

**RHODES UNIVERSITY**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**An Organisation Development intervention in a previously disadvantaged  
school in the Eastern Cape.**

**Submitted by**

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**Education**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*“We often spend too much time coping with problems along our path that we forget why we are on that path”*

*Peter Senge*

This study describes and analyses the implementation of Organisation Development (OD) to a previously disadvantaged school.

OD is a relatively new method of planned change in South Africa. Unlike more traditional change initiatives, OD promotes collaboration; it tries to involve all members of an organisation in problem solving and decision-making. It is an applied behavioural science discipline dedicated to improving organisations and the people in them.

Previously disadvantaged schools in South Africa continue to be disadvantaged. Ten years after the introduction of democracy there have been few changes in some of these schools and some seem to be getting worse. This study was an attempt to introduce a process of planned change to one such school.

Since 1994 many changes have been imposed on our schools with new curricula, increased class sizes, changes in systems of assessment and teaching methods and the abolishment of past procedures such as corporal punishment. Teachers have had little say in any of these changes and this has resulted in resistance, resignation, frustration and in many cases a lack of ability to cope.

OD was introduced to Acacia High School in the form of a Survey Data Feedback (SDF). An action research process followed and a diagnosis was made followed by action planning and then the execution of a plan. My study follows this process and the implementation of the plan describing its successes. Sadly change was not sustained and I highlight some of the challenges that face the school in order to bring about real long-term improvement in the culture of learning and teaching.

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My thanks also go to the participants of the study and I hope things will get better for them in the future.

Finally I should like to dedicate this book to my daughters Ruth and Emma

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## **ACRONYMS**

AVP – Alternatives to Violence Project  
COLT – Culture of Learning and Teaching  
DoE – Department of Education  
RCL – Representative Council of Learners  
SDF – Survey Data Feedback  
SGB – School Governing Body  
SMT – Senior Management Team  
OD – Organisation Development  
WSD – Whole School Development

## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

20 December 2004

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**Signature**

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**Date**

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## CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

*We may need to stop complaining about the rug being pulled from under our feet and learn to dance on the flying carpet.*

*Rosabeth Moss Canter.*

### 1.1 PERSONAL CONTEXT

As a child I loved school and even received prizes for 100% attendance. I remember my teachers as people who enjoyed teaching and I don't recall ever not wanting to go to school or not having a teacher in class. When I became a teacher in 1990 I too enjoyed my tenure. Schools are places where continuous learning occurs and not just from books; the friends, the sports, the functions, concerts and plays all contribute to making the school part of a learning community. My own children similarly had a joy of learning and have now completed their tertiary education. Naturally along the way I have encountered those who bemoan their plight and their wayward students, but nowhere have I encountered more frustrated teachers than in the government schools of South Africa.

I was educated in England and have taught in schools there as well as in Malawi, where I worked for the Designated Schools Board. In South Africa I taught at an independent school for five years and more recently an ex model C school for two years.<sup>1</sup>

It was while working at the ex model C school and studying for a B.Ed. Honours at Rhodes University I began to understand why the teachers here were so despondent. My fellow teachers at the school and on the course opened my eyes to some of the appalling situations that some learners and teachers experienced pre-democracy and the conditions they continue to deal with today.

Of course I knew about the poverty and the damage apartheid had done but it was 2002, surely things were getting better? But the gap between government and independent education appeared to be getting worse. In Grahamstown the difference in fees alone are from R45, 000 per annum for a day scholar at an independent school to R90 at a township

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According to Steyn an ex model C school was a formerly 'whites only' school which became multi-racial in 1992. The state covers 75 –85% of its running costs, including teacher salaries (in Lemmer & Badenhorst, 1997: 146)

school and R12 for a farm school. The independent school I had worked at was similar to the ex model C school, the fees being around R6, 000 per annum. None of the teachers I worked or studied with would send their children to a township or farm school and yet some of them taught at these places, so why the lack of trust in the education at these schools? And why were the matriculation results from these schools not as good as they should be?

The main reason, according to my fellow teachers was the lack of resources at township and farm schools. Another contributing factor however has been the introduction of change and the ways in which change has been implemented in these schools. There is a huge difference between voluntary and imposed change. Changes imposed without consultation are likely to incur resistance and sabotage (Harris, 2002: 37). The introduction of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) was imposed on the schools in this region and it has left many of the teachers feeling anxious and angry. There has been a lot of resistance from schools across the board. Other regions held planning strategies beforehand and produced documents for teachers explaining the need for the changes. In the Eastern Cape things have been a little less organized.

Successful schools however have continued to be successful. They have a solid foundation on which to build strategies for change and they have adopted OBE in diverse ways. This confirms Janson's argument that schools with a strong organizational culture are able to cope more easily with change (Janson, in van der Westhuizen, 2003: 130). High fee paying schools have to maintain high standards if they are to continue to attract customers. Because of their secure financial positions they are able to afford experts or advisors to help them find ways to implement the new policies and curricula.

The same cannot be said for previously disadvantaged schools and these are the ones I became interested in as even ten years after independence base-line studies conducted for the Whole School Development (WSD) programme show that:

- Teachers do not have the necessary knowledge or teaching skills
- Schools are not effectively managed
- Districts are not able to deliver effective school support services
- Two new curricula have been introduced in schools over the last six years

Furthermore schools in poor communities

- Are poorly resourced for effective teaching and learning
- Have limited and/or problematic parental and community involvement and support
- Are faced with numerous problems; learner discipline, crime, drugs, child abuse, poverty, hunger, alcoholism, AIDS, unemployment, and political power struggles

(England, in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004: 17).

During the second year of my honours course I studied Education Leadership and Management as one of my electives. The class spent one weekend on Organisation Development (OD) and I was immediately attracted to it. I saw it as a process that might enable some of our previously disadvantaged schools to cope with their turbulent situations. I embarked on the Masters course to discover if this was true and chapter four showcases the data collected as I carried out an OD intervention at a historically disadvantaged school.

## 1.2 THE SCHOOL CONTEXT



The school I chose to carry out my research in was built in 1983; it has a good solid structure though on closer examination one can see the signs of decay.

There is electricity and running water (most of the time) and they have computers, a telephone

**Figure 1:** Broken windows



and a fax machine. It is considered the top school in the township and is to become a school of excellence in Mathematics and Science. All is not well though as there has been a decline in academic achievement since 1999. This was shortly after there was a change in leadership at the school.

**Figure 2:** Broken door handle

The pass rate at matric has dropped from 89.9% in 1999, 86% in 2000 to 74% in 2002 and 2003. Although this is still above the regional average for the Eastern Cape (68%) it is a concern as other schools in the region are managing to improve their results.

Among the numerous methods of school improvement introduced in South Africa OD is a relatively new concept. Many initiatives have failed to produce any signs of improvement and I wondered if it was because they have involved the training of only a few key members of an organization. Madasi in her study also recognized this and she claims that a more holistic approach to management training is required and the whole school should be involved in the training, not just the principal and one or two senior staff (Madasi, 2004: 72). OD has a holistic approach in that it tries to get everyone in the organization involved in expressing their aspirations, building awareness and developing their capabilities. One of the core principles of OD is based on Kurt Lewin's philosophy which states "we are more likely to carry out decisions we have helped to make" (in Weisbord, 1987: 89). OD uses behavioural science techniques and deals with

the gamut of 'people problems' such as poor morale, low productivity, interpersonal and intergroup conflict, inappropriate leadership styles... where organizations are not realizing their potential, OD can improve the situation.  
(French, Bell & Zawacki, 2000: 2)

Both England and Glover are skeptical of some of the interventions that have been introduced into our schools in South Africa (in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004: 16-21 & 19-32). They see them as problematic in that they appear to be 'quick fix' solutions where 'one size fits all'. OD recognizes the individuality of each organization: as Evans puts it "change has to be brought about teacher-by-teacher and school by school" (Evans, 2001:xi).

### **1.3 GOALS OF RESEARCH**

My aim was to carry out an intervention in the school in order to discover if OD could make a difference to the culture of learning and teaching there. I wanted to determine if the experiences of the participants reflected the aims of the OD process, to determine whether or to what extent OD has the potential as a people centered approach to introduce planned change to an organization: to what extent:

OD is a process for teaching people how to solve problems, take advantage of opportunities, and learn how to do that better and better over time  
(French, Bell & Zawacki, 2000: xiii).

Although my time for the research was short I hoped to be able to instigate a process of change using the action research method. I wanted to research the participants' perceptions of the procedure rather than the outcomes which may take a long time to realize. OD is a long-term procedure and meaningful change does not happen overnight.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH APPROACH**

Due to the nature of my research, which is an attempt to bring about change, I naturally chose to work in the critical paradigm. There are also elements of an interpretive orientation as I try to understand the participants' experiences of the process. I used the case study method applying the research to only one school and focused on only one dimension which was the intervention.

The process started with an initial data gathering exercise called a Survey Data Feedback (SDF) and from this a diagnosis of the situation was made. This was followed by a plan of action and its implementation. I was able to conduct interviews with the participants before and after the implementation of the action plan. In this way I was able to assess if there was any perceived improvement in the culture of learning and teaching at the school.

#### **1.5 AN OUTLINE OF THE THESIS**

Chapter two is a presentation of the literature I reviewed whilst carrying out this research. The literature concentrates on the theme of educational change in South Africa and focuses specifically on organization development. I describe some OD successes and also some challenges facing the process.

Chapter three describes the methodology and paradigms of the research. There is a detailed description of the OD action research method and how it applied to my intervention. I also provide information about my data collecting tools and how I ensured the research was ethical, rigorous and valid.

Chapter four is a narrative of the OD process as it progressed. This is interspersed with the voices of the learners and their teachers in the form of interview data to provide a rich description of their experiences of the intervention. I also present details of subsequent changes that followed the initial action plan.

Chapter five is the concluding chapter and this is where I present a summary of my findings. These include recommendations for future interventions at the school to ensure continued growth and renewal. I also describe some of the limitations of my research and I conclude with some personal reflections.

## **CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW**

*'The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them'*

*Albert Einstein*

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In chapter one I described my reasons for undertaking this research and why I selected Acacia High School. I stated the goals of the research and the paradigms I worked in as well as providing a brief outline of the thesis. In this chapter I discuss the imperative for organisational change. I show why South African schools need change and describe some of the methods of change being used. I give a brief history of Organisation Development and demonstrate how it is used to bring about change in organisations. I then provide some evidence of why I think OD is appropriate for the needs of South African schools and outline some of the constraints to change.

### **2.2 WHY CHANGE?**

Change is essential for any organisation that is growing and developing. Theron states that organisations that do not change will stagnate and eventually decline (Theron, in van der Westhuizen, 2003: 181). Schools in particular should be dynamic places preparing learners for their place in a future that can hold many surprises. Change affects all aspects of a person's life and is sometimes associated with loss since it challenges our competences and makes us feel insecure. Therefore however much we may exalt change in principle, in practice we tend to oppose it so there is often resistance to change (Evans, 2001:25). Teachers often feel threatened by change, feeling that their work is not good enough or that change will jeopardize their promotion. van der Westhuizen and Theron both agree that if change is well planned and the process takes into account the difficulties that people might encounter there should be less resistance to it (van der Westhuizen & Theron, in van der Westhuizen, 2003: 222).

In South Africa the constitution of 1996 requires that schools be transformed (changed for the better) and democratised, to provide as far as is reasonably possible equal educational access to all its citizens. The quality of education for all learners must also be improved (Department of Education, 1995: 6).

When planning change it is not easy to decide how to introduce it to an organisation. According to De Caluwe and Vermaak there are five different models for the diverse types of people and cultures found in any organisation. They have colour coded each model as follows:

- Yellow print thinking – people change their standpoints only if their own interests are taken into account.
- Blue print thinking – people or things change if a clearly specified result is laid down.
- Red print thinking – people change if things are appealing or inspiring to them.
- Green print thinking – people change if they learn – they are motivated to discover their limits.
- White print thinking – everything changes autonomously of its own accord.

(in Zaptin, 2003:592)

The challenge for any change agent is to identify what ‘colour print’ the people in an organisation are and then plan the strategy for change accordingly. In any organization there could be a combination of ‘colour prints’ present and the change agent should be sufficiently skilled in behavioural science to recognize participants dominant views.

Watkins and Marsick (in Chilton, 2004: 113) however debate the assumption that one can, or is ethically entitled to, cause another to change. A deeper issue is the central flaw in understanding change (including learning and emancipation) as something done *to* people, *by* someone, in a way that is controlled and managed. Raelin (in Chilton, 2004: 110) believes that in order to enhance change procedures we need to establish communities where everyone shares the experience of serving as a leader, not sequentially, but concurrently and collectively. Raelin presents a model of “leaderful practice” (*ibid*: 110). It consists of four tenets: leadership is concurrent, collective, collaborative, and compassionate. Concurrent leadership allows that multiple leaders can operate at the same time. People share power willingly. Collective leadership means that the group is not dependent on an individual. Instead, leadership may emerge from multiple members of the community. Collaborative leaders advocate their point of view, but they remain equally sensitive to the views and feelings of others. In this way change can be brought about in an almost natural way. This seems to be an ideal system for the achievement of democratic

leadership so talked about in South Africa. It will require a high level of maturity from leaders and may prove difficult in a South Africa that is still emerging from apartheid.

Change is inevitable and, as I shall argue essential to the needs of education in South Africa. Change is complex; it is a journey and needs to be guided by local knowledge and circumstances. It will only be through informed experimentation, the pursuit of promising directions and the refining of practices that headway will be made. Burton & Murugan state that flexibility must be accommodated and the route and destination discovered through the journey itself. The key to success lies in the creative activity of making new maps (in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004:65). Change is thus another word for growth or for learning; we can all do it and **enjoy it**, if we want to (Evans, 2001:24).

### **2.3 SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

Taylor, Diphofa, Waghmarae, Vinjevold and Sedibe all argue that research on change in South African schools has been quite sparse. The apartheid government did not encourage much data collection in either black or white schools (in Taylor, Muller & Vinjevold 2003:19). After 1994 the new democratic government had a massive change process to complete. From eighteen racially divided education departments there are now nine; control has been decentralised and each institution has been opened to all races. Whilst much research is ongoing it is very disparate involving many different projects and little conclusive data about the changes and how they were achieved have been produced so far.

