions and answers is more encouraging to respondents.
- * Clarity of wording and simplicity of design are essential. Clear instructions should guide respondents – “put a tick,” for e.g. invites participation, whereas complicated instructions and complex procedures intimidate respondents.
- * Arrange the contents of the questionnaire in such a manner so as to maximise co-operation. For example, include questions that

are likely to be of general interest. Intersperse attitude questions throughout the schedule to allow respondents to air their views rather than merely to describe their behaviour (Cohen and Mannion (1994: 96).

Finally, a brief note at the end of the questionnaire can: ask respondents to check that no answer has been inadvertently missed out; solicit an early return of the completed schedule; thank respondents for their participation, and offer to send a short abstract of the major findings when the analysis is completed (Cohen and Mannion 1994: 97).

The questions in the questionnaire ranged from rigidly standardised, in which both the questions and the alternative responses permitted the subject are predetermined, to the completely unstructured, in which neither the questions asked nor the responses permitted the subject are predetermined.

In the standardised questionnaire, questions are presented with exactly the same wording, and in the same order, to all respondents. The reason for standardisation, of course, is to ensure that all respondents are replying to the same question. Differences in question order can also influence the meaning and implications of a given question.

In the questionnaire I had included fixed-alternative (or closed) questions in which the responses are limited to the stated alternatives. These alternatives in most instances are simply yes or no, and in others they consisted of replies like; always, sometimes or never, of which the respondents pick the one closest to their own position.

Fixed-alternative questions have the advantages of being simple to administer and relatively easy to analyse. The pre-coded responses can be simply tabulated.

The closed question may require the respondents themselves to make judgements about their attitudes rather than leaving this up to the coder. One of the major drawbacks of the closed question is that it may force a statement of opinion on an issue about which the respondent does not have any opinion. Many individuals have no clearly formulated or crystallised opinions about many issues, this important characteristic is not likely to be revealed by a closed question. In the closed question, the reply is taken at face value. The closed question has the advantage of focusing the respondent's attention on the dimension of the problem in which the researcher is interested.

I also included “open-ended” questions which are designed to permit a free response rather than one limited to stated alternatives. The distinguishing characteristic of open-ended questions is that they merely raise an issue but do not provide or suggest any structure for the respondent’s reply; the respondents are given the opportunity to respond in their own terms and in their own frames of reference. The analysis of responses to open-ended questions is often difficult and expensive, and is more complex and often troublesome.

When using questionnaires, collect some data that can easily be quantified and other data that can render quotable phrases (see last sentence of ‘Teacher Feedback’ page). Though many educators prefer numbers, many are captivated, too by the catchy phrases of their colleagues (Schmuck and Runkel 1994: 366).

The questions (see attached questionnaire) accentuate a vast array of pertinent issues that have a bearing on the ethos of my organisation. Whilst confining myself to a specific area would have been small as it would have been easier to analyse. I attempted to make a detailed overall impression of my school so as to move forward to a better of the school. Oral feedback from the teachers who completed the questionnaire saw the need to candidly expose the strengths and weaknesses of my organisation so as to bring about lasting, effective and fulfilling change.

The questionnaire reflects questions on:

- A. Current Situation – questions that elicit reactions on the present school climate.

- B. Road to the Future – questions on strategies or ways that educators would use to improve/change our institution.

- C. Future of Cray Valley High – questions that reflect the perception that the educators have of our school into the next millennium.

I handed a questionnaire to the principal, Mr. R. Pillay* for perusal. I then handed the questionnaires personally to thirty-three of the thirty-four members of staff. I had not handed a questionnaire to the deputy principal, as she does not acknowledge many of us including me in any encounter e.g. passing her in the corridor. She was voted out of her position as acting principal when the staff moved a motion of “no confidence” in her. She had perpetrated numerous inconsistencies. One of which was, in October of 1997 rioting, toyi-toying pupils brought the school to a standstill. They had alleged that the acting principal was a racist. Another allegation was that she is terribly vindictive. If ever you

had crossed swords with her she becomes vengeful. And, further, she tends to be sectarian. Based mainly on the last point I did not hand her a questionnaire. As seeing that I was not a member of her camp she would not have filled it in.

A male, level one teacher returned the questionnaire to me as he chose not to answer it. He stated that the answers that were required of him were of a personal nature and he was not comfortable with that.

A female, level one teacher who is at the school for nineteen years asked whether she was required to be honest. I emphasised that that was essential.

She then remarked that she had a lot to write. I secretly received much joy from that remark because seeing that she is at the school for almost two decades she would have amassed a fount of information regarding Cray Valley High and I certainly wanted to be privy to that.

Many of the educators remarked that filling in the questionnaire was like writing an examination. I felt really pleased by that statement as I realised that I had provoked them into thinking carefully about the answers. Further although the questionnaire was a time taking exercise the educators saw it fit to fill it in. Some educators remarked that that an

exercise such as this was long overdue and much needed by our institution. Seven of my close friends wrote such comprehensive answers that they wrote on the flip side of each page. My thoughts are that they trusted me sufficiently to share such personal detail and also that they wanted to see me complete my degree.

Of the thirty-two questionnaires that were handed out I received eighteen that were completed. I was pleased to note that as many as fifty six percent were painstakingly filled in. One person filled in the questionnaire very sketchily and answered mainly the YES/NO questions. I was tempted to discard that questionnaire as I felt that the person participated merely for the sake of participating and was not sincere and consequently the answers were not well thought out.

Questionnaires were returned in a piecemeal manner up to three weeks later. I was grateful, however that 56% of the questionnaires were returned. This percentage return is not atypical for this method of data collection

(Cohen and Mannion 1992: 86).