In 1996 President Mandela instigated a research project called the Presidential Education Initiative (PEI). Although the research involved only 300 schools the researchers said it was sufficient to give an indication of just how poor the quality of education in the township and rural areas was. Taylor and Vinjevold were pleased to discover that many teachers were committed to change; they had an internalised personal conscience that encouraged them to consider their learners' welfare and outcomes of education. Sadly others were found to believe that this responsibility lies mainly with the state (in Taylor, & Vinjevold, 1999: 137).

In order to make apartheid education work, an extremely authoritarian mode of operation and communication was necessary. This was characterized by a lack of consultation

between the government and its employees. South Africans (apart from the resistance movement) learned to become a passive, obedient society unwilling to challenge commands from the top (Davidoff & Lazarus 2002:9). This makes the move towards a more democratic system very difficult as Lippert discovered with his scout groups in the 1940's it took much longer to adjust from autocratic to democratic leadership than the other way round (Weisbord, 1987: 85). Autocracy is imposed but democracy has to be learned and many schools still operate in an autocratic manner. Teachers who are of the old school still respond passively to instructions and find it difficult to adopt democratic principles.

Of the thirty thousand schools in South Africa three thousand are deemed dysfunctional (Delta Foundation, 2004). This means that ten percent of schools apart from physical deficiencies do not even have a timetable. Of the functional schools there are many that are not performing as well as they should and according to Chisholm & Vally this is particularly pronounced in the secondary schools (cited by Kruger in van Deventer 2003:4). The schools have been faced with many changes since 1994 and "an enormous number of new policies have been introduced to address the imbalances of the past" (Davidoff & Lazarus 2002:3). England notes that six thousand schools in South Africa are involved in development projects and costs donors R500million annually (England, in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004:17). Observations by Westraad showed:

the introduction of an outcomes based curriculum, and the subsequent revision of this curriculum at a General Education and Training (GET) level, has resulted in educators being flooded with training and information sessions. The introduction of Continuous Assessment (CASS) at a Further Education and Training (FET) level requires educators to attend numerous cluster meetings, and in addition the Department of Education (DoE) has a number of other initiatives that they require educators to attend. At school management level initiatives to address leadership, management, governance and administration are being launched as well as direly needed training in school safety and security. Add to this the other interventions by Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's) then we can see why some schools and educators are being overwhelmed by improvement and change

(Westraad, in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004:2).

Along with the curricula changes Meerkotter noted that the new democratic government also decided by 1999 the teacher: student ratio for all secondary schools would be 1:35 (in Morrow & King 1998:52). This resulted in a redeployment process and the retrenchment of

many teachers. In the Eastern Cape this process is ongoing and is still causing disruption. No new teachers have been recruited since 2000; only temporary appointments have been made and some temporary teachers went without pay for many months and they receive no benefits in terms of medical aid or pension contributions. In many schools it is not unusual to find up to seventy learners in one class. The physical working environment for some is also very challenging; 35.5% of schools still have no form of telecommunication, 27.3% have no access to water, 42% have no electricity and 16.6% of learners are without toilet facilities (Department of Education 2000 x-xi). I know of a headmistress in rural Transkei whose teachers still have to bring a bucket into the staff room to use as a toilet. Along with the lack of textbooks and writing materials this makes the working conditions in some schools very challenging.

The above factors have combined to leave teachers with feelings of frustration and disenchantment. Many teachers say they would not enter the profession again if given a choice (Evans, 2001: 95). According to Barth they feel “unappreciated, overworked and demeaned as professionals, powerless to effect change” (cited in Evans 2001:95). There is a culture of learned helplessness with a mixture of cynical resentment and passive resignation (Evans 2001:141).

Plans have been made to help schools cope with the all these changes and as mentioned by Westraad above, there have been hundreds of workshops offering instructions on how to implement them. Sadly many of the previously disadvantaged schools continue to decline as the school cultural climate moves further away from one of learning and teaching to one of just trying to survive on less and less resources. Meerkotter sees these schools as “triply disadvantaged” (in Morrow & King 1998:51). They were poorly resourced under apartheid, their teachers were less skilled and now with the introduction of the new curriculum they are struggling to cope. Many teachers from disadvantaged areas may have very little idea of what systematic and uninterrupted teaching and learning in schools is really about since their own education was often disrupted due to political instability.

Conradie claims that the new ‘buzzword’ for these schools is *trapped*. They are trapped in a situation from which they cannot escape; a situation in which the Culture Of Learning and Teaching (COLT) has been destroyed (in De Groof, Bray, Mothata & Malherbe, 1998:80). They are unable to carry out any new developments. A large contributor to the deterioration

of COLT is absenteeism. A newspaper article reported absenteeism rates in township schools as high as 30% amongst teachers and 50% for students on so called *normal school days* and blamed it on poor physical facilities and the intimidation of teachers by learners (in De Groof, Bray, Mothata & Malherbe, 1998: 80). The problem facing many educators is how this attitude can be reversed to change it to one where an atmosphere of discipline, trust and mutual respect prevails.

This turnaround has been achieved in a small number of schools. Christie and Potterton (in Gultig, Ndhlovu & Bertram, 2002: 93) carried out investigations into what they termed 'resilient' schools. These were previously disadvantaged institutions that had achieved success against the odds. Somehow despite their disadvantaged circumstances their results were getting better and better. The DoE also carried out research and discovered that a true culture of learning and teaching, as well as a supportive management culture could only thrive in a school where the major stakeholders feel ownership of the schools mission and ethos (in Gultig, Ndhlovu & Bertram, 2002: 5). Meerkotter also agrees that "teacher commitment, learner and parental involvement... contribute greatly to a climate of orderliness and an accountable school management, which are so essential for meaningful learning to take place" (in Morrow & King 1998:55). The best laid teaching plans may go awry if the overall milieu of the school is not supportive, encouraging and stimulating to the staff and students involved and if the school is not so organised as to enable good teaching and learning to take place (Davidoff & Lazarus 2002:vii). The results of these studies provide proof that sustainable school improvement is possible even in previously disadvantaged schools.

## **2.4 TRENDS IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

Education is seen as a political tool for many governments and school policies are changed by successive regimes. Education is the most reformed organisation of any public service and each time the policies are changed the teachers have to learn to adapt (Evans, 2001: xi). Over the past thirty years many different methods of change have been devised and although they may have different titles, they possess similarities in their styles of restructuring. Diphofa, Vinjevold & Taylor stress that today, school improvement is seen as vital because schools are expected to produce citizens who are globally competitive. There are international league tables that compare education systems worldwide (in Taylor &

Vinjevold 1999:1). The following are examples of methods of school improvement in use throughout the world.

#### **2.4.1 Total Quality Management (TQM)**

W. Edwards Deming an American statistician who worked at the Hawthorne plant in the early 1930's was the founder of TQM (Masters, 2004:1). Deming went to Japan shortly after World War Two to help with rebuilding the nation. Today Japanese industry is so successful that they are exporting their managerial styles back to the US. One of the core values of TQM is that the customer is vital to the operation of the organisation, as without customers there would be no organisation. TQM also urges organisations to turn top-down management on its head.

In the early 90's TQM was introduced into education and has had much success in schools. For example in Alaska, Mt. Edgecumbe School boasts 20 times more of *its* learners go to and stay in college compared to other schools. Similar to its values in industry TQM recognises learners as both customer and employees of the educational system. The teachers are encouraged to work with the administrators as a team. For evaluation TQM believes in continuous assessment for both teachers and learners as to wait until the end of the year would be too late for any changes that may need to be made (Masters, 2004: 3).

I have encountered TQM whilst working in an independent school in the Eastern Cape and there were some successes with the process. Unfortunately political upheaval in the school led to the procedure not being continued. I remember the visioning exercise and the planned monthly meetings to help discuss changes within the school. It was a training course of action and only involved staff members and representatives from the prefect body. No parents or governing council attended. De Bruyn cites the research by Carlson, who asserts that implementing TQM in schools is extremely difficult and not easily sustainable and its failure rate is as high as 70% (De Bruyn, in Van der Westhuizen, 2003: 325). Carlson claims that the main problem is to do with the business discourse which does not sit comfortably with many teachers. They do not like teaching to be referred to as a commodity nor their learners to be called consumers (Carlson, 1996: 99). Carlson also implies that TQM is a very time-consuming process which requires a huge commitment on behalf of the leadership in the school.

### **2.4.2 School-Based Management (SBM)**

David (cited by Cunningham & Cordeiro 2003:163) claims that SBM follows the same principles as TQM. It empowers staff to create conditions in schools that facilitate improvement, innovation and continuous professional growth. The school principal and senior management team encourages teachers to introduce an improvement that directly affects learning and teaching. There need to be opportunities for professional development and adequate information available for informed decision making. Incentives should also be provided to encourage personal improvement.

South Africa used to offer increased salary incentives for qualification improvements but now there is no money available for such schemes and as soon as you have completed four years post matriculation no more increments will be granted. SBM is also seen as a top-down technique of bringing about change and so still has echoes of authoritarian ideals and apartheid and whilst it may have a role to play in some schools it will not help to bring about democratic change in education.

### **2.4.3 Strategic Management**

Strategic management is a fairly new trend in schools and colleges leading towards greater autonomy. It has evolved due to the need for schools to become more market driven rather than remain as a public service. This method is already established in Britain but is starting to take a hold in the USA and Canada. In South Africa too there has been a call for some successful schools to start handling their own finances and independent schools already operate quite successfully in this manner. The government plans provide a subsidy related to the number of students and the physical resources of the school. These institutions will be described as section 21 schools. The government will pay the salaries for the staff plus the subsidy but other monetary needs of the school should be raised locally. This idea seems fine for well established and resourced independent and ex model C schools (see footnote page 1) who are able to demand fees of R5000 and more per annum, but for the township school where fees are less than R100 per annum it seems a daunting task.

As the name suggests strategic management is a management-led process of change but some of the strategies involve collaboration so there are similarities to OD. The main aim is to bring about change and improvement in response to the external environmental demands if the school is to survive. The process requires a good leader who can carry out strategic

analysis in terms of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and affect strategic planning for the future whilst maintaining the standards of the present (Middlewood & Lumby 1998: 1-15).

#### **2.4.4 Whole School Development**

Oliphant & Tyatya note that this is a project that grew out of the Department of Education's Whole School Evaluation process that was initiated in Durban 1999 (in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004: 33). It was adapted in the Eastern Cape by a Delta Foundation project in conjunction with the Eastern Province Department of Education and Rhodes University. It aims to improve classroom practice and learner achievement in terms of Whole School Development (WSD). The model for WSD has eight key areas that need to be monitored, they are:

- School administration
- Learner welfare and development
- Teacher welfare and development
- Leadership and management
- Community integration
- Curriculum implementation
- Curriculum development
- Resource management

Oliphant & Tyatya say emphasis should be given to all these areas because they are influenced by the values and attitudes of the school community (Oliphant & Tyatya, in du Plooy & Westraad 2004:36). WSD should involve everyone in the school but it needs to be initiated by the School Governing Body (SGB) and the Senior Management Team (SMT), as they are the ones who will carry the changes. Initially the project that started in primary schools expected the principal and four key teachers to attend workshops. On its introduction to secondary schools with their more restrictive timetables only the principal and an SGB member were expected to attend (Diko, 2003: 4).

This project has had some successes but the problem remains that it is a top-down management project and the way in which it is carried out is through workshops with representatives from each school who are then expected to go back to their school and implement change. As has been demonstrated before sending only two or three members of an organisation to workshops has a limited success rate in bringing about change. Glover insists "they also need some hand-holding and on-site support, as they move from the tried

and trusted to something new and potentially more valuable and satisfying” (Glover, in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004: 27). Also the focus is on eight different pre-determined areas for school development whereas OD typically tackles only one issue at a time which has been identified by the school.

## **2.5 ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT**

Organisation development (OD) differs from the above-mentioned methods of school change in a number of ways. Most significantly it is a **planned** process of change. The ideas for OD were first inspired by collaboration between Douglas McGregor and Kurt Lewin in the late 1940's (Weisbord, 1987:97). They were responsible for the founding of the Research Centre for Group Dynamics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) from where many of our modern day business practices have arisen. By the 1940's the manufacturing industry had moved on from the 'machine age' to the 'human relations movement' and was in the process of balancing out production versus the needs of people.

Some earlier work related to group dynamics had been carried out by Lippitt and he also joined Lewin at MIT. In 1946 Lewin held the first experimental workshop in OD at Teachers' College, Connecticut. The following year the National Training Laboratories were established. Many people who were interested in participative action research and collaborative management strategies were trained there to become skilled at improving group relations and managing change (Weisbord 1987:98).

The training groups or 'T' groups as they came to be known, were places people could gain feedback about their behaviour, examine any negative aspects of their self-image and experiment with new behaviours in the atmosphere of psychological safety provided by the laboratory education. The programme was based on Dewey's point that "people learn by doing" (cited in Mirvis, 1996:14).

One of the core principles of OD is that we are much more likely to modify our behaviour when we participate in problem analysis and solution, and we are likely to carry out decisions that we have helped to make (Weisbord 1987:89). Another important principle that Lewin seemed to know intuitively was that of involving the *gatekeepers* (Weisbord, 1987: 88). These are people who are in control of situations and they need to be part of the

process in order for the change to be sustained. Lewin was working with Margaret Mead on a project to persuade civilians to use the less rationed meats. Mead and Lewin identified housewives as the *gatekeepers*; they reasoned that families ate what their mothers prepared for them. A comparative experiment was set up; an expert who told them what to use lectured the first group of housewives, the second group were given all the facts and were asked to come up with their own ideas. As expected the housewives who were allowed to make their own decisions changed their eating habits and that change was sustained (Weisbord, 1987:89).

In the school situation the *gatekeepers* are the principal and/or the senior management team and if change is to be sustained then these people have to be involved and approve of it in order to ensure its continuity. One cannot simply say change and expect it to happen overnight, it takes a lot of effort!

Schmuck and Runkel introduced the concepts of OD to educational organisations and they worked extensively with schools from 1967-1994 (Schmuck & Runkel 1994: ix). Their handbook of OD in schools is recommended as the core text when carrying out OD interventions. Schmuck and Runkel have made numerous modifications of industrial methods to suit the needs of educational institutions. They have recognised three social-psychological conditions that make schools different from industry.

The first is associated with the goals of education, which is not just the manufacturing of an end product. Exam results are the usual criteria for measuring the success of a school but they should not be the only standard, the holistic development of the individual is also of paramount importance.

Secondly the structures in schools are such that there are less highly differentiated jobs. For example the federal civil service of the USA has 18 grades whereas most schools will have no more than 4 grades; teacher, head of department, deputy principal and principal (Schmuck & Runkel 1994:12).

Thirdly schools tend to have less competition with each other than some businesses (although this situation may be changing in South Africa with the increased autonomy of some of the schools). Davidoff & Lazarus claim OD can help because:

Organisation Development has a major role to play in making  
'the school experience more meaningful for teachers and learners... and  
is an extremely effective way of improving classroom practice'

(Davidoff & Lazarus 2002: xvi).

Schmuck & Runkel also claim that it is:

a coherent, systematically planned, sustained effort at system self-study  
and improvement ...its goals are to improve organisational functioning  
and performance

(Schmuck & Runkel 1988:4).

It does not happen overnight but it is a process of change that "equip(s) the school as a  
whole to become more effective in its purpose and goals" (Davidoff & Lazarus 2002:41).

Needing change does not make it happen. According to Belasco you require the  
involvement of large numbers of individuals to draft a vision and this is what empowers  
people (Belasco 1991:119). All must understand the vision and it must be done in a  
participatory way that empowers people. OD is a process that involves **all** the stakeholders  
in an organisation. In a school this includes the school governing body, management,  
teachers, administration, parents, learners and the community.

### **2.5.1 Readiness**

For an OD project to work the participants need to be **ready**. According to Schmuck and  
Runkel the organisation is not ready when there is resignation and complacency, where the  
staff are not happy with their situation and believe that they themselves have no hope of  
changing it (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994: 56). Suggestions are provided to help raise  
readiness levels and these include working firstly with administrators (the senior  
management team) and then with key teachers who may then be able to carry the change to  
the rest of the staff (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994:60).

### **2.6 WHY OD?**

Organisation development is a process of planned change and according to Hattingh its  
purpose is:

to help people and organisations cope, adapt, survive and even prosper in these  
vexing times...it is a process of teaching people how to solve problems, take  
advantage of opportunities and learn how to do that better and better over time

(cited in Meyer & Botha, 2000: 166).

French, Bell and Zawacki agree that:

Organisation development is a long-term effort, led and supported by top management, to improve an organization's visioning, empowerment, learning and problem-solving processes through and ongoing, collaborative management of organization culture- with special emphasis on the culture of intact work teams and other team configurations – using the consultant-facilitator role and the theory and technology of applied behavioural science, including action research.

(French, Bell & Zawacki, 2000:25)

OD deals with the human side of an organisation and is based on behavioural science principles from psychology, sociology and anthropology. The two major goals of OD programmes are:

1. To improve the functioning of individuals, teams and the total organisation and
2. To teach organisation members how to continuously improve their own functioning

(French, Bell & Zawacki, 2000:2).

In other words to help people realise their potential and help them to become more effective at what they do. Teachers are very good at doing this for their learners but sometimes they neglect to keep themselves up to date with changes that are happening around them. This is in part a legacy from the past in South Africa. Taylor and Vinjevold say a good example of this is the way fundamental pedagogics; often an integral part of teacher training taught people to follow instructions and not to think for themselves (in Taylor & Vinjevold 1999: 132). Schmuck & Runkel claim that OD can help resolve this situation:

The most far-reaching kind of aid we think OD can give however is in enabling education organizations to achieve a sustained capacity for solving their own problems. The people in schools and colleges having that capacity will monitor their environment and take action to control inputs from that environment.

(Schmuck & Runkel, 1994: 14)

OD should be able to bring about transformation of an organisation and change South African schools from places where the culture of learning is deteriorating to becoming *learning organisations*. Senge defines a *learning organisation* as “an organisation that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future” (Senge, 1994: 14). It is important for progress that education institutions promote lifelong learning, in our ever-changing environments it is vital that we are able to adapt and survive in new situations.

### 2.6.1 Learning Organisations

It is ironic that although schools are organisations devoted to learning, they are generally not learning organisations (Department of Education, 1995:31). Hitt (1995:18) identifies three different organizational paradigms in the past century that have had a major impact on the way organizations operate. In 1947 Weber defined bureaucratic organisations, which have a paradigm focused on rationality and efficiency. In 1964 Drucker described the performance-based organization with a paradigm promising results and effectiveness. Senge in 1990 popularised the learning organization having a paradigm centred on continual adaptation to an ever-changing environment. Learning organisations are needed for survival and Revans in 1982 postulated that “learning must be greater than or equal to the environmental changes ( $L \geq EC$ ) or the organisation will die” (cited in Hitt, 1995:17).

In order to become learning organizations Fenwick (2003: 614) feels we must, from a critical perspective, understand the structures of dominance that express or govern the social relationships and competing cultural practices within the organization. Politics are central to human cognition, activity, identity, and meaning. Emancipatory educators claim that when mechanisms of cultural power are named, ways and means to resist them appear. Collective action is combined with critical analysis on power relations and structural oppression; people can explore unexpected, unimagined possibilities for work, life and development.

Another way to help organisations become lifelong places of learning has been developed by McKinsey (cited in Hitt, 1995: 18). He suggests a seven S framework:

1. Shared values – these are the core beliefs of the organisation
2. Style – of management
3. Strategy – this is the vision of the organisation
4. Structure – how many levels of employees and how they are grouped
5. Staff – the characteristics and personalities
6. Skills- the abilities of the individual staff members
7. Systems – within the organisation, the communications network

In South Africa the bureaucratic principles of Weber may have achieved orderliness, which is still a necessary part of any organisation, but it is not sufficient for the spontaneity and flexibility needed in our unpredictable environment. We also require individuals able to

learn to adapt and survive and that means not only conforming to standards but also continually asking whether the standards are correct (Hitt, 1995: 23).

## **2.7 HOW OD WORKS**

OD opens people up to new inputs and provides meaningful content so they can judge for themselves whether or not their current behaviour is effective. To facilitate change OD offers regimens of fact finding and problem solving and seeks to equalise power in organisations. It encourages personal mastery and team learning (Mirvis, 1996:16).

Botha associates six major topics with organisation development: Organisation culture, organisation climate, management of change, management development, organisational conflict and employee commitment (Botha, in Meyer & Botha, 2000:8). A wide range of activities is available, each addressing a specific problem area, focusing on a specific segment of the organisation and utilising a specific intervention to achieve the desired outcome. To this end Waugh presents the OD cube designed by Schmuck and Miles (Appendix A). This can be applied as part of the conceptual design of the solution according to its problem, its focus of attention and its mode of intervention (Waugh, in Meyer & Botha, 2000:122).

Educational innovations require changes in the 'culture' of the school and organisation development is a method that can bring about cultural change. There are four types of OD interventions commonly used; Training, survey data feedback, constructive confrontation and process observation and feedback (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994: 28). Usually an OD practitioner or facilitator will help identify which issue(s) needs to be addressed by using methods such as *Survey Data Feedback* (SDF). Botha says this method can gather information by using questionnaires, direct observations, interviews, workshops, documentation and records or a combination of these techniques (Botha, in Meyer & Botha 2000:8).

Training is often needed to introduce new or improved organizational methods. Behavioural and structural change arises from experiential learning. Individuals can alter their habitual behaviour patterns when encouraged to act in new ways by colleagues.

Cognitive change can also be stimulated by means of information presented in the form of lectures or written handouts (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994:371).

SDF was first described by Floyd Mann who discovered that departments that discussed their data made more significant changes than those that heard nothing or received feedback only. Face to face discussion not just the survey technique is the key to constructive change (Weisbord 1987:192). SDF is the most frequently used OD design, as it is easily adapted to suit any situation and is particularly useful in getting an OD intervention started where an organisation is quite emotionally or physically disparate.

Constructive confrontation is necessary in situations where conflict is impeding the progress of an individual or group. The OD facilitator can bring together the conflicting groups and help them to communicate more freely the perceptions they have of each other in an attempt to get them to come to some kind of agreement which is mutually beneficial (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994: 30).

Process observation and feedback tries to involve participants in talking about their working relationships and make group agreements to modify their ways of working together in the future. This is a particularly useful method for trying to improve meetings that most people seem to think of as 'a burden to be endured' (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994:183).

### **2.7.1 Future Search (FS)**

Another intervention which is gaining in popularity amongst OD specialists is that of the 'future search' conferences. It was an idea suggested in Weisbord by Emery and Trist (Weisbord, 1996: 282). The basic principle of it is to get an organisation to recognise changes that have occurred by examining their past and present situations as well as examining their hopes for the future. Weisbord and Janoff are co-directors of the future search network and have led conferences all over the world training more than 2,500 facilitators in Africa, Asia, Australia and Europe. They see FS as extending traditional OD meetings in an exciting new direction. The spirit of FS is self-management and discovery and it requires the commitment of the 60-70 people attending the 2 to 3 day conference (Weisbord & Janoff, 2000:12).

Students at the University of Maryland claim the purpose of FS is to help large diverse groups of individuals discover their common values, goals and interests. It should provide them with a way to create a desired future together that they can start implementing straight away. It is said to be most beneficial in uncertain, fast-changing situations. It typically involves 60-80 people and usually lasts two to three days. The group needs to be big enough to provide different perspectives but also small enough to allow for dialogue. Participants need no prior training or expertise (University of Maryland, 2003: 1).

FS has four principles:

1. To get rid of the hierarchy and involve everyone who has a stake in the organisation from the janitor to the chief executive officer.
2. To help each person to see the bigger picture
3. To treat problems and conflict as information whilst searching for common ground and desirable futures
4. To invite and encourage the participants to work together in small groups reflecting, taking and acting on what they learn

When carrying out a FS procedure there are five tasks to perform:

1. Examine the past to see where the organisation has been
2. Examine the present to discover the trends that are affecting the organisation
3. To look at the “prouds” and “sorries” of the organisation
4. Examine the future to see what the organisation wants to do
5. Find common ground for action planning

Task one establishes a common history and brings in previous experiences. Task two notes the world trends affecting the whole group. Task three acknowledges what they are doing now that they are proud of and what they are sorry about. Task four and five help to devise ideal future scenarios.

The benefit of a FS is that it has a unique approach based on the belief that each of us has the skills and knowledge necessary to create change. Everyone regardless of his or her status, skills or attitudes is given the opportunity to be involved. Participants work in small groups and learn from one another and this builds trust, encourages creativity and provides sustainability (University of Maryland, 2003:1).

Sean Barry, a student at the university of Maryland reflects on the success of a future search operation and how it empowered every member of her organisation whilst at the same time

it eliminated a great deal of possible power struggles. Previously in her organisation her class had been working towards a mission statement but everyone's egos kept getting in the way. With the introduction of FS people were able to continue to work on their own projects but without the power struggle (University of Maryland, 2003: 2).

Sonoma State University's Psychology department also carried out an extremely successful FS procedure using nine of their OD masters students. They worked with a local community and developed a shared vision for a better future for young people in the town of Windsor. They had a three-day conference and invited educators, administrators, government officials, youth service providers and representatives of local youth (Sonoma State University, 2003: 1).

## **2.8 THE OD FACILITATOR**

The success of implementing change is generally associated with those who facilitate the change process. The personality of the OD practitioner her/himself is a vital part of the process. The person has to have a positive enthusiastic attitude themselves in order to help facilitate the development of others. (Armstrong, 2004:1). As a facilitator you have to gain the trust and confidence of your client and if you are of a negative disposition your success rate will not be very high. You also need to have a good knowledge of behavioural science, have the ability to recognise people's attitudes, emotions and perceptions. It is also of benefit if you have some experience in the type of organisation you are helping, for example in education it is helpful if you have been or are a teacher and have knowledge of some of the issues affecting the organisation.

The OD consultant/facilitator should have five core competencies:

1. Information seeking- an underlying curiosity and desire to know more about things, people and issues
2. Analytical thinking- understanding a situation by breaking it apart into smaller pieces or tracing the implications of a situation in a step-by-step way.
3. Conceptual thinking- the ability to identify patterns or connections between situations that are not obviously related, and to identify key or underlying issues in complex situations
4. Interpersonal understanding- the ability to accurately hear and understand the unspoken or partly expressed thoughts, feelings and concerns of others

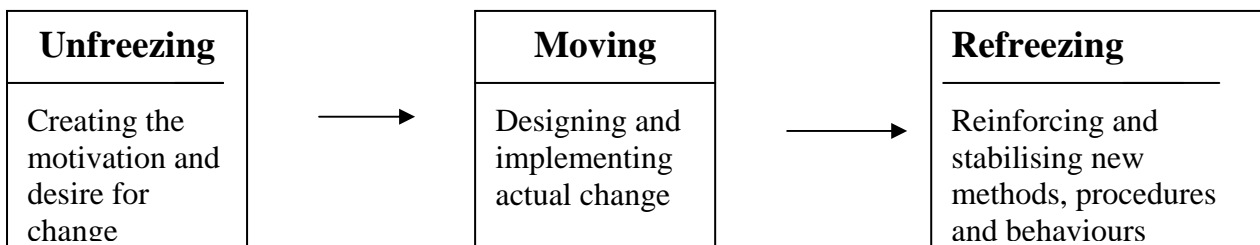
5. Adversity flexibility- the ability to remain flexible when the environment is changing and to adapt to these changes  
(Nel, in Meyer & Botha, 2000: 102)

The facilitator should also remain objective, even when circumstances may encourage them to be subjective. He/she should be dedicated to reaching the desired project outcomes even when it means overcoming obstacles or problems that may arise. He/she should be willing to assume the role of leader for certain projects and should have the self-confidence that allows them the belief in their own ability to accomplish an assignment. He/she should be able to select an effective approach to a task or problem (*ibid*:103).

The OD facilitator often has to display strong leadership skills, especially if training is part of the intervention (Schmuck & Runkel 1994: 75). Constructive confrontation is the least used of all interventions but may be needed in situations where there is major conflict between colleagues. Once again the facilitator will have to play a dominant role in ensuring proper handling of the situation. Process observation and feedback is a feature that is present in all interventions. Facilitators have to ensure that the group is continually on the right path and sticking to agreements.

## 2.9 THE PROCESS

The procedure for most OD interventions follows ‘Lewins Law’ which involves the three-step procedure for change. Lewin saw human systems as almost but not quite static (Weisbord, 1987:226). Unresolved issues accumulate in organisations and people freeze in dysfunctional patterns; nobody listens, appreciates, celebrates or communicates (Weisbord, 1997:227). The job of the OD facilitator is to get people to unfreeze, move forward and then refreeze in order to sustain the change.