3.3. PLANNING THE DIAGNOSIS

This step of diagnosis is crucial, as knowledge of group laws is insufficient for the resolution of a social problem. One must supplement this knowledge with knowledge of the “specific character of the situation”, which one gains through a process of “scientific fact finding called diagnosis” Lewin (1948: 24). The characteristic that defines this step of action research is that it is collaborative.

Trist and Banforth in French, Bell and Zawacki (1994: 68) postulated that an organisation is composed of a social system and a technical system, and, these must be jointly optimised for best results. They called this Sociotechnical Systems Theory.

Research by Schmuck and Runkel (1994:68) indicates that the facilitators and an OD planning committee in an educational system carry out the most effective organisational diagnoses. The facilitator, whether an insider or an outsider, serves as a technical assistant to this committee, brings to it examples of questionnaires, interview formats and observation.

The purposes of the OD diagnosis are several. First, OD theory stipulates that making a diagnosis of one's own situation increases feelings of ownership of the data and enhances one's motivation to seek change. This is the central idea behind most "needs assessments" in education. Those who participate in defining their own needs will work harder to seek new ways of satisfying those needs. But in OD a second purpose of diagnosis is as important and central as the first to uncover data throughout the target system that will permit colleagues to enlighten one another about their diverse and often contrasting views of the social situation. It is easy for people in power to believe that all is going well in an educational system, particularly if most participants collude to keep quiet about their perceptions and feelings that typically are not brought out into the open. The third purpose of diagnosis is to help build a workable agenda for system-wide problem solving. Most educational organisations, including schools and colleges, have a myriad of organisational problems related to communications, goals, meetings, decision-making and the like. A diagnosis can help rank the problems, according to both importance and feasibility to change. After a diagnostic exercise in a target system, the staff should feel motivated to work on very specific targets of change. Moreover, the inspiration of the initiators of the effort should have started to spread to others in the system (Schmuck and Runkel 1994: 70).

3.4. PROCESSING SURVEY DATA

My task was then to reduce the mass of data that I have obtained to a form suitable for analysis. “Data reduction”, as the process is called, generally consists of coding data in preparation for analysis – by hand in the case of small surveys; by computers when numbers are larger. First, however, prior to coding, the questionnaires have to be checked. This task is referred to as “editing” (Cohen and Mannion 1994: 101).

EDITING

Editing self-completion questionnaires is intended to identify and eliminate errors made by the respondents. Moser and Kalton (1997: 143) point to three central tasks in editing.

1. **Completeness:** a check is made that there is an answer to every question. Missing answers can sometimes be cross-checked from other sections of the survey. At worst, respondents can be contacted again to supply the missing information. I, however, was unable to contact respondents for missing answers as the questionnaires required anonymity.
2. **Accuracy:** as far as possible a check is made that all questions are answered accurately. Inaccuracies arise out of carelessness on the part

of the respondents. A tick in the wrong box, a ring around the wrong code, an error in simple arithmetic – all can reduce the validity of the data unless they are picked up in the editing process. I must confess that I had not given an instruction regarding the ticking or making a cross on the

YES/NO response. The respondents assumed that responsibility.

3. Uniformity : a check is made that respondents have interpreted instructions and questions uniformly.

CODING

The primary task of data reduction is coding, that is, assigning a code number to each answer to a survey question. Of course, not all answers to survey questions can be reduced to code numbers. Many open-ended questions, for example, are not reducible this way for computer coding. Coding can be built into the construction of the questionnaire itself. In this case the answers are pre-coded. Where coding is developed after the questionnaire has been administered and answered by respondents the answers are post-coded. Pre-coding is appropriate for close-ended questions such as the YES/NO responses in my questionnaire. For open-

ended questions a coding frame has to be devised after the completion of the questionnaire.

3.5. THE NEXT STEP

In the solving of problems or, for a more comprehensive Survey Data Feedback design the group will move on to developing a macro-design.

Fred Fosmire and John Wallen (Schmuck and Runkel 1994: 229) laid out steps for systematic problem solving that depicted "... a problem as the gap between the unsatisfactory present situation (S) and the more desirable goal and target (T) ... we find a path (P) from S to T. My questionnaire thus mirrors a correlation between each of these steps viz. A Current Situation (S), B Road to the Future (P) and C The Future of Cray Valley High (T).

I used questions to gather data/information on areas in my organisation that need change and improvement.

These areas are:

A. Current Situation

- the type of academic institution our school is,
- staff relations on both social and work related levels,
- respect for one another,
- effective communication,

- conflictual problems at school,
- work ethic by teachers and pupils,
- parental involvement,
- decision-making processes, and
- the kind-or-not of vision all role players have for the school (situation areas).

B. Road to the Future

- ways or strategies that the staff will implement to improve or change our school (path needed to change the status quo), and

C. Cray Valley Tomorrow

- Perception or impression that the stakeholders have for our school eventually (target area).

ANALYSIS OF FEEDBACK

1. BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

- 1.1. seven male respondents
- 1.2. eleven female respondents
- 1.3. duration of time spent at Cray Valley High

AVERAGE	6 years and 10 months
MEDIAN	4 years
MODE	4 years

2. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

	YES	NO	UNCERTAIN
2.1. Is school good academically?	2	15	1
2.2. Does staff relate well?	2	16	
2.3.1. Does staff form part of subgroups?	17	1	
2.3.2. Is this a good phenomenon?	17	1	
2.4. Do we respect one another?	16	2	
2.5. Is communication effective?	9	9	
2.6. Does conflict occur readily?	11	7	
2.7. Does everyone want power?	10	8	
2.8. Is our school management and administration: -			
Democratic	3		
Autocratic	-		
Laissez faire	15		

	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
2.10. How effectively do we work with our parents?		15	3
2.11.1. Are decisions arrived at by consensus	8	10	
2.11.2. Do we carry out these decisions?		15	3

	YES	NO
2.12.1. Does our school have a vision?	2	16
2.12.3.1. Can a vision – by all stakeholders – create a better learning and teaching environment?	18	

2.12.4. When can we realise this dream?

2 years	10
5 years	5
10 years	1
NEVER (category included by respondents)	2

From the above table, the following deductions can be made: -

- our school is seen predominantly to be a poor academic institution– 83%

*Of the two teachers that noted that the school is good academically, one teacher is at the school for four months and the other teacher is at the school for eighteen years. The latter person is the person that answered the questionnaire sketchily.

- staff do not seem to relate well to each other and they form sub-groups and cliques – 88%
*Of the two educators that feel otherwise, one teacher is at school for four months and the other four years
- the formation of sub-groups and cliques is viewed as not being a good phenomenon – 94%
- the majority of my colleagues (88%) acknowledge the respect we have for each other
- the educators are divided (50%) about the effectiveness of communication amongst staff members
- 61% of the educators are in agreement that conflict occurs readily
- responses on who has power in our school were as diverse as – parents, governing body executive committee, the principal and a few individuals
27%, the highest response, believe that the principal has the power
- 83% of the respondents indicated that our school has a laissez-faire type of management style
- 83% are of the view that we work effectively, sometimes, with our parents
- 55% agree that decisions are arrived at by consensus, sometimes, and
44% feel that they are arrived at always
- * 83% believe decisions are carried out, some of the time
- 91% believe that the school does not have a vision

- 100% believe that a vision can create a culture of teaching and learning
- there is hope yet, as 28% believe that this dream of a better learning and teaching environment can be achieved in 5 years and the majority believe that this can be achieved in 2 years

*not for consumption by staff at feedback meeting, this has been merely my observation and I did not want the staff to feel that I was becoming personal

3. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

A. Current Situation (S)

- a culture of non-learning and non-teaching is prevalent
- management and staff are not working in harmony
- communication skills amongst the rank and file are poor
- there is ineffective leadership
- all levels of the teaching corps lack accountability
- there is a lack of knowledge by members in all spheres e.g. meeting procedure, protocol
- the lack of professionalism is rife
- there is no teamwork
- important decisions although consensual are not carried out

- there are unequal power relations
- parents are alienated from school
- there is no vision

B. Road to the Future (P)

- create a vision, set goals, have a year plan, a detailed term plan
- bring about harmony and unity
- involve parents and community
- shift focus from sporting activities to academic activities –
 - monitor homework and assignments closely
 - provide extra classes for weaker pupils
 - initiate a commitment to improved matric results
 - reintroduce teacher supervision by management
 - prepare tests for grades 8 to 11 that simulate matric examinations
 - curb pupil absenteeism
- minimise teacher absenteeism and leave-taking
- find our enthusiasm and discipline again
- clean up the school

- emphasise professionalism
- effective management by principal

C. Future of Cray Valley (T)

- Cray Valley has educators that are excellent visionaries, people who are able to pinpoint weaknesses and provide remediation therefore.
- It is sad that this would have to be realised by “changing the management”, “getting a good leader”.
- The dream of a better Cray Valley can be realised in two years according to 55% of the respondents and five years according to 28% of the respondents.

Some comments I would like to share (not for consumption by staff) regarding the principal, are as follows: -

- “ The principal has the power but is not using it effectively or should
I say not using it (PERIOD!).”

- “At Cray Valley the electricity is in the office but the power is in the change room.” (reference to the physical education teacher who is the principal’s staunchest ally)
- “ Some educators believe that their primary job at school is to protect the prince-pal, NOT to teach”.
- “ Prince-a-pal returns the protection/favouritism to pals.”
- “ The principal must be taught principles.”

3.7. FEEDBACK MEETING

My task at this stage then was to lead a staff discussion regarding my findings in the survey data. This was concluded on 3 of November 1998.

1. I wrote the statistics of the biographical data on the board.

I made reference to the imbalance in the gender response. A greater percentage of females than males responded. I would love to have

alluded to the hunch I had that the principal has a bunch of “merry men” who seem hell bent on protecting the principal and thus their jobs when educators are to be declared in excess early in 1999. Actually this hunch was borne out as the principal rigged statistics in favour of these male educators. Fortunately this sorry state of affairs was brought to order by some of us eagle eyed female educators.

The average time spent at Cray Valley High by each of the educators was 6 years and 10 months. The median as well as the mode was four years. I felt that the educators were sufficiently qualified experientially to answer the questions with any degree of authority. This was certainly an advantage.

2. I projected the table of the quantitative data on an overhead transparency.

I spoke to each point by outlining the conclusion I had arrived at regarding each statistic as mentioned in page 23.

I must admit that I was apprehensive as this was a daunting task. Daunting because here I am, a relative lightweight (level one educator)

outlining to senior teachers and levels two, three and four educators, what is seen to be the weaknesses at Cray Valley. I staved off the rotten tomato throwing and the raw egg pelting by avoiding the controversial issues which I had indicated by means of an asterisk (*) in my project.

3. I presented the qualitative data by finding similar remarks in answers to particular questions. “ Using techniques such as patterning (looking for anything that occurs more than once); looking for the unexpected; triangulating data” (Mathison in Unterhalter 1991: 162), is what I used to make sense of the data gathered from the educators. This information I then wrote on transparencies and projected as a basis to initiate further discussion, argument, debate and resolution of the problem (S) that beset our organisation.

3.8. PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Most of the teachers found the exercise an extremely useful tool in initiating debate and discussion on ways and means to improving our school.

The following decisions (P) have been taken to remedy (T) the shortcomings (S) that our school is faced with.

1. A colleague suggested that an OD team be established. This was well received by the staff who promptly elected a team of four educators (all level one) to be co-ordinated by myself.
2. This team was then tasked to draw a comprehensive questionnaire that every member of the staff was required to complete. This was imperative so as to get a true reflection of the status quo of the school.