(Nel in Meyer & Botha 2000:91)

In schools, unfreezing is seen as necessary when the school is trapped in a crisis situation. Examples of crisis could be an increase in the learner failure rates, declining enrolment or teacher and student absenteeism.

### **2.9.1 Cultural Change**

OD has the ability to change the culture of an organisation and this is seen as imperative to effect change. The culture of an organisation is its norms and values; the way that things get done and why is as important as what is done (French, Bell & Zawacki, 2000:4). This is what makes OD different from other methods of school improvement. The OD facilitator is able to work with the school not just a few representatives of the organisation. He/she is able to organise a structured timetable of events that are mutually acceptable by the organisation for its future developmental needs at that time. Working in that school environment allows real data to be collected from the participants and a true picture of the unique needs of that school will be generated. The facilitator is then able to feedback the information and following discussions with the participants help them to decide on the way forward using the Situation Target Path (STP) method (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994: 53).

Although there may be generic problems and solutions, no two schools can be alike. Schools have a dynamic human element that may consist of different cultural beliefs and values. The facilitator using constructive confrontation methods can help to find the common ground between these groups and in the case of a dysfunctional school can try to help the staff find a way to restore the culture of learning and teaching.

### **2.10 EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL OD INTERVENTIONS**

A typical OD intervention is a prolonged process and involves an iterative action research process which consists of seven stages:

1. Preliminary diagnosis
2. Data gathering from the client group
3. Data feedback to the client group
4. Exploration of the data by the client group
5. Action planning by the client group
6. Action taking by the client group
7. Evaluation and assessment of the results of the actions by the client group

(French, Bell & Zawacki, 2000:5)

At stage seven a further diagnosis may be made which will be followed by steps 2 to 7 and this should carry on, as a continual cycle of change and each time progress should be made within the organisation.

Argyris and Schon proposed the 'double loop' of organisational learning. Groups engage in inquiry and publicly test their assumptions and definitions of the situation. This opens up a second loop of inquiry whereby the system scans itself and learns how it learns (Cited by Mirvis, 1996:19). Organisations often have difficulty in knowing why some changes work and some do not. The reasons range from denial, discounting and blaming to flank protection. Mirvis advises organisations to treat planned change as an experiment, not an action based on knowledge and skills that should automatically work. Organisations should expect errors and learn from them (Mirvis, 1996:18).

Waugh describes a South African mining industry that developed the 'Seven D change process' with great success. It was a technological approach as it involved the development and implementation of Information Communication Technologies (ICT). The seven D's are:

1. Demand phase – potential business and operational benefits must be proven and serve as the driving force for change.
2. Discover phase – a suitable team is appointed by the management to discover the requirements of change.
3. Dimension phase – this is when the possible solutions are developed conceptually and project areas and teams are defined.
4. Design phase – dedicated teams will design the delivery and then it is assessed in terms of risks/benefits. It is then presented again to the steering committee.
5. Development phase – the programmes are put together, the target groups are primed to create expectations and the capacity is built to support the changes
6. Deliver phase – this is the execution of a number of interventions. The intention of this phase is to create a climate that is conducive to change as well as enabling the business to successfully implement the changes to achieve sustained performance improvements
7. Dedicate phase – this involves the development of realistic, achievable and measurable plans to sustain the changes. Ownership is created and the changes are continuously monitored and analysed. Feedback to both the people and the management are given.

(Waugh, in Meyer & Botha, 2000:135).

Examples of interventions in industry are given in French, Bell & Zawacki. For example one manufacturing company made the long-term commitment of 3-day work sessions in OD every 3 to 4 months over a period of 18 months until the organisation had started on the road to recovery. Another company had an initial 3-day workshop followed up by observation of meetings and a half-day workshop to evaluate the changes after 3 months. The company now has a 3-day workshop annually (French, Bell & Zawacki, 1999:6).

In the case of Yellowwood, a South African school, the process of change is still ongoing but the OD intervention was documented over a period of 2 years. The process was slow and had many ups and downs. Some topics had to be covered more than once but the authors placed more emphasis on the process rather than the outcomes. Their main desire was to assist the school in becoming more self-reliant, learning from experience, reflecting on actions, understanding what works and what does not, and why (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002: 186).

Irvine used OD to help improve the NGO she was working with; she achieved great success in transforming the organisation to meet the needs of its environment and staff (Irvine, 1999: 61). Kadyakapita also found success with his intervention in private church schools in Malawi. He confirmed that OD values were congruent with those held by the school (Kadyakapita, 1998: 114). Neshila of Namibia also achieved some success with her intervention into problem solving and communications at the school (Neshila, 2004: 82).

## **2.11 BARRIERS TO CHANGE**

School improvement rests upon a number of assumptions, the most important one being that the school has the capacity to improve itself. Harris notes five factors, which can prevent school improvement:

1. Unclear purposes and goals: if the reasons for the change are not transparent it is unlikely that teachers will be committed to working towards the change
2. Competing priorities: when there are many changes taking place simultaneously then the constraint of time will mean that some changes are given more priority than others.
3. Lack of support: in order to implement change there needs to be adequate technical, professional and emotional support for teachers.
4. Insufficient attention to implementation: many school improvement efforts fail simply because insufficient thought has been given to exactly

how change is to be embedded within schools and classrooms. A well-intentioned change may be lost.

5. Inadequate leadership: any successful change or innovation will require direction and leadership. Where school improvement fails it is often because it has lacked leadership within the school or has been delegated to others without the authority to take it forward.

(Harris, 2002: 19).

OD has the potential to ensure that factors one to four are accomplished but factor five is a huge problem facing many South African schools. School principals in most schools are often teachers with many years' service and no particular management skills. Theron cites Carnal, Miles, Paulo, Jwaideh, Virgilio and Virgilio who all emphasise that the principal needs certain skills in order to initiate and manage change successfully. He/she must have:

- Good interpersonal relationships and ease of manner
- A grounding in the ethics and philosophy of change
- An understanding of how groups function
- Familiarity with adult education and with running workshops
- Wide teaching experience, a sound knowledge of educational management and a good general knowledge of other disciplines
- Initiative and innovative ideas
- Skills in enhancing communication, trust and self confidence
- The ability to generate effective, positive relationships, to give support and to show empathy and sensitivity
- A willingness to confront people where necessary without generating hostility
- A sound understanding of how to handle conflict and stress
- A flexible and adaptable management style
- The ability to identify her/his own and others' strengths and weaknesses
- Skills in planning for action and implementation

(Theron, in van der Westhuizen, 2003: 199).

Lahui-Ako, during his research about principals in Papua New Guinea found that high school teachers had been promoted to the position of principal based on inspection reports as classroom teachers, also friendships and "who they knew" had an influence on their appointment (Lahui-Ako, 2001:235). The Eastern Cape reported a similar situation where corrupt teachers and official made appointments on an ad hoc basis (Naki, 2004:4). Because of a lack of leadership and management skills principals saw themselves primarily as administrators and despite their good intentions little of their work was directed towards

teaching and learning and they spent most of their time on administrative tasks (Lahui-Ako, 2001: 236).

From his research Lahui-Ako recommended a programme of training for the principals to provide them with leadership and organizational knowledge and skills, including knowledge of change and innovation. The ability to initiate, invent and adapt, a sense of direction as well as the skills to motivate and provide appropriate leadership styles to meet the challenges and demands of the changing educational environment (Lahui-Ako, 2001: 239).

Change is a process that needs to be managed and the school principal is the key figure around which the school revolves and so a very important gatekeeper where OD is concerned. Having the support and commitment of the teachers, students, parent and the community to help bring about change is also important to secure meaningful change. Adequate time must also be allowed – even though one feels the sense of urgency for the students who are in their final years of high school, the process should not be rushed.

## **2.12 SUMMARY**

The purpose of schooling is to support all students in gaining skills, understanding and credentials to participate effectively in the workplace and the society of the future. A good school is one where management and leadership supports the teaching and the teaching supports the learners and all are working towards a common goal – successful achievement outcomes (Silins & Murray-Harvey, 1999: 335). Schools require strategies for improvement that match their particular context, circumstances and developmental needs (Harris 2002:7). The legacy of *innovation overload* is well known and where schools face multiple changes and competing priorities improvement is unlikely to occur (Harris, 2002: 10). As mentioned in the section on South African Schools (chap. 2, 2.3) they are inundated with mandatory changes. This is why I think that OD with its facilitator who can work within the school, assisting in directing change and tackling only one issue at a time is perhaps the most promising way forward for some of our struggling schools.

In this chapter I have described the situation in South African schools showing the need for change and the various methods of change currently available. I show that OD holds the

greatest hope for meaningful change in our turbulent environment. Its democratic principles and empowerment of individuals are major strengths which have the potential to introduce sustainable change. I highlighted some serious constraints related to management which will require deeper investigation if OD is to achieve its promise of improvement for all involved in education.

In the next chapter I describe my research design.

## CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

*“Organisations work the way they work because of the ways that people work”*

*Peter Senge*

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I presented the literature that supports the essence of my research and in this chapter I describe the research paradigms or frameworks I chose to work in. I go on to describe the data gathering tools which consisted of journal entries, observations and interviews. I discuss the validity of my research and outline the steps taken to ensure that ethical standards were maintained. The methodologies were selected to support the goals of my research which were:

- To carry out an organisation development intervention in a previously disadvantaged school.
- To explore the participants’ experience of organisation development.
- To investigate if there is any perceived improvement in the culture of learning and teaching by the participants.

### 3.2 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

Paradigm is a Greek word which refers to the way in which we understand and interpret our world (Covey, 1989:11). It is our frame of reference and depends on many diverse factors related to our education, culture and beliefs. When choosing which paradigm to work in our selection is directed by our ideas about the nature of the world, our ontology. According to Schwandt a paradigm is a type of cognitive framework used by a specific community of scientists to generate and to solve puzzles in their field (Schwandt, 1997: 108).

Morrison (in Coleman & Briggs, 2002: 11) maintains that education is the experience and nurture of personal and social developments towards worthwhile living and that research into education should ask two key questions. The questions are concerned with epistemology and the first is about the relationship between what we see and understand – based on our theories of knowledge. The second question is about our reality – our ontology or sense of being. In the words of McKenzie (cited by Morrison in Coleman & Briggs, 2003: 11) “how we go about creating knowledge about the world we live in?”

There are two main paradigms that form the basis of research in the social sciences. The paradigm that is rooted in the physical sciences is called the systemic, scientific, positivist or quantitative approach whilst the ethnographic, ecological or naturalistic approach is often called qualitative (Kumar, 1999:12). The qualitative paradigm is also known as post-positivist and it has only found its place in research over the past 40 years. Before that time almost all research was conducted using the natural science method. Data collected were shown to be “statistically significant” and “generalizable” amongst populations. Post-positivists believe the world may not be knowable - that it is infinitely more complex and open to interpretation (O’Leary, 2004:6).

I found myself drawn to post-positivist research because the topic I am studying is not a fixed, single, agreed upon or measurable phenomenon as is found in positivist research. I am researching a unique organization and though some of the results obtained may be transferable this was not a deliberate intention of the study. Both the critical and interpretive paradigms inform the philosophy of my research. According to O’Leary there is no ‘best type’ of research, only good questions matched with appropriate procedures of enquiry (O’Leary, 2004: 9). Morrison says all educational research should be grounded in people’s experiences (in Coleman & Briggs, 2003: 18) not as facts but as a construct in which people can understand reality in different ways and this is why I chose the interpretive paradigm.

### **3.2.1 The Interpretive Paradigm**

*“There are no facts - only interpretations” - Nietzsche*

Interpretivists base their view on the Hegelian perspective that ‘humans can only understand the world as it appears to them – not as it really is’ (Janse van Rensburg, 2001:16). They acknowledge and explore the cultural and historical interpretations of the social world. This paradigm is characterized by a concern for the individual (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 22). I wanted to discover the perceptions of the participants with reference to the OD intervention. This paradigm allows for the construction of multiple meanings of reality that are in a state of flux and can change over time (Merriam & Associates, 2002: 3).

The state of affairs in South African education at the moment is one of permanent flux. I was introducing even more change with my research and so this was the paradigm most suited to trying to understand how the participants were making meaning of the changes in relation to their worlds. I also recognized that as a qualitative researcher not only would I have an impact on the participants but they would also have an impact on me. According to Morrison using this paradigm allowed me to pay attention to detailed observation leading to rich and deep descriptions of the holistic picture the topic was embedded in (Morrison, in Coleman & Briggs, 2003: 20).

### **3.2.2 The Critical Paradigm**

*“I don’t just want to research something - I want to make a difference”*

*Zina O’Leary*

Critical researchers have the view that research processes are value-laden... and a quest for enquiry to contribute to transformation in an unjust world (Janse van Rensburg, 2001:23). In particular it seeks to emancipate the disempowered, to redress inequality and to promote individual freedoms within a democratic society (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 28). As mentioned in chapter two (see 2.3), many teachers are feeling helpless in the face of so many changes within education. In carrying out an Organisation Development (OD) intervention I did have an agenda to help bring about change to the organisation in some way.

Teachers and learners have virtually no input concerning the changes that are taking place in education at the moment. There is widespread disenchantment and low morale amongst both learners and teachers and they are the ones who have to eventually bear the blame for the failure of the school system. In most cases they have no power to make meaningful change or have their voices heard. By carrying out research in this manner I wanted to give teachers the opportunity to speak out and empower them in some way, enabling them to take back some control in their lives.

OD itself uses action research methods which are vehicles for politically strategic action and in some settings play a galvanizing role in collaborative efforts to bring about social change (Noffke & Stevenson, 1995: vii). In chapter two I describe how some of the changes in education have come about (see 2.3) and my intention in using this paradigm is to help

produce knowledge that might inform transformation in some of the schools that are becoming dysfunctional.

### **3.3 METHOD**

The method I chose was a case study of the action research process used to inform the OD intervention in the school.

#### **3.3.1 Case Study**

Bassey gives a thorough definition of the case study method which explains it very well:

An educational case study is an empirical enquiry which is:

- Conducted within a localized boundary of space and time
- Into interesting aspects of an educational activity, or programme
- In order to inform the judgments and the decisions of practitioners or policy-makers
- Sufficient data must be collected for the researcher to be able to explore and interpret the data, present a worthwhile argument which is trustworthy and enables other researchers to add to or challenge it.