The OD team is then required to collate the information and provide feedback. The staff would then take further steps to remediate shortfalls and weaknesses.

This team expressed the confidence that they felt empowered to see this OD project through to completion.

At this stage I felt all the fears that I had earlier dissipate.

2. Mr. John Pillay, the acting deputy principal volunteered to draw up a year plan for 1999 and a detailed year plan for each term. I felt compelled to volunteer my services here as well.
3. The principal acknowledged that is finding difficulty in his job, as his promotion from post level one to post level four did not equip adequately with skills to manage and lead the school. He appealed for co-operation from all members of staff.
4. Finally, I do hope the reservation I have is purely pessimism. I concluded feeling that there were silent voices that could have made significant contributions e.g. the heads of department.

4. SELF ASSESSMENT

The following were some of my shortcomings:

1. Overlapping questions in the questionnaire.
2. Looking at too vast an array of issues and not homing in on specifics e.g. subject meeting procedures, principal-teacher relationships, decision-making etc.

3. Not having drawn up questionnaires for the other stakeholders (pupils, parents, members of the governing body) in my school.

5. OD POSSIBILITIES

Melanie Walker (Unterhalter et. al. 1991: 169) stated that:

... developing democratic schooling requires of teachers that they think about the assumptions and values on which their work rests... need to develop into autonomous decision-makers who are organised within democratic educational and social structures.

Self-reflection or introspection of the different role players at my institution will become a very lengthy and painful process. What is heartening is that I have detected a willingness on the part of my colleagues to tread the pathway that will bring about the change we all desire. Organisation development opens up many doors. The analysing of organisations can become a valuable strategy for change if implemented properly in any organisation. Interaction amongst the educators in my organisation has become priority and they have given the go-ahead to have follow-up meetings to “institutionalise OD by establishing procedures, roles and structures to maintain the metaskills necessary for organisational adaptability” (Schmuck and Runkel 1994: 36).

6. CONCLUSION

Critical analysis of our organisation can hopefully lead to “Building trust and partnership in classrooms which may impact positively on wider political relations between students and teachers, making possible collaborative political struggle in school and the wider community” (Walker in Unterhalter et. al. 1991: 163).

The tenets of OD may as well have a very constructive impact on the overall functioning of our school. Ownership of the process has to be a part of every single stakeholder of our institution.

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The Characteristics of a Perceived Good Leader

PROJECT THREE of Three

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1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a topic I had studied in my Master of Educational Leadership and Management coursework. I want to draw a correlation between the research that has been conducted and concluded on the characteristics of a good leader with what some of my colleagues have perceived to be good leaders. I shall be researching the characteristics that these educational leaders portray and drawing parallels with that which has been found in research.

I want someday soon to be an educational leader. I feel that my assimilation of what scientific research has revealed regarding the characteristics of a good leader and my exposure to educational leaders, albeit in a vicarious manner will equip me to a certain extent for the daunting task of educational leadership.

A principal occupies a leadership position. Obviously, school organisations contain individuals, who are not in formal positions of authority, yet who possess and wield influence and power.

Conversely, some individuals who occupy leadership positions do not always exercise their power and influence, and others exist in schools who exercise leadership in one position or situation but not in others.

At the outset I find it imperative to attempt to define some of the terms that I shall be using.

1.1. LEADERSHIP

Finding one definition to illustrate the concept leadership is extremely difficult, as there are as many definitions as there are people who define the term.

Leadership is the human factor that leads an institution toward realising definitive objectives through the co-operative and voluntary effort of all the people in the enterprise. An enterprise often succeeds or fails due to the presence of good leadership (Kruger 1990:387). I find this to be a very instrumental definition.

Some people regard good leadership as synonymous with popularity while others identify it as aggressive and enthusiastic action. The fundamental characteristics of leadership are to bring people to work together effectively as a team, to inspire their loyalty towards the group and generally bringing them to make a meaningful contribution to achievement of objectives (Reynders 1977:47).

Leadership is the process by which a particular person, the leader, influences a group of people (subordinates) in such a manner that they will subsequently be willing to strive to achieve the objectives that the leader presents them with (Bester 1976:47). From this definition it is obvious that the leader should have a special ability to influence the behaviour of subordinates, she usually obtains their co-operation without coercion. The interaction between the leader and the group, as well as the situation is emphasised throughout.

Burns (1978:56) in commenting on different definitions of leadership stated the following:

Some define leadership as leaders making followers do what followers would not otherwise do, or as leaders making followers do what the leaders want them to do. I define leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values

and the motivation – the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations of both leaders and followers ... Leadership, unlike naked power-wielding, is thus inseparable from followers needs and goals.

Whilst in the context of this project I am primarily concerned with leaders and leadership I feel compelled to note definitions of

manager/administrator so as to draw a distinction between the two.

Further, the latter two terms cropped up repeatedly in the interviews I had conducted.

1.2. MANAGER/ADMINISTRATOR

Brown (1965:39) defines a manager as: “A member who has subordinate to him authorised roles into which he can appoint members and determine their work: he is accountable for his subordinates’ work in these roles.”

Coventry (1970:68) prefers a more sweeping definition: “A manager is one who is responsible for getting things done through other people, instead of doing the job himself ... with stated objectives to achieve, i.e. to produce certain goods or services, he directs human activities, with the help of the other resources available, towards these ends.”

1.3. EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership in education/schools will here refer to the facilitation of learning, the capacity to enable, empower or help those in schools to take charge of their lives, “to frame problems and to discuss and work individually and collectively to understand and change the situation that caused those problems” (Codd in Smyth 1989:159).

1.4. PRINCIPAL

The former Department of Education and Training Guide for Principals of schools (1986) views principals as heads of schools whose main responsibilities are the management of physical and personnel resources and the leadership of staff and pupils.

1.5. HISTORY OF LEADERSHIP

It would be remiss of me not to include in a project of this nature a history of the work undertaken on leadership in the express hope of attempting to define it.

I hereby present a summary of the exhaustive work that has been carried out over the ages.

Leadership is an important topic in the literature of educational administration. Definitions of leadership vary widely, as do the approaches taken to its study. Originally, research centered on identifying the traits that leaders commonly exhibit, but the emphasis was replaced by concern for the importance of specific properties of the situation to explain leaders' behaviour. Today both leader traits and situational variables are recognised as important in explaining leadership.

Studies to determine the basic dimensions of leadership behaviour generally identify two distinct categories – concern for the task and concern for individuals and interpersonal relations. Leadership studies of school administrators suggest that the most effective are those that score high on measures of initiating structure (organisational ability) and consideration (ability to relate to subordinates). Leadership studies performed at the Michigan Survey Research Center and at the Laboratory of Social Relations at Harvard (Hoy and Miskell 1987: 308), using somewhat different approaches, revealed results remarkably consistent with those at Ohio State.

For a fuller understanding of what makes leaders effective, contingency models that examine the link between personal traits and situational variables must be evaluated. Fiedler's model of leadership effectiveness explores the relationship between leadership style and situational variables such as position power, task structure, and leader-member relations. Research studies in public schools provide evidence to support Fiedler's theory; effectiveness of elementary schools was found to be contingent on the leadership style of the principal and the favourableness of the situation. House's path-goal model focuses not on leadership style defined in terms of leader traits, but on leader behaviour. Like Fiedler, House also looks at situational factors that affect leader effectiveness but he defines effectiveness not in terms of task accomplishment but in terms of subordinates' psychological states. For the further study of educational leadership, both of these contingency approaches need to be supplemented by consideration of a number of other variables.

In addition to formal models of leadership, study of the concept has been advanced by results emerging from management development programmes. Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid and Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Theory offer insights that are consistent with the Ohio State studies, though both need further testing in the school setting (Hoy and Miskell 1987: 308).

Finally, leadership is cultural and symbolic as well as instrumental and behavioural. Successful leaders infuse value in organisations, thereby creating institutional meaning and purpose that go beyond the technical requirement of the job. The institutional leader is responsible for articulating the mission of the organisation, shaping its culture, and protecting and maintaining its integrity (Hoy and Miskell 1987:309).

2. LEADERSHIP STYLES

James McGregor Burns in his Pulitzer Prize winning book, Leadership Introduces a distinction in his analysis of leadership. Burns (1979: Ch 8) distinguishes between action that he calls “transactional” and action that he calls “transforming”. In both instances the action is rooted in values.

Transactional leadership normally takes place between individuals and is guided by values that regulate, order, guide the transaction between them. These are “modal” values; those values governing the means someone employs to achieve a given end. These modal values include such values as honesty, fairness, loyalty and patience.

Transforming leadership involves considerations that go beyond individual interests to the goal of the group or the larger collectivity, and is guided by other values which Burns (1979:70) calls “end” values.

Those values include those larger purposes to be served by the action of the parties involved, values such as justice, community, freedom, equality, and the rule of law. In transforming action, people are called to rise above self-interest and the often petty grievances engendered by self-interest to pursue those larger social ends, which justify the social organism in the first place.

3. RESEARCH TRADITION, METHOD AND TECHNIQUE

My project topic “The characteristics of a perceived good leader” smacks immediately of the need to employ a non-positivist research paradigm.

The following excerpt from Kempner (1991: 121) explains why this is so.

To gain this understanding and self-awareness of our research, we must begin by understanding first that the approaches to educational research are multidimensional and cannot be explained by simple, linear concepts. How knowledge is socially constructed and the multidimensionality of this process should be the focal point of concern researchers. As human beings we are not dispassionate in what we observe or measure, whether the techniques are qualitative or quantitative. Similarly, the disciplinary matrix in which scientists

operate composes their culture and what is the appropriate knowledge, language, and behaviour for members of their scientific community. What scientists and the societies in which they live depends not only upon how knowledge is produced but also upon the social and cultural context in which this knowledge is constructed. The theories that guide scientists are human interpretations of the world, and not some inherent truth. It is the context or culture of the society that defines how individuals perceive the world and what is accepted as appropriate behavior and knowledge.

I have interviewed three colleagues: Jason Pillay*, Kimeshnee Naidoo* and Kim Pather* on principals Sugen Govindsamy*, Rajesh Maharaj* and Shirley Govender* respectively that they believe to be good leaders. The interview format I had used was unstructured. Implicit in this technique one would observe an adherence to the interpretivist paradigm. This research tool subscribes to the assumptions of the phenomenological or social constructionist viewpoint that "human interests not only guide the way we think, and the structures of work and authority, but they also condition the way we enquire into, and construct our knowledge of, the world" Habermas (1970) in Bennett, Glatter and Levacic (1994:78).

* pseudonyms

The basic beliefs of constructivism as noted by Guba (1990:25) are as follows:

1. The theory ladenness of facts. If empirical tests are to be valid arbiters of propositions (hypotheses and questions) put to nature by inquirers, then it is essential that the theoretical and observational languages be independent. The “facts” that are collected must be independent of the propositional (theoretical) statements. But philosophers of science now uniformly believe that facts are facts only within some theoretical framework. Thus the basis for discovering “how things really are” and “really work” is lost. Reality exists only in the context of a mental framework (construct) for thinking about it.
2. The underdetermination of theory. No theory can ever be fully tested because of the problem of induction. Observing a million white swans does not provide indisputable evidence for the assertion, “All swans are white.” There are always a large number of theories that can, in principle, “explain” a given body of “facts”. Thus no unequivocal explanation is ever possible. There can be many constructions, and there is no foundational way to choose among them. “Reality” can be “seen” only through a window of theory, whether implicit or explicit.
3. The value ladenness of facts. Constructivists concur with the ideological argument that the inquiry cannot be value free. If “reality” can be seen only through a theory window, it can equally be seen only through a value window. Many constructions are possible.
4. The interactive nature of the inquirer/inquired into dyad. Objectivity is not possible, the results of an inquiry are always shaped by the interaction of inquirer and inquired into. Knowledge is a human construction, never certifiable as ultimately true but problematic and ever changing.