(Bassey, in Coleman & Briggs, 2002: 109).

The empirical enquiry for me was the initial data gathering exercise of the survey data feedback. The research was conducted in only one school, namely Acacia High School. The activity studied was the OD intervention which was aimed at school improvement. It proved to be very interesting and deserving of investigation as it was vitally important to the members of the organization and the way they worked together. Respect for participants' wishes in line with a code of ethics was maintained and will be discussed later in this chapter. It is to be hoped that the findings of the research will contribute to progress being made in other school interventions. Subsequent researchers should be able to build from my findings and I believe sufficient data were collected for the limited time that I had available to carry out my research. (See chapter four for the presentation of data).

The usefulness of single case studies is supported by Gluckman who asserts they are reliable and respectable procedures of social analysis. He goes on to say that one good case

can illuminate the working of a social system in a way that a series of morphological statements cannot (cited in Gomm, Hammersley and Foster, 2002: 165).

The methodological approaches involved in a case study can be broad and eclectic. They can involve any number of data gathering methods, for example; surveys, interviews, observation and document analysis (O'Leary, 2004: 15). My research involved an action research process which included a survey data feedback, diagnosis and action plan. Interviews were taken with participants during and after each stage. A journal was also kept to record my perceptions of any changes that might occur in the school.

### **3.3.2 Action Research**

Action research is a powerful tool for change at the local level (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 226). It is a research strategy that pursues action and knowledge in an integrated fashion through a cyclical and participatory process. In an action research process, outcome and application are inextricably linked (O'Leary, 2004: 139).

Action research generally involves the identification of practical problems in a specific context and attempts to seek and implement solutions within that context. Action research methods are familiar to many teachers as problem solving techniques. They are seen as a necessary development to assist teachers and schools in coping with dynamic developments, divergent demands and complex practical situations (O'Hanlon 1996:61). Action research methods are participatory and self evaluative - the ultimate objective being to improve practice in some way or other (Cohen & Manion 1994:186).

My research could be classified as participatory action research in that the participants were an integral part of the research design. As Mouton describes I was trying to gain insights into the experiences of the individuals in an attempt to empower them to change their social conditions (Mouton, 2001: 151). Kemmis & Mc Taggart (cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:227) make a distinction between action research and the everyday actions of a teacher. Action research involves problem posing not just problem solving, it is research done on teacher's own work to help them improve what they do and how they work with others. Most important is the ability of action research to help in the professional development of teachers.

Action research is synonymous with OD processes and a sound OD programme rests on the action research model (French, Bell & Zawacki, 1994: 138). OD typically involves members of the organization participating actively in all phases of the process from the initial design of the project, through data gathering and analysis to final conclusions and actions. My plan was to involve all the participants in the school in the initiation of the project and to follow the stages of implementation and evaluation but as is shown in the data the path of my research did not run smoothly.

### **3.3.3 The OD Cycle**

Nel (in Meyer & Botha, 2000: 95-98) describes seven phases in their OD consulting process. I compare my research to their plan and this is how the intervention proceeded at Acacia High School:

#### **1.) Problem recognition / Pre-entry Phase.**

At this stage the facilitator needs to find out more about the issues and problems facing the organization. S/he needs to be aware of the client profile and what expectations they may have concerning OD. S/he also should be aware of what could go wrong and be prepared with alternatives.

A friend on the SMT at Acacia High School recognized the problems at the school and thought that OD might be able to provide a solution for them. He made an appointment for me with the principal.

#### **2.) Entry / Initial Contact**

This is either by invitation from the interested party or as in my case an appointment with the school principal to seek his approval for my intervention. It is during this time that the facilitator should assess the situation, the needs of the client and the objectives of the intervention. Can a relationship be established and what the restraining forces are within the organization?

The principal requested a meeting with his Senior Management Team (SMT) before the approval was given which was good as it meant there were five members who agreed to go ahead with the procedure

### 3.) Diagnosis / Data Collection and Problem Analysis

The success of an OD intervention is dependent on this stage of gathering the 'real' data. It is here that one can assess the readiness for change as well as the underlying culture and attitudes of the participants. One can identify the key role players and assess the hierarchy of the organization too.

This stage was the Survey Data Feedback (SDF) and in order to collect data I borrowed from the Future Search (FS) method of identifying 'prouds' and 'sorries'. This resulted in a preliminary diagnosis being made which was confirmed by further in-depth personal interviews about the issues raised in the 'prouds' and 'sorries'. Although only half the teaching staff were involved in this stage I was encouraged to continue as the SMT were all present and they are seen as the gatekeepers of the process.

Before the staff wrote their 'prouds' and 'sorries' they did enter into a contract with me about the procedure and they agreed to co-operate with me (see appendix C). It was also during this very important stage that a team of facilitators was elected to help carry the process. The team was involved in helping to make the diagnosis from the data they had helped to collect using interview questions they had helped to devise.

### 4.) Feedback / Problem Analysis

The goal of this stage is to ensure that the client organization receives and accepts all the research information as a valid and accurate picture of the current state of affairs. It is also when the facilitator should try to create some enthusiasm for undertaking changes designed to solve the problems identified. In the case of Acacia it was quite an embarrassment for some of the teachers to see their problems written down on paper and rather than excited enthusiasm for change there appeared to be despondent acknowledgment with a determination by some to try to bring about change.

The facilitator must remain objective at this stage and make no value calls or judgements on the data. During this meeting I outlined a plan of how to start a change process using the Situation Target Path (STP) analysis (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994: 53). I also offered my assistance in helping to plan the way forward. This offer was politely

refused and I was thanked for my assistance in bringing the situation to light. I was informed they would contact me at a later date if necessary.

#### 5.) Action Planning / Intervention Planning and Design

I did not take part in this stage of the process but the SMT did incorporate OD designs when developing the plan of action. Many problems had been identified by the SDF and the SMT decided to focus their attention on just one issue, punctuality. They involved the whole school in a collaborative process hoping that if they were all involved in making decisions they would implement them. They called their plan “Project Punctuality” (see chap.4, 4.6.1).

#### 6.) Intervention Implementation

During this phase I was an observer making detailed notes after visiting the school and informally talking with members of staff and students. Although my role was unofficial at this stage I was acknowledged as being a facilitator of the process and welcomed by most of the staff.

#### 7.) Evaluation

Following the implementation there is always a need for follow-up to assess if everything is going according to plan. Adaptations are sometimes needed as hiccups are bound to occur in the initial stages of any change process. Acacia High School did plan to have evaluation or progress meetings about their project but these failed to materialize due to management issues (see chap. 4, 4.8).

During this stage it is common to have new problems materialize. In the case of Acacia there had been many issues raised at the SDF which still needed attention. Although discipline in the school had improved with the instigation of the Project Punctuality there were still some underlying problems. OD is an ongoing cyclical process of identifying problems → implementing solutions → evaluating the change and then going back to the first stage again.

### **3.4 DATA GATHERING TOOLS**

After my initial contact I kept a personal journal of detailed notes and observations made after each visit to the school. I also took photographs to confirm some of the physical conditions mentioned in the data chapter. Informal interviews were carried out during some of the visits and snippets of conversations were written down. Formal interviews were made at crucial stages in the intervention, namely after the SDF and implementation of the action plan.

#### **3.4.1 Interviews**

Interviews are seen as the most important source of case study information (Yin, 2003: 89). As most case study evidence is about human affairs it is important that they be reported through the eyes of specific interviewees (Yin, 2003: 92). According to Brenner interviews can focus on the informants' understandings rather than checking the accuracy of the interviewers' account and they allow both parties to explore the meaning of the questions and the answers involved (cited in Arksey & Knight, 1999:32). Clarification of information is obtained in this way and the use of semi-structured interviews allowed for the collection of specific data from all the respondents and at the same time permitted the respondent to define their experiences in their own unique way (Merriam 2001:74).

The interview questions for the SDF were designed by the elected group to elicit specific information about the issues uncovered by the 'prouds' and 'sorries'. Twenty-one staff members were interviewed during that time and the answers were written down on the question sheet (see Appendix B). All the interviews were anonymous and details were kept confidential. During the SDF a team had been elected to assist in collecting the interview data. This team of four conducted the interviews in private offices or a quiet corner of the staffroom a few even opted to fill out the interview forms themselves.

The interviews after the action plan was implemented were more focused and did not involve the team. Each interviewee was selected for interview and the individual interviews took place in a private office in the school. The interviews were recorded after permission had been granted by the participants. My intention was to explore the perceptions of the participants about the improvement of the culture of learning and teaching at the school after the initiation of Project Punctuality (Goal 3), as well as their experiences of the OD

process (Goal 2). Two of the interviewees were teaching staff, one of whom was from the SMT, and the other three were students. The students were purposively selected because of their skills in communication. I considered them the most likely students to be able to articulate their answers with confidence.

### **3.5 EXAMINATION OF DATA**

The initial ‘prouds’ and ‘sorries’ were coded and grouped under four categories (see 4.3.1). This was done with the assistance of the elected members of the school. The interviews for the SDF were also categorised and a summary was made of the information (see 4.4.1).

After the implementation of Project Punctuality an analysis was made. This was done by comparing descriptions of the school on my first visit to subsequent visits as well as data collected from the interviewees. Observations included the numbers of learners lounging outside classrooms and playing soccer in the yards before and after the implementation.

The recorded data from the interviews were transcribed in full and given to the participants to verify before being used in the data chapter. These data were analysed with the specific intention of gleaning answers to the progress of the OD intervention and to establish if the individual had perceived any changes in the culture of learning and teaching at the school.

### **3.6 ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Permission was sought before I carried out any intervention. I had a letter of authority from Rhodes University asking to be allowed to conduct research in the school. Although the principal was reluctant to get the intervention started he warmed to the project afterwards. All the staff present at the workshop gave their written consent to the intervention (see appendix C).

Pseudonyms were used when referring to the school or any of the staff members or learners. All the interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis and the participants were able to verify the information collected before publication. In the case of the teenage participants parental permission had been granted for them to attend another workshop at the school and this included consent to be interviewed afterwards. No one was pressed for

any personal information that was not readily forthcoming and nothing was printed without prior agreement.

### **3.7 VALIDITY**

According to Arksey and Knight increasing attention is being given to the eliciting of children's views and experiences directly. There is greater evidence to show that children are capable of providing worthwhile data from an early age (Arksey & Knight, 1999:115). Although the young adults involved were on average 16 years of age they did provide some very insightful information. The adults had similar opinions (see chapter 4) and along with my journal entries the data produced did provide me with some kind of in-house triangulation (Wellington 2000:73).

### **3.8 LIMITATIONS OF METHOD**

Time was a major limiting factor for this research. The research had to be completed over a period of six months which is quite restrictive for an OD intervention. The process of change can be long and although significant change was achieved initially it was not sustained. The lack of sustainability needed to be investigated further but was beyond the scope of this research.

### **3.9 SUMMARY**

This chapter described the paradigms or frameworks I chose to work in. I then presented the methods that I used to carry out my research and discussed the ethics and validity thereof. Included in this discussion are the limitations that restricted my research. In the next chapter I present my data in a narrative form together with the analysis which will help to provide clarity for the reader.

## CHAPTER FOUR – DATA AND DISCUSSION

*Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.*

*John. F. Kennedy.*

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I outlined the methodology I used in conducting my research. In this chapter I present a narrative account of my interaction with the school using the model of an OD intervention. The data include some of my journal accounts and these will be interspersed with interviews and comments made by staff and students at the school. I analyse the data as they are presented and this should help the reader to gain a clearer understanding of the participants' experiences in carrying out the intervention. I describe some further opportunities for change that arose after the intervention. I conclude by summarising the effect of the OD intervention. I comment on its failure and successes and make some suggestions about how the school could continue to benefit from OD in the future.



**Figure 3:** The school

### 4.2 ENTRY

A Head of Department and personal friend of mine at the school approached me with the suggestion that Acacia<sup>2</sup> High School would welcome an OD intervention. He knew the

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<sup>2</sup> All names have been altered to provide anonymity

school was having difficulties and had heard about OD and thought that such an intervention would help them. He made an appointment for me to meet with the principal on March 9, 2004 at ten am. This was to be my first visit to the school and I had a letter of authority (appendix D) from my supervisor at Rhodes University asking for the schools co-operation in carrying out a survey data feedback (SDF) there.

At the meeting Mr Khoza, the principal, perused the letter very carefully and explained he would not be able to give permission without the approval of the senior management team (SMT) that would be meeting the next day. I immediately offered to present my case to the SMT personally and so made arrangements to meet with them at two pm the next day. I chatted to him about OD explaining how it should involve all the stakeholders of a school. He said he understood why that would be important but he would only want to have teaching staff and perhaps some School Governing Body (SGB) members to be involved at this stage. The learners could join the process later.

#### **4.2.1 SMT Meeting**

Mr Khoza was taken ill shortly after my visit with a suspected heart attack. The deputy principal, Mr Nda agreed to continue with the SMT meeting to hear my presentation. There were five members present, three females and two males. I outlined my plans for the introduction of OD and briefly explained what SDF involved. I asked them to arrange a meeting with the whole staff and some SGB members.

During my presentation the three female staff members remained silent only the two male staff asked questions. My contact at the school, Mr Shell was very keen for me to proceed as he felt it would be “very beneficial to the school” and Mr Nda (who knew a little about OD from his studies at RU) was also interested; he felt “the school was ready for such a procedure”. I asked the ladies if they had any questions but only the deputy principal, Mrs Pils answered saying that she would “go with the flow”. There being no objections they decided to allow me to introduce OD to all the staff and representatives of the SGB on the March 16 at 1pm. It was understood the principal would be away for some time having been diagnosed with stress related symptoms and so Mr Nda assured me he would confirm the date no later than March 12.

#### **4.2.2 Delays**

On March 12 Mr Khoza was discharged from hospital and returned to school March 15. My meeting with the staff on March 16 was postponed due to a memorial service for a local headmaster who had just died of a heart attack. I repeatedly requested another date but was unable to persuade Mr. Khoza to make a firm commitment. I asked Mr. Nda to intercede for me and he succeeded in securing a meeting for me on April 22 at 1pm.

At 4pm on April 21 that meeting was postponed but I was given the definite date of April 26. April 27 was a public holiday and many local schools were taking leave on the 26<sup>th</sup> to create a long weekend. It was anticipated that many students would not attend school that day and so the OD presentation would not cause too much disruption. 44 days after my initial appointment I was finally allowed to present OD to the staff.