Further, to illustrate the constructive belief system I subscribe to I present Guba’s summary of the above-mentioned paradigm.

- ONTOLOGY: relativist – realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them
- EPISTEMOLOGY: subjectivist – inquirer and inquired into are fused into a single (monistic) entity. Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two
- METHODOLOGY: hermeneutic, - dialectic – individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically; and compared and contrasted dialectically, with the aim of generating one (or a few) constructions on which there is substantial consensus (1990:27).

The QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TECHNIQUE I shall be using is the UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW. The flexibility of the unstructured interview, if properly used, helps to bring out the affective and the value-laden aspects of the respondents' responses to determine the personal significance of their attitudes. Not only does it permit the subjects' definition of the interviewing situation to receive full and detailed expression: it should elicit the personal and social context of beliefs and feelings.

This type of interview achieves its purpose to the extent that the subject's responses are spontaneous rather than forced, are highly specific and concrete rather than diffuse and general, and are self-revealing and personal rather than superficial (Selltiz, Wrightsman and Cook 1976:318).

The type of unstructured interview I conducted was a focused interview. In the focused interview the main function of the interviewer is to focus attention upon a given experience and its effects. Although the respondent is free to express completely his or her own line of thought the direction of the interview is clearly in the hands of the interviewer. Interviewers have freedom to explore reasons and motives, to probe further in directions that were unanticipated.

According to Van Maanen, qualitative methodology represents “ a mixture of rational, serendipitous, and intuitive in which the personal experiences of the organisational researcher are often key events to be understood and analysed as data” (1979:10). He goes on to say that qualitative researchers tend to describe the unfolding of social processes rather than the social structures. They also seek to derive “contextual understanding” which cannot be achieved without direct, first-hand and intimate knowledge of a research setting (Van Maanen 1979:10).

Miles says of qualitative data that they are “rich, full, earthy, holistic, ‘real’; their face value seems unimpeachable; they preserve chronological

flow where that is important; they tend to reduce a researcher's trained incapacity, bias, narrowness and arrogance" (1979:117).

While qualitative data and qualitative research are attractive, and for this investigation, apt, they have serious weaknesses and problems. I had to keep these in mind during the course of the research process. In fact Miles refers to it as "an attractive nuisance" (Miles 1979:117). He reminds the researcher that collecting and analysing data is a labour intensive task.

One of the problems of qualitative studies, and this applies to this study, is the question of sampling involved and the generalizability of qualitatively derived findings. Given the fact that qualitative research works largely with words which are ambiguous symbols, rather than fixed numbers, the possibility of researcher bias is always present.

The most serious difficulty with qualitative data is that the methods of analysis are not well formulated (as compared with quantitative data). Miles calls it a "mysterious, half-formulated art" (Miles 1979:122). The analyst, faced with a mass of qualitative data, has very few guidelines for protection against self-delusion and presentation of unreliable or invalid conclusions. Also, the lack of a common language in analysing and

writing makes for much ambiguity. Under such circumstances, researchers have pointed out; the validity off quantitatively derived findings is seriously in doubt (here Miles and Huberman (1984) quote Dawson, LeCompte and Goetz).

However, these weaknesses and problems, rather than discouraging the process of qualitative research, have instead indicated the need for explicit, systematic methods for drawing conclusions, and for testing them carefully. I have attempted to visit these issues in the course of the write-up of my research and its findings.

4. SAMPLING

There are two methods of sampling (obtaining subjects). One yields probability samples in which, as the term implies, the probability selection of each respondent is known. The other yields non-probability samples, in which the probability of the selection is not known.

The magnitude of my study (three interviews) dictates that I use non-probability samples. Despite the disadvantage that arises from their

non-representativeness, they are far less complicated to set up, are considerably less expensive, and can prove perfectly adequate where researchers do not intend to generalise their findings beyond the sample in question.

I have decided to use two kinds of non-probability samples viz. convenience sampling and purposive sampling.

Convenience sampling – or as it is sometimes called, accidental sampling – involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continuing that process until the required sample has been obtained.

In purposive sampling, the researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their typicality. In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their needs (Cohen and Manion 1993:89).

5. ARRANGING THE RESEARCH

Once I had decided the research technique I had then to decide on interviewees. I had subsequently enquired of my colleagues if they have been led by people in headship; positions that they have deemed to be excellent leaders. Kimeshnee Naidoo was thoroughly impressed by

Rajesh Maharaj who was her principal at Jacobean Secondary School* while she was there for six years, Jason Pillay is still in awe of Sugan Govindsamy who was his principal at Spoonerville Secondary School* for four years and Kim Pather is still reeling from the energy that Shirley Govender exuded for one term (three months) while she was at Crescent Primary School*.

I was grateful for the time that each interviewee granted me. This interaction was part of the research process. The relationship that exists between the interviewer and the interviewee is a specialised form of conversation. Roberts and Oakley in Adler, Laney and Packer (1993:71) admit that the interviewer cannot elicit information from the respondent in a detached, “professional” manner as in this view of social science the interviewer is intricately interwoven in the interview. Further it cannot be

* pseudonyms

coldly clinical, as there is always an unpredictable element; as no two interviews were the same because each relationship and interaction is unique.

In my initial encounter with the interviewees I described the project, its rationale and scope and structure. I then asked for permission to use a

tape recorder. I wanted to unite subject and object, escaping the traditional interview relationship. However, I have to acknowledge my naivete and inexperience. Conducting the interviews was an important part of the learning process for me, as I had not had much previous experience of interviewing.