#### **Comment**

Mr Khoza and the SMT are the gatekeepers of the school and a key factor to consider when planning change. According to van der Merwe any process of change that lacks the managers' support and commitment has a very slim chance of success (van der Merwe, in van Deventer & Kruger, 2003:46). Without their involvement the sustainability of change is difficult. French, Bell & Zawacki also find it imperative that top management lead and actively encourage the change effort (French, Bell & Zawacki, 2000: 26).

There were only two SMT members who appeared to be actively interested in the process but I was not to be deterred at this stage as I was still to introduce them to OD. Mrs Pils' comment about "going with the flow" was not really supportive but as a black woman it could have been part of her culture not to object strongly when the men of the SMT had already approved the procedure. I did not realise at the time how important it was to have Mr Khoza's approval. I later discovered that Mr Nda's decision to go ahead with the meeting in the absence of Mr Khoza was an unusual occurrence. Meetings were usually cancelled if Mr Khoza could not be present.

#### **4.3 CONTRACTING**

Seventeen of the thirty-eight teaching staff members were present at school that day (April 26) for the SDF workshop. Of the absentees some had taken a day leave and five were at a workshop for HIV/AIDS. No SGB members were present (no-one had invited them) and

the ancillary staff were too busy to attend. The learners who had arrived that day (there were no registers taken but it is estimated that only two thirds of them came) were sent home at 10am.

### **Comment**

Although 24 teachers had turned up that day only seventeen came to hear about the OD. Because the SGB members and ancillary staff had not been invited I was disappointed but at that time I thought seventeen willing participants was a good number of teachers to begin with.

### **4.3.1 The Workshop**

I started the workshop with a brief introduction of who I was and where I was from and then put up a poster of the planned agenda for the workshop as follows:

- Introduction to OD
- Contracting
- Discussion groups
- Tea
- Comments on issues raised
- Voting for representatives
- Date for feedback

I introduced OD with a cartoon about change and how it evokes fear into us all (Appendix E). I explained that OD was a process of *planned* change and so less fearful. I outlined a brief history of OD and how since the time of the industrial revolution managers have been trying to make the most money by using the least effort. They have used engineers, psychologists, behaviourists and sociologists all trying to make us become more efficient as workers.

I displayed another cartoon, this time the 'far side' about chickens working for chicken feed (Appendix F).

I described how OD had started in industry in the 1950's and then moved across to education in the early 80's. How education is recognised as being different from other organisations in that it requires a more human approach. Education involves learners and teachers not machines and products.

I went on to say that education has been the most reformed of all institutions and although change had been planned by some ministers somewhere teachers were the ones responsible for implementing those changes.

I displayed a cartoon of a frustrated teacher (Appendix G).

I asked them how we are expected to keep up with all the changes and went on to describe how 60% of people change only when there is a sudden disaster, 20 % evolve and slowly adapt to change but only 20% will actually plan for change. I told them that OD helps people to plan for change.

I informed them that OD recognises unless the people doing the work have a voice in planning the change it will not work. With OD the ones actually doing the work are the ones who will choose what to change and facilitators like myself will help them find ways to make the changes.

I told them that if they decided to continue with the process of OD, I would be able to offer them some specialist training in teambuilding, decision making, meeting skills, constructive confrontation and any other skill they might require. I also told them it was a myth that only specialist people can learn these things because as teachers they practised these skills daily. I went on to explain the procedure for OD and the steps involved in any change process. There are seven steps: Entry > Contracting > Diagnosis > Feedback > Action Planning > Implementation > Evaluation. Today we would only go as far as the contracting but we would carry out an SDF exercise in order to broadly outline some issues for diagnosis. They would then elect a team to carry out further in-depth data gathering using interviews before confirming the diagnosis and feeding it back to the school. After that they would have to decide what to do with the information. I stressed that there were no 'bosses' in this process that everyone was equal and they had to find some common ground, a shared vision. I also stressed that the process needed their trust and faith that it could work.

I empathised with them about how change is exalted in principle but we find that in practice many of us try to avoid it. Change is often associated with loss; loss of competence makes us feel insecure. Outcome Based Education (OBE) has made many of us feel like

beginners. Change creates confusion, it is unpredictable and many of us are looking for stability in our lives. Change can also sometimes cause conflict.

I told them that OD facilitators are trained to cope with many diverse issues or challenges and that I hoped to have persuaded them that OD was what their school needed to help them cope with all the stresses of the changes that are happening in education today.

I displayed the Far side cartoon of a 'full brain' (Appendix H).

I opened the floor to questions and issued copies of the contract (Appendix C).

Only one teacher questioned the procedure. He felt that there was nothing that could make the teaching situation improve for him until "the government provided more resources and reduced the class sizes". Other teachers asked if "the discipline problems could be solved" using OD. I emphasised that I was not there to solve problems but to help them find their own strategies for bringing about change. I re-iterated that OD was a process of planned change involving all the stakeholders and it is often a long-term process. Any change would come from within the school and it was up to them to decide what needed to be done and how to do it.

I then left the room whilst they decided if they would like to sign the contract. I returned within three minutes to find there had been a unanimous decision to continue with the workshop and so I proceeded. I distributed flip chart paper to each group of three or four teachers. Each piece of paper was divided into two with the headings 'prouds' and 'sorries'. I asked each group to think of at least two things that they were proud of in their school and two things they were sorry about.

After twenty minutes the papers were collected and the participants were invited to have tea whilst I perused the papers looking for correlations in the data. At this time I requested that two members be nominated to assist me in the interview process to take place after the workshop. Pieces of paper were distributed and each member was asked to nominate two people. In all thirteen people were nominated and out of those one name had a majority of votes (nine votes) whilst two others were equal second (seven votes). Rather than take

another vote I asked if it was acceptable to the group to have three representatives for the team and they agreed.

The six pieces of flip chart paper with the ‘prouds’ and ‘sorries’ were put them up on the wall. The groups were able to compare each other’s comments and I was able to point out any correlations.

The following table represents what was written down.

<b>PROUDS</b>	<b>SORRIES</b>
<p>I feel good about going to class            I manage to make learners want to learn            Good results – improving the quality of our results            All the structures such as different committees; RCL, SGB, etc put in place            Democratic management of the school            Good relationship between educators, parents and learners</p>	<p>Discipline of educators and learners            Educators getting demoralised because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Many changes at same time</li> <li>▪ Problems not properly addressed by the department</li> <li>▪ Learning material not arriving / or arriving late</li> <li>▪ No supply of materials to centres such as library and woodwork</li> <li>▪ Computers not enough; not being serviced, resulting in subjects such as compu-typing not being offered any more</li> <li>▪ Not receiving training to keep up with new developments in education</li> </ul>
<p>Academic results – school            RCL structure            SGB structure            Capable educators -&gt; curriculum content</p>	<p>Communication strategies            Planning            Policy and implementation – gaps and lack            Sport development and cultural (extra mural)            Team spirit            Quality of academic results            Computer lab. - &gt; Resources            Ill disciplined learners            Low morale – teachers and learners            Co-operation (effective) of all stakeholders</p>

	OBE introduction ->training
Proud of the children Some dedicated teachers	Failure to <u>act</u> to solve problems Lack of discipline in general (teachers and learners) Management don't manage
Best results in matric United staff members, that relates very well Healthy relationship, co-operative & hard working	Learner behaviour is sometimes a problem Big numbers in class – difficult to teach (individual attention)
Infra-structure (buildings / physical) Relations among staff	Lack of discipline among staff and learners Management (weak) Lack of resources Constant indecisiveness on the part of the department
Results – quantity not quality Co-operation among the staff	Insufficient equipment in laboratories Most of the computers in computer centre are out of order Deterioration of discipline amongst learners Late arrival of learners material e.g. textbooks and stationary

I brought the workshop to a close by explaining what would happen next with the interviews. The team agreed to meet with me on April 29 at 3pm to discuss the data and to formulate questions for further more detailed interviews about the above findings. It was agreed that interviews would take place on April 30 during any free time the teachers might have at school.

### **Comment**

The purpose of an SDF is to systematically gather information to be used as a basis for diagnosis, problem solving and planning (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994:29). It has become the most frequently used OD design because it fits well into the OD philosophy of sharing power with participants at all stages of the OD process. It is particularly effective where the facilitator wishes to take a low profile (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994: 75) as I did with Acacia High School.

The SDF workshop was described by some participants as the 'best workshop' they had ever attended. This was because they had been asked to actually take part in discussions and present their own views in the 'prouds' and 'sorries'. Many workshops that teachers

have attended recently have been training programmes for the implementation of OBE. The workshops were organised and run by the DoE and attendance was compulsory for the teachers concerned. They usually consisted of subject advisors passing on instructions and/or content from their supervisors with little understanding of the implications for the teachers who were treated as passive recipients only.

This was an OD workshop and the participants were allowed the opportunity to discuss matters that really concerned them. OD encourages individuals to express their opinions openly and each one is valued. The teachers' questions after the introduction of the SDF were centred on OD solving problems of school systems such as discipline. The teachers seemed to think that OD would introduce generic solutions to generic school problems. They had not yet reached the understanding that OD empowers people by self-study and analysis to find their own solutions. It was noticeable from listening to the teachers that they valued being able to voice their own opinions.

#### **4.4 DIAGNOSIS**

The team met on April 29 to discuss the data collected at the SDF. We examined the 'prouds' and 'sorries' in greater detail, coding them and dividing them into four categories:

- Management
- Discipline (both teachers and learners)
- Education Department
- Lack of resources

The information provided insight into the problems existing at the school and we now wanted to find the underlying tensions that were causing these problems. In the 'prouds' the staff agreed that they had good relations with each other and the learners. Some were also proud of the academic achievement of the learners. One group was both proud and sorry about the learners' results and another proud of the number of passes but not the quality of them. One group said they were proud of the democratic management and structures in the school such as the SGB.

Each group had mentioned discipline as a problem, and there were thirteen ‘sorries’ that could be attributed to management. Five of the six groups were sorry about the lack of resources and recognised the Department of Education (DoE) as responsible for this situation. Although these constraints are a major contributing factor to the problems facing the school they are external influences on the school and therefore beyond the focus of this study.

### **Comment**

The problem of lack of resources falls under the DoE and until their own capacity building programmes develop competencies and capabilities for effective management of districts it will continue to be a problem and one which the school can have little influence over. The team therefore decided to focus the interview questions on discipline and management at the school. These were the internal issues which OD could try to help resolve.

At this early stage of the data gathering process we felt that the staff might have been reluctant to discuss issues openly, especially with the SMT being present. We hoped that during personal interviews we might get people to be more candid and provide details of the issues surrounding discipline and management that would hopefully point the school in the right direction for change. The issue of academic results appeared to be contentious but most of the teachers seemed to recognise that standards at the school had dropped. The team felt it was good that there was such congruence between the data as it made it easier for them to focus their attention on the two issues of discipline and management.

### **The interview questions**

The team discussed the questions that should be raised for the interviews and the following questions about discipline and management was agreed upon. They also decided that it was important to continue with the interviews the next day in order to maintain the momentum of the exercise.

1. How long have you been working at Acacia?
2. What is your role here at the school?
3. Do you feel your talents are being fully used?
4. Discipline among the staff and learners was a common “sorry” Can you say what it is about the discipline that is a problem?

- a) With the staff
  - b) With the learners
5. What would you do to help solve these problems?
- a) With staff
  - b) With learners
6. Management was also identified as a sorry. What do you think are the main problems with management?
7. If you were part of the management team what would you do differently?

### **Comment**

To get an idea of participants' experience at the school we felt it important to ask about the length of time they had been there. The team recognised that the staff that had been there longer may have different views from newer staff members. Also the length of time a teacher has taught is likely to have an impact on his or her opinions on discipline and management. The question relating to their talents was raised because the team felt that the issue of delegation and responsibility should be explored, as they were aware of staff members who had administrative skills that were not being used.

Asking for the interviewees to come up with solutions was felt to be a very important part of the process. In doing so we were hoping to empower the staff to solve their own problems. This is an important principle of OD since 'we are more likely to carry out decisions we have helped to make' (Weisbord, 1987:89).

#### **4.4.1 Interviews**

I arrived at the school at 7:40 on the 30 April, in time for the daily morning staff meeting. This appeared to be a very haphazard set of announcements and the few staff that were there seemed inattentive. I advertised my presence and requested that anyone who would like to be interviewed should try to see me or one of the team. Between the four of us (the three nominated representatives and me) we managed to interview twenty-one people that day, eighteen teaching staff and three security /caretakers. Others were too busy or did not wish to be interviewed. The interviews were voluntary and took place in the staffroom or the teachers' classroom. OD respects the rights of organisational members and no pressure was applied to coerce anyone into participating. Two teachers who had not attended the SDF were interested in the procedure and after a brief explanation of what had gone on agreed to be interviewed.

The following data were collected from the interviews:

### **Discipline problems with teachers**

- Most of the teachers are good but there are some (three to four, or up to seven) who are not.
- The main problem seems to be punctuality especially period 1 and after break.
- Absenteeism for various reasons, but even when some teachers are present they fail to go to class. Some arrive late and leave early. Also some are not teaching when they are there
- There is a poor work ethic, staff do not comply with decisions made at staff meetings, and some show no respect towards authority particularly those protected by the unions.
- This is an English medium school and a lot of teachers teach their subject in Xhosa.
- Many are not involved in extra-curricular activities, for some their personal studies are affecting their teaching.
- Generally some do not have the learners' interests at heart, some discriminate between the learners and some have not accepted the modern approach to education and may still use corporal punishment.
- Some do not co-operate with the non-teaching staff, they litter and if they take chairs outside they leave them there.
- There is a general demoralisation of the staff, which is resulting in a lack of trust and a loss of self-esteem.

### **Suggested solutions**

- There has to be accountability, records must be kept of attendance – union members also need to be accountable. Action should be taken against persistent offenders.
- Staff need to be committed, they must practice self-evaluation and comply with decisions made by SGB, staff meetings and the union.
- Staff should co-operate fully and help support each other and unite in their methods of dealing with students.
- The principal and the staff should all be good role models for the learners; they should not be authoritarian but try to motivate students positively.
- Non-teaching staff should have a representative at meetings to answer any questions and prevent misunderstandings.
- Meetings should be planned in advance, there should be a timetable prepared at the end of the year with meetings and exams etc.