Each interview lasted about thirty minutes. I went to each of my colleagues' houses to conduct the interview. I felt that if each of them were in their own homes they would be most comfortable. The only interview guideline I suggested was that they were at liberty to discuss whatever it was, including anecdotes that they felt would provide the information I needed. I did say that in order to obtain clarity I might ask questions. They did not find difficulty with all of the above.

I seriously under-estimated the time needed to arrange, conduct and particularly to transcribe the interviews.

6. DISCUSSION OF DATA

I shall be presenting the data by finding similar themes in each of the principals' management and leadership skills. "Using techniques such as

patterning (looking for something that occurs more than once); triangulating data” Mathison in Unterhalter 1991:162), is what I shall be using to make sense of the data gathered. I shall provide comment on each by illustrating with quotations from the interviews.

6.1. Communication Skills

All the respondents identified communication as an important leadership. Different aspects of communication were emphasised. Jason referred to the “excellent rapport with all the teachers, learners and parents”, which indicates a sound relationship as well as communication skills.

Kimeshnee spoke of the importance of keeping everyone informed: “Mr. Maharaj would make announcements at every tea break.” She also mentions how” he would give us a running commentary.” For her, therefore, an effective leader is one who keeps everyone informed.

6.2 Clarity of Purpose

These leaders knew exactly what they wanted and how to go about achieving it. They were single minded in achieving the goals of the school. Kim mentioned that “Mrs. Govender drew up a management plan

for the following year,” which also shows her ability to plan. Jason made reference to:

He knew where he was taking the school, he what was expected of the educators, he knew where the children needed to be at the end of their schooling career.

This clear direction allows for all the members of the teaching corps to work towards clearly defined goals. Kimeshnee said that as a physical education teacher she knew her duties, her job description, the school calender and which committee she belonged to. She felt that “merely working towards these dates ensured the smooth running of the school”.

6.3. Administration

These leaders have proven to be excellent administrators. Jason emphasised this when he spoke about Mr. Govindsamy. “He was meticulous in the manner in which he maintained records (filing, attending to the post, acquainting himself with circulars and drawing relevant aspects to the attention of the staff), if you walked into his office you would get the impression of a very, very organised person.”

Kimeshnee mentioned that when money was being collected from the sixty three to sixty seven class units Mr. Maharaj would be on hand to assist and supervise. To her him keeping abreast of circulars and drawing the attention of the staff were signs of an excellent administrator.

6.4. Leading by Example

These leaders lead by example. “Mrs. Govender was often irritated when people (members of staff, parents and pupils) expected her to be in her office. She would retort, “I am not an office-worker!” She would rather be assisting the teachers by drawing up worksheets, helping the pupils with reading while the subject teacher attended to another group, taking over a class when a teacher is absent etc.” Kim felt that her presence in the classroom gave her great comfort and support. Kim said that this hands on approach was the best way in which a teacher, particularly a new teacher could learn how to teach. Jason said that one of the hallmarks of a good leader is that “he know his work, that he know the tricks of the trade.” He found that Mr. Govindsamy certainly was very well informed. Kimeshnee stated that “Mr. Maharaj always wanted to see things on paper.” She feels that if you planned well on paper and if you had your guidelines then you would be in a better position to put your ideas and needs into practice.

6.5. Personality

Kim and Jason believe that extrovertedness and assertiveness are two traits that define an excellent leader.

Kim was taken aback when a Superintendent of English arrived at the school and required each of us to be present while he supervised our books. Mrs. Govender stood her ground and insisted that all the members of the English department and her be present. Kim remarked, “She is a courageous woman and a good principal.”

Jason believes that Mr. Govindsamy’s “charming personality and his extrovertedness might have been a plus in his favour.

6.6. Management by Walking About

All of these leaders conducted some of their management by walking about. Jason feels that by being “visible” to the educators and pupils he was not “spying” on them but merely ensuring that there were no problems. More importantly Jason felt “he was ensuring that the school environment is conducive to learning and teaching.” Jason feels strongly that this is an

Important quality in a good educational leader as the *raison d’etre* of education is learning and teaching.

Kimeshnee was impressed with how Mr. Maharaj managed the school by walking about.

He enquired after the pupils if they were found outside the classroom during lesson time. If while walking past your class he noticed you having a problem with a pupil he would remove that pupil and attend to him/her. If a chart was coming unstuck he would enter the class excuse himself and attend to the chart.

She feels that by walking about he was more in touch with what was happening (teaching, discipline or lack of it) as opposed to sitting in his office. According to Kimeshnee this is the most important method he employed to keep his finger on the pulse. “Being informed about what is going on in school” is an important aspect to good leadership.

Kim said that Mrs. Govender had boundless energy. She always wore flat shoes so that she could be comfortable. She would walk from one floor to the next as Crescent Primary consisted of four storeys. Kim felt that not only did she ensure that the teachers were on duty but that her maternal instinct came to the fore in that she was protective over the pupils. The playground was on the top floor. Kim said that this nurturing instinct always stood her in good stead.

6.7. Humanitarianism – Empathy, Compassion

While these leaders are goal directed they are not transactional leaders but transformational leaders (p.6 leadership styles).

All three of them have the ability to feel with their subordinates and to act in concrete ways to demonstrate this empathy.

Kim spoke about the extent that Mrs. Govender went to to assist a teacher that was undergoing an emotionally traumatic time. “She taught all of her subjects and when the teacher was ready she returned to her class.” Kim mentioned that this display of compassion indicates that Mrs. Govender is a warm, caring person that is essential in a leader.

Kim had personal experience of the empathy Mrs. Govender has when someone experiences trying circumstances. This quality makes her the true humanitarian that she is.