## **Comment**

The data collected from the staff gave a clearer picture of the discipline problems at the school. The teachers seemed very aware of the schools' shortcomings and although unwilling to name names they knew exactly who was not behaving in a professional manner. This was a very encouraging situation as the teachers had not only identified the problems but had also thought about the solutions. I realised that this must be a great source of frustration for them.

They would also like to have more staff involved in activities at the school and become better role models for the learners. Timetables and meetings should be planned well in advance. As one teacher explained to me:

Teachers are unable to plan well for their lessons, we have our syllabus outline and we know what we have to teach but we cannot plan for the week ahead as the school is so unpredictable. Meetings are called, lessons are shortened or lengthened, some group comes along and wants to address the grade nine girls or the matrics go for a week to a maths course the choir has to practise for a function. None of it is planned in advance – you just arrive at school to be told today such and such will happen and you just have to get on with it. If you try to complain you only end up frustrating yourself and so we just learn to accept.

Mrs J. and Mrs Mat agreed: you will only give yourself stress and it is not worth it – you will never change anything so just accept it.

They also felt that it was up to management to instigate disciplinary proceedings for any professional misconduct. The question has to be asked why the school is stuck in this situation and Acacia may be one of the 'trapped' schools referred to in chapter two (page 12). The apartheid system bred compliance with authority and many teachers feel unable to challenge the status quo. This suggests that the hegemonic nature of the system has changed little in the new South Africa and it still exerts its influence.

### **Discipline problems with learners**

- The main problems seem to be with absenteeism and punctuality, especially for period one and after break. Learners often bunk lessons and their behaviour since the removal of corporal punishment has been arrogant and demanding.

- The classes are large and this leads to problems in the classroom.
- They do not take their studies seriously, quite often they do not do their homework or class work and they do not seem to care.
- They do not seem motivated to achieve the best of their capabilities, and have a lack of respect for authority.
- Generally there is a poor culture of learning.
- There is a problem with drugs (dagga – not cocaine) and drinking, not too big but increases during evening functions etc.
- Some learners' behaviour is destructive; some live with their grandparents, or have violent parents and so are difficult.
- The code of conduct for learners is not adhered to.

### **Suggested solutions**

- If the teachers are in class the learners will also be. Discipline procedures need to be followed, and action should be taken against persistent offenders. SGB should deal firmly with them.
- There has to be more communication between parents and teachers, perhaps the social workers or even the psych department of Fort England (local psychiatric institution) should be called in.
- The learner's proficiency in English needs to be improved, perhaps by extra library periods. Maybe need a literacy campaign for parents as well to improve learning.
- Students should be mentored and be able to discuss problems with teachers.
- A team of teachers could be responsible for patrolling certain areas in the school. The principal should be more visible around the school.
- There needs to be more cultural and physical activities for the learners, challenge them more. Set goals for them. Try to develop a strong culture of learning, get the RCL involved, and train them better in leadership strategies. Motivate with positive reinforcement – certificates to boost self-esteem.

### **Comment**

Once again the teachers recognised that many of the problems the learners had were related to the teachers' behaviour. There were also social issues to contend with but no serious crimes involving guns or so called 'hard' drugs. The teachers also wanted to see management take firmer action against students who were disruptive and help provided to those in need. The provision of extra-curricular activities is also an important issue for some as they saw it as an important part of the learners' development.

## **Management Issues**

- The management team is well-balanced in the sense that there are some strong and moderate figure-heads in the senior management team.
- There was a general feeling from the members of the teaching and non-teaching staff that there should be a planning and vision statement created by the whole school, collectively. (SGB, RCL, teaching and non-teaching staff and management)
- The interviewees complained that most of the time, meetings were held; decisions were taken but were not implemented. This led to discussing the same issues over and over again.
- Management is not attentive enough to the staff needs and ideas
- Some teachers complained that when teachers want to take the initiative and help learners in extra-mural activities, they are not supported by management. - It may be moral support or physical in the form of transport ....
- They also regretted that teaching seems to be last on the list of priorities in the school.
- Grade 12 students were often taken away from teachers for different workshops, which then prevents teachers from continuing with their syllabus.
- There is too much noise outside classrooms which prevents teaching and learning
- Lack of delegation
- The majority of teachers interviewed were unhappy about the lack of collective management. They would like more democratic decision-making as well as more delegation. Each teacher should be responsible for a class, an activity or an issue relating to their role in school life. The teacher should be allocated a specific task and be allowed to implement decisions as well as to give follow up to the staff in regular meetings.
- This would hopefully develop a sense of togetherness, ownership and responsibility towards the school.

## **Solutions:**

- Outcomes should be published and put in the staff room and communicated to the SGB.
- Planning: the teacher's timetable should be put up in the staff room, then it can be seen who is free and who should be where at any given time
- There should be a calendar of events along with a planner
- The names of the HOD's and teachers should be displayed showing who is responsible for which classes.
- A code of conduct and disciplinary matters should be on display in the staff room
- There should be a reward system, and form of appraisal for learners.

## Comment

There was a lot of frustration from the staff about the management and their failure to implement decisions. Meetings were described as long drawn out affairs where the same topics were discussed again and again, no minutes were kept and so the staff felt meetings were a waste of time. There was a lack of delegation and because of this no one is accountable for any task. As was noted in chapter two (see 2.1.1) many untrained principals see themselves as administrators who are in charge of everything at the school. The security/maintenance staff said they were able to organise their own work under the previous principal but now have to await instructions from Mr Khoza before doing anything, even something as simple as replacing a door handle.

Mr Khoza has no formal teaching or management qualification but he has been attending an ‘Imbewu’ project together with the SGB teacher representative. The project is providing them with training in methods of school improvement. It is part of the ‘Whole School Development’ plan mentioned in chapter two (see 2.4.4). The only thing that appears to have come out of the project so far is a visioning exercise three years ago. A day was spent with members of SGB, staff and community and whilst a two-page document was produced it has never been looked at or referred to since (Appendix I). Hence the comments above about needing a visioning exercise.



**Figure 4:** The school emblem (Harrier)

School Motto: Education is knowledge with wings

The Employment of Educators Act (in ELRC, 2003: C2) describes the role of the principal as someone who ensures the school is managed satisfactorily in compliance with regulations and to promote learning in a proper manner. H/she should provide professional leadership and supervise the work and performance of all staff. Policies are there guiding

disciplinary procedures but according to some staff Mr Khoza seems reluctant to engage in anything that may result in conflict or make him unpopular with both the DoE and the staff. He values his relationship with staff but continually fails to confront issues. According to Evans principals who do this are crippling their administrative credibility and any effort to improve the school (Evans, 2001: 276). A habit of compromise is also said to sap a leader's integrity (*ibid*: 278).

In his interview Mr Khoza told of how in his first year as principal he had been held hostage in the school by the grade twelve's over the issue of their farewell dinner dance. He had also experienced difficulties with SADTU and was afraid of the powerful position they held in the school. Union meetings are held during school hours and take precedence over school activities. The Interim Management Team (IMT) report on the Eastern Cape confirmed the extent of control that the unions have over the education system and how they have been involved in most senior position appointments (DoE, 2004).

Requests from the DoE were also given preference over teaching and learning at the school, giving support to the notion of compliance mentioned earlier.

#### **4.5 FEEDBACK**

Whilst awaiting an opportunity to present the feedback session I was informed one morning at 9 am of a cancellation of an OBE meeting that day and was asked if I could meet the staff at 1:30 pm. I agreed. I had hoped for a fuller staff meeting but once again there were the faithful seventeen staff, I presented the information for discussion and ensured everyone was given a copy of the findings. There were constant interruptions during the presentation, (The door squeaked every time it was opened and students kept interrupting staff by returning keys or giving messages and people even talked amongst themselves). This was very distracting.

After completion there were a few questions, which led to some discussion about the validity of my research. I was asked why I had not done a more quantitative survey such as a statistical analysis of how many had complained about this or that, which some thought would have been more beneficial to them. I explained that this was not quantitative research about numbers but rather qualitative to discover issues and it did not really matter how

many were having a problem but only that the problem existed. A few staff also expressed their embarrassment at seeing their problems written down.

I went on to remind the staff that this was a preliminary stage in OD and that the next step would be the 'situation, target, path' (STP) investigation (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994:53) or as in the whole school development the 'now, wow, how' I explained that we had found the 'now' or situation and that if they would like me to we could continue with the process and offered to facilitate workshops in any area that they considered necessary. I told them I would be able to assist them with meetings, constructive confrontation or that I could arrange for special training workshops. The principal thanked me and then informed me that he would discuss the findings with the staff and let me know if they would like me to contribute further.

### **Comment**

Once again despite there being 38 teaching staff at the school, less than half of them turned up for the meeting. Although absenteeism is considered high in the school it is usually an average of three to four people off sick or away on official business at any one time. Some teachers appeared to pay little attention to the OD process and even during the presentation the fact that they talked amongst themselves showed a lack of interest in the findings. Some were once again embarrassed to see their problems exposed in such a manner but were optimistic that perhaps now something would finally be done. There was no obvious malice or name calling involved and I felt that this was a positive sign.

### **4.6 ACTION PLAN**

The SMT, which consists of the principal, two deputies and three heads of department, had a meeting (May 11) to discuss the findings of the SDF. They decided to use the data to start a process of improvement in the school via a collaborative method with the whole school. They chose to address the problem of attendance. They discussed the issue in a general staff meeting, and then each register class teacher discussed the issue of attendance with his/her class. The class representatives then met together as the student representative council (SRC) and then the president and deputy of the SRC met with the SMT and a strategy was agreed together.

A democratic process did appear to have been followed to produce the action plan for the school. After a church sponsored workshop had taken place in August (see 4.9.2) I was able to carry out in-depth interviews with some teachers and learners and this helped me gain some insight on the process. Of the sixteen people present at the workshop the following five were selected for interview:

**Ntombi** – a sixteen year old female grade eleven learner

**Yaya** – a sixteen year old male grade ten learner

**Dudu** – a seventeen year old male grade eleven learner

**Mrs Pils** – a 50 + year old deputy principal, single parent of one.  
Experience: teacher for 15 years and deputy principal for six.

Teaching subject: English

Qualifications : BA Hons – presently studying ACE English

**Mrs Shali** – a 45 year old teacher, widowed mother of four + three step-children

Experience: teacher in Zambia, UK for 20 years

Teaching subject: Art and English

Qualifications: BA Art + PGCE – presently studying ACE English

I asked each interviewee about the decision making process for the action plan:

**Ntombi** and **Yaya** both said they were involved in the decision making process.

**Dudu** however felt that the teachers had made up their own minds first as to what was to happen and then they told the students what was expected of them.

**Mrs Pils** said everyone was involved. It was very much an empowering process because we were united.

**Yaya** who is also a member of the RCL explained it well when he said being involved in the decision-making did help to make it work because if we were just told it would cause a lot of chaos. Because what are these rules? Where did they come from? But now everyone was involved with these rules and so it does work because everybody made these rules and so they can live with them.

### **Comment**

Mrs Shali had the same opinion about the process as Dudu but as a part-time teacher she was not always there for the morning meetings. Nor was she a class teacher and so would not have been involved in the preliminary discussions with learners. Dudu was often absent from school and so it is possible that he had missed some of the process too. The SMT

assured me that the procedure was a democratically inclusive one and as Yaya points out they can live with the rules because they made them.

#### **4.6.1 Project Punctuality**

The school decided that they wanted to take a firm stand and get teachers and learners into class on time with teaching taking place. Teacher and class registrations were taken and the school gates locked at 8 am each morning. The class representative would carry a class register, which each teacher had to sign, and then the report was to be given to the grade coordinator at the end of each day. They called it 'Project Punctuality' (PP) and felt that it would help bring back some discipline into the school and provide an atmosphere conducive to learning and teaching. They wanted to concentrate on one issue and get it right. They also hoped that if the discipline was on track then other things might follow.

#### **Comment**

The interviews after the SDF had revealed that the teachers felt that if they all got to class on time the learners would too. One of the general complaints from almost all interviewed was the 'chaos' that ensues when teachers are not in class. One absent teacher means forty possible learners wandering around the school corridors often shouting to friends and generally disturbing teachers in class trying to teach. More frequently there are three or four teachers missing and this means up to 160 learners wandering around, playing soccer or just being generally noisy – chaos! If the teacher inside the classroom tries to chase the unsupervised learners away then she runs the risk of disrupting her own classes.

PP was seen as a positive start to reversing this situation. A substitution timetable was also to be drawn up so that no class should be left without a teacher. If the teachers were in class that would mean no learners would be left unattended and so there would be fewer disruptions and therefore teaching could take place. It was also decided that a timetable should be placed in the staffroom and then it could be seen who was legitimately there in a free period and who was bunking. The fact that records were being kept meant there was to be accountability. Teachers and learners would be marked down as present or absent. Even the register being kept at the daily briefing was new to the staff. The management team also patrolled the school corridors between lessons to look for stray learners and to ensure teachers were in their classrooms.

Project Punctuality started May 17 2004. The rules for the project were distributed to each staff member (see Appendix J)

### **Effects of PP**

By the beginning of June the school seemed to be a different place and learners, teachers and parents were commenting on the changes. The following extracts were taken from interviews with the participants of the church sponsored workshop:

**Ntombi** I thought it was the best idea ever! It changed the school totally. The first few weeks that it was going on it was so quiet you could like hear yourself breathing and going to the toilet you could hear your footsteps echoing down the corridor. My mum was walking past and she said 'was the school open today?' And I'm like yeah wow and the people used to say like our school was not disciplined enough and now they say that change has been happening and it's a good thing

**Yaya** I am the class rep. For my class and we were given papers and we used to mark the absent learners and every lesson the teacher would sign and at the end of the day I would give the paper to my class teacher. We had to get to lessons quicker it was good.

**Dudu** It did make the classes better but the main problem was being locked outside the gates. I mean if we could be brought in and given punishment it would be better. If you wake up late you will say what is the point of hurrying, as you will just be locked outside and so you stay in bed. Teachers don't get locked outside they can phone or send messages but the students cant do those things so they think it is unfair

**Mrs Shali** enjoyed being part of the PP as I am one of the teachers who has been teaching for so many years and on top of that it is something which is not new to me, to have such organisation. I liked the way we carried it

**Mrs Pils** felt very much happy to be involved in PP because when things were not going well I was very much frustrated. Now when the project was introduced it was better. Even the community outside they commented that the school had changed. People do like change because it brings happiness

Other teachers also said that PP was great; they found they were able to teach. Mrs J. an English teacher very quietly spoken and of slight build had always struggled to make her voice heard above the noise of learners playing in the yard. She was very pleased with the PP and said she was able to make much better progress with her students. Mr X. said that

he felt compelled to prepare better lessons as there was an air of greater expectancy from the learners.