My ex-husband battered me. One day I arrived at school sporting a blue eye. Mrs. Govender told me not to go to my classes, as she wanted to spare me any embarrassment by the pupils. She took control of my classes and taught them for four days. I went to school each day but stayed away from the pupil population. Kim

Jason stated that if you needed to attend to problems he would allow you time off. “I recall when I married, he allowed me to leave school early.”

Kimeshnee felt that Mr. Maharaj was so much like having a father you could rely on “a father who was fair”. This characteristic endeared her to him (she became emotional at this part of the interview). Kimeshnee felt that this characteristic of humanitarianism made him the well-rounded leader that he was.

If he heard that there was a death in the family he would be on your doorstep before some of the members of the family. When women had problems in their marriages he would go to their homes and tell their husbands where to get off. Kimeshnee

Not only was he doing good he was also brave and courageous.

All my respondents concur that this aspect of humanitarianism is most important, as an educational leader’s most valuable resource is people (teachers, pupils, cleaning staff etc.).

6.8. Delegation of Duties

These leaders delegated tasks. This delegation allows members of staff to grow. This empowerment acquitted members of staff with skills and information so that they could be promoted to subsequently higher levels in the hierarchy of school management.

Kimeshnee is proud to note that all she knows about school management and administration she learnt from Mr. Maharaj.

He would each year give the newer and younger teachers a chance to be roped into committees and learn some aspects about management

and administration. As a result of this I have learnt how to draw up the timetable manually; co-ordinate and athletics meeting, debutantes ball and to plan an excursion. There wasn't a committee on which I did not serve.

Another characteristic that Mr. Maharaj embodied was that he was not inflexible. He was the first to admit, "your idea is going to work better than mine".

As a leader Mr. Govindsamy delegated duties. "When people are delegated tasks they need to be empowered with information. He did not withhold that information."

Kim said that there was a willingness on the part of the staff to take part in whatever committee there was. The staff pulled together. The drive and power she had was all permeating. When she left that enthusiasm left with her.

6.9. Co-ordination of Tasks

These leaders did not merely delegate tasks and provide information therefore they had a hand in co-ordinating it, "He co-ordinated all the things at the school or he had a hand in co-ordinating it" said Kimeshnee.

Kim said that it was hard for Mrs. Govender not to get involved in everything.

6.10. A Good Leader should accept Criticism

Each of my respondents believed that a good leader should accept criticism. Jason was a staff representative and in that capacity he concluded that Mr. Govindsamy entertained any type of criticism. Two of Kimeshnee's ideas for the athletics meeting were accepted and used at Jacobean Secondary. Kim said of Mrs. Govender that she would not force any worksheet onto you. She would prepare it and say, "check if it works, if it works better than yours use it, if it does not work better than yours, tell me about it and then do not use it".

6.11. These Leaders are Encouraging, Motivating and Influential

All of the respondents acknowledged that no task would go unrewarded. This motivation is what impelled them forwards. They did not hesitate to offer their services whenever it was called upon. Actually they often volunteered it. Jason mentioned that whenever somebody accomplished something he gave him or her credit for it; he acknowledged the good that people did.

According to Kimeshnee Mr. Maharaj “did not fail to thank the members of staff individually or collectively for assistance they rendered. He was not afraid of showing appreciation. The aim was to keep the staff together as one big happy family. This also implied Mr. Maharaj’s social responsibility to maintain staff unity.

If at a staff function he saw women not wearing new clothes he would approach you and say, “You’re looking nice, you’re clever with money.” He makes you feel that he recognised not your old clothing but your wisdom in not spending your hard-earned money.

Kim maintained that Mrs. Govender was utterly selfless.

On one occasion the religious instruction teachers had to extend their lessons well into the afternoon, Mrs. Govender was so concerned about them that she made arrangements for her to be picked up later than usual. As a result these teachers developed an enormous amount of respect for her.

Kim felt that the Thank You notes that Mrs. Govender sent out on a regular basis and the card she gave each teacher on the occasion of their birthdays made each teacher feel special. She said that it made you feel that you were not just a member of staff but an individual of note. This is a special quality in a leader of such stature.

7. DATA ANALYSIS

There is more to leadership than the technical and interpersonal aspects of efficient management. Leadership also has a symbolic side. It rests upon meanings as well as actions. Leaders make meanings. Indeed some would argue that what a leader stands for is more important than what he or she does (Hoy and Miskell 1982:307).

The term “institutional leadership” comes from Philip Selznick, who argues that a major function of leadership is to infuse the organisation with value beyond the technical requirements at hand, that is, to build upon people’s need for meaning and create institutional purpose.

What school leaders stand for and believe about education and schooling, the role of education in our society, how schools should be structured and operated, and how parents, teachers and students should be treated constitute a basic set of principles that bring meaning and institutional integrity to educational leadership. Successful leaders infuse a common set of values, ideals and principles in their schools. The task is to build school culture. Leaders also provide role models for subordinates through their own deliberate behaviour.

Leadership in schools is a complex process. It involves more than the skill of mastering a style of behaviour or a contingency approach.

Matching the behaviour with a specific situation is important, but so too is the symbolic and cultural side of leadership. The issue is not one of choosing between leadership as an instrumental and behavioural activity or leadership as a symbolic and cultural one; it is clearly both (Hoy and Miskell 1982:308).

Shirley Govender, Rajesh Maharaj and Sugan Govindsamy are successful institutional leaders who articulate the mission of their schools, shape its culture and protect and maintain its integrity.

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I feel that I hadn't done Mrs Govender justice in that I interviewed Kim Pather who was subjected to principalship for a mere term (3 months). As much as the information I gleaned was sufficient I feel that an educator that was under her headship for a longer period of time would have been able to provide me with a wealth of information.

Pseudonyms have been used for the persons and schools so as to protect their identities.

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