### **Comment**

To many people arriving on time and getting to class and actually teaching are part of the normal life of a teacher. However the culture of some township schools has historically been one of disruption and lack of accountability. It was noted in chapter two (see 2.3) that on average these schools lose 40 teaching days a year. Mr. Zac noted, “At Acacia I would not be surprised if it were more like 70 days”. He said:

Teaching never starts on time at the beginning of the year, there are always class lists and timetables to be prepared. Some teachers are missing. At the end of each term there always seems to be tests and so teaching time is lost again. Say about five days at the beginning and then twelve at the end by four terms that’s 68 already.

Mrs J agreed: we lose so much teaching time as when it’s exams the learners only come in to write and then go home. Then we have the days we close early due to meetings. They might tell you today it is day nine not eight because of such and such and then each lesson is to be shortened by 10 minutes and then Zanzi (secretary) forgets to ring the bell so we don’t know where we are – it really is chaotic sometimes.

Out of 198 official teaching days per year this would be a loss of more than a third of the contact teaching time. The main reasons for this loss are exams, absenteeism, union meetings, funerals and memorial services for community members. When the exams are over the teachers are busy marking and so no longer prepare lessons and once again the learners will not bother to attend. The beginning of term shows a similar trend as some learners say “the teachers are still marking and writing our reports and so they are not teaching us anything for the first few days so why should we come?”

As noted in the problems of discipline with teachers many are placing their personal studies before school responsibilities. This leads to the rather incongruent situation where teachers are being trained to improve their teaching methods but in fact their teaching is suffering. At Acacia this year there are sixteen members of staff doing further studies. There is a requirement by the South African Council for Educators (SACE) that by 2005 all teachers in high schools have a degree plus a teaching qualification. Many teachers who trained

during apartheid only received teaching diplomas and most of those are teaching in previously disadvantaged schools. Also with the introduction of the new learning areas for Outcome Based Education (OBE) some teachers have enrolled for the Advanced Certificate of Education (ACE), which enables them to learn new teaching methods along with the new subject content.

At Acacia there are nine teachers involved with ACE and five taking honours courses at the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE). Because SACE has required these upgrades the teachers feel justified in missing school. At the beginning of term three the five attending UPE were away for two weeks writing exams. During the same time five teachers were at an ACE course for three days and there was a HIV/AIDs workshop that was attended by three other teachers. On top of that the DoE held a Continuous Assessment (CASS) training workshop for four days starting at midday. Along with the daily gamut of illness and family commitments this made teaching at the school over those particular two weeks extremely difficult.

The PP had stated that any teacher going away should leave work for the learners to complete. A substitute timetable was made and the classes were supervised. In early August when so many teachers were absent this became impossible and the teachers who were not studying or attending workshops understandably got very frustrated with their colleagues. The postponement of PP during this time was unavoidable; the management was unable to cope with so much absenteeism.

#### **4.7 REVIEW**

OD is an action research method and it involves a spiraling succession of data gathering, action planning, implementation and review followed by further data gathering. It is a process that focuses on organisational culture, processes and structure using a total system perspective (French, Bell & Zawacki, 2000:3). The culture of learning and teaching (COLT) was deteriorating at Acacia and the long-term goal of the intervention was to help bring about a reversal of that situation.

The teachers were also concerned about the declining COLT, the matric pass rate at the school over the past five years had dropped by fifteen percent (see 1.2). Pass rates are of

major national concern and the beginning of each year sees criticism of schools that fail to improve their pass rates. Enrolment is affected by pass rates as parents try to get their children into schools that are successful. Because of the introduction of OBE, which is supposed to bring about a more equitable level of achievement, the results are being given a lot of attention.

It is a worrying fact that nationally, the statistics show “out of every hundred learners entering at grade one, only one will matriculate at grade twelve”. This has remained unchanged for over fifteen years (Chisholm, 2004). It concerns the whole country and it appears that the previously disadvantaged schools continue to be disadvantaged, especially in the Eastern Cape, Northern Province and Mpumalanga.

The restoring of COLT means bringing the conditions and disciplines of compulsory schooling; regular attendance, punctuality and acceptance of authority back to the teachers and learners (Lethoko, Heystek & Maree, 2001: 311). There is no quick fix for this and Harris recommends that the process of improvement should start by building on existing good practices (Harris, 2002: 262). Just having an outsider who poses questions in a supportive way and then helps to set deadlines is helpful. Part of the Reconstruction and Development (RDP) programme for schools has included rebuilding the material and social conditions necessary for schooling to take place (Lethoko, Heystek & Maree, 2001: 313). There has also been an increased responsibility granted to the SGB and training is supposed to be given to ensure that it is able to fulfil its duties.

Mr San the teacher representative on the SGB at the school says that this training has not taken place. Although the teachers are proud to have the SGB structures in place (see 4.3.1) the SGB in reality do little more than supply members to sit on an interview board for staff selection. Mr San confirms they have only met twice in ten months and that was to discuss the interview times for some redeployed teachers. The principal is the person who arranges and chairs the meetings and he is also the person who reports back to the staff. Although Mr San knows that as the staff representative he is the one who should take issues from the staff to the meeting and provide the report back to the staff he says there is little he can do until the training of the SGB has taken place.

#### **4.8 SUSTAINABILITY**

Mr Nda said that after the introduction of PP the SMT and School Development Committee (SDC) had wanted to meet every two weeks to assess progress. The principal had cancelled the first meeting and for various reasons subsequent ones were also postponed by him. No further school development meetings have taken place.

Project Punctuality started on 17 May and continued up to the start of the end of term exams on 21 June. As soon as the exams started the learners only had to attend to write the exam and then go home. Exams continued to the end of term and when the school started again in term three no attempt was made to re-instate PP because of the high absentee rate being experienced by staff during that time. Even before the start of the exams though there were signs of fatigue.

**Yaya** we used to mark the absent learners and every lesson the teacher would sign and at the end of the day I would give the paper to Mr Zac (class teacher) but now we are seeing that nothing is done. Because on those papers there are a lot of learners who are dodging every day but nothing is being done. The learners are still dodging class because they think they are free. If at the end of the week Mr Zac could talk to those dodgy learners then maybe they will not do it again and so then the project could work but now it is not working.

**Ntombi** At first it was good but now you can see it is not working because we are short of teachers. The teachers will eventually come back but if there is a teacher free first period they should collect all the kids who haven't got a teacher and put them in the hall and talk to them about things.

**Dudu** It was good at the beginning but then it was not fair that the students were being treated differently from the teachers.

**Mrs Shali** We have lagged behind a bit now though, and the learners they see what the teachers are doing and do the same, if we do something good they will also do that but we want it to go on again.

**Mrs Pils** Now when the project was introduced it was very good. We have fallen a bit and I think we should continue to do the right thing because sometimes you know as time goes on the people draw back, they don't want to be consistent and I think refresher courses should be done to remind the stakeholders that we must not forget that we have this project. I think unity is very important.

## **Comment**

Mr Zac, Mr Shell and Mrs J. all agreed that at the beginning PP was brilliant but said as time went on the ‘unprofessional’ group of teachers stayed away more and more. They saw that their classes were being cared for and so did not worry about them. The teachers who substituted noticed that it was the same teachers’ lessons they were covering for each time and began to resent the extra workload. No disciplinary action appeared to be taken against the absentees and Mr Khoza did not offer any explanations when asked the whereabouts of those teachers.

In his SDF interview Mr Khoza had said that staff confided in him about their ‘difficult circumstances’. He empathised with them and allowed them leave of absence but was unable to inform staff of the reasons why some staff were continually absent as he could not break that confidentiality. Some of his teachers are very respectful of him and think of him as a ‘kind person’. Others say he is easily taken advantage of as he is ‘too soft’. One teacher, who was continually absent, was eventually discovered to be working part-time in Uitenhage and only when she was offered a full time permanent position there did she resign from the school.

Evans (Evans, 2001: 275) says that administrators of schools unlike their big business counterparts have little power to increase or decrease wages and promote or dismiss their employees. School leaders try to maintain a balance between keeping positive relationships with staff and administering changes that they may feel ambivalent about. So instead of being confident and forceful they end up being weak and uncertain. Schools are less likely than other organisations to engage in conflict – teachers are trained to avoid it since it is part of their daily practice with learners (Evans, 2001: 236).

## **4.9 OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER CHANGE?**

Schools at different stages of development will require different strategies for change. Strategies that are effective at one growth state are not necessarily effective at another (Harris, 2002: 3). Many views of school improvement are concerned with outcomes and tend to be driven by a need for greater accountability. However there are situations present in some of the township schools which may need to be addressed before other changes can be introduced.

According to Moloï tumultuous changes have occurred over the past decade and our environment in South Africa is turbulent (Moloï, 2002: xiv). Although many reconstruction, transformation and policy intervention initiatives have been introduced they do not seem to have made much impact in bringing about real change in the culture of township schools. These schools occupy the largest sector of South Africa's public school system. Most of the schools have to operate in environments which are considered disabling. There is an atmosphere of low morale, there are ineffective practices by both teachers and learners and an atmosphere of exhaustion with inconsistent attendance.

I wish to highlight three development paths which are presently being explored within the school. The first deals with the pervasive and almost omnipresent threat of violence in the lives of learners and teachers.

#### **4.9.1 Violence**

Part of the turbulence that exists in our South African society is caused by the violence that seems to be an accepted part of our everyday lives. Hijacking, robbery, murder, rape and abuse have become so prevalent they almost seem to be routine. This violence has spread to many schools and principals fear for the safety of both their staff and learners.

Kader Asmal the previous minister of education said that to have a positive culture of learning in schools the environment should be safe, orderly and conducive to learning (DoE, 2000: 2). Violence begets violence and does not build a culture of human dignity, tolerance or respect. It does not nurture self-discipline rather it undermines a child's self-esteem. It was noted in the 'sorries' that corporal punishment was still being used by some of the teachers and I witnessed the principal and deputy on a number of occasions wielding their so called 'cultural stick' and learners were running away.

Interviews with students after the AVP workshop revealed the extent of violence experienced both at school and in their community:

**Dudu** It was a lot of violence where I am staying. Everybody knows that in a township there are lots of things happening and my part of the area is one of the places. In school most of the violence is committed by the

teachers, some of them don't know they are committing it. It is not what they wanted it is because of the background they are coming from.

**Yaya** In my community I have experienced a lot of crime and at school it is usually a bully, at home it is private. Those who do the violence I think they want it to stop but we don't know how.

**Ntombi** The violence in school is not like killing and stuff, it is just about bullying, it is happening all the time but no one is courageous enough to talk about it. I have experienced some sexual harassment but my dad sorted it out for me

**Mrs Shali and Mrs Pils** used to practice corporal punishment but now look at it as something which does not work. Maybe you beat them here and there but it doesn't work at all.

### **Comment**

Corporal punishment (CP) as a social practice has existed in South Africa for centuries (Van Wyk, 2001: 196). Most studies support the notion that teachers will perpetuate the disciplinary styles modelled earlier in their lives, selecting disciplinary strategies that they themselves have experienced. As it was only in 1994 that the ban on CP began it is safe to assume that many of the present day teachers will probably have experienced or may have used canings or beatings. CP was officially banned in 1996 (DoE, 2000: 100) by the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of South Africa, Act no. 108.

Research shows that many parents continue to use CP in the home and believe that it should still be used at school (Morrell, 2001:294). CP has effectively disappeared from middle class, formerly 'white' schools but is still relatively common in township schools. It is widespread in many families where violence is often the first line tactic in resolving conflict. Harsh CP by parents affects academic performance and produces low self-esteem and anti-social behaviours (Cherriam & Miller cited in Morrell, 2001: 295).

Because of cut backs in education schools can no longer employ child psychologists. This means that teachers these days are expected to handle more teaching, more administration, larger classes as well as acting as counsellors and mediators (Morrell, 2001:293). This places a lot of stress on teachers and Morrell says he is not surprised that many of them resort to using CP. At Acacia there is only one teacher who is trained in counselling. She has a full timetable and is only able to help students when she has a free period. Mrs J., Mr Shell and Mr Z. have expressed shock and compassion at the situation some of their

learners are in. There have been two teenage suicides at the school this year and many have lost parents or family members due to AIDS related illnesses, murder or road traffic accidents.

There was a lot of media attention given to the use of CP in schools in early June when Thuthuka Zuma, a sixteen year old grade ten learner at Phezulu High School, Kwa Zulu Natal, died after being beaten by his principal with a hosepipe. He was apparently late for school (Nair & Jones, 2004: 1). The Premier for the region commented that educators needed training and support to use other forms of discipline without depriving the learner of his right of access to education.

It was at this time the principal accepted the offer of a workshop on Alternatives to Violence (AVP) by the local Quaker group and I was involved in the organisation and presentation of it. AVP developed out of efforts to combat the grinding violence in some prisons in the United States. It is now used worldwide in prisons, churches, schools and other organisations.

#### **4.9.2 AVP Workshop**

AVP concentrates on primary conflict resolution skills and has some similarities with the constructive confrontation methods to be found in OD (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994: 327-362). They start with a three-day workshop that concentrates on:

- Affirmation – building self-esteem and trust
- Communication – improving both listening skills and assertive methods of expression
- Co-operation – developing co-operative attitudes that avoid competitive conflicts
- Creative conflict resolution – getting in touch with what AVP refers to as ‘transforming power’ to resolve violence

The following are comments about the workshop from some participants:

**Dudu** It was absolutely genius, it was something new in my life. I learnt something new that I never thought, something that can be negotiated by people to co-operate. I didn't expect what happened but it changed my life. It showed me how violence comes up in the most little things and you don't have to force somebody to be a part of something you just have to say what you want to say and let them have their chance to say – just let other people to communicate with you.

**Yaya** I wanted to know how to react when there is violence around me and now I've learnt a lot. Now I know how to react and I can deal with problems and I expect the best from people. I have been involved in a couple of fights and I don't want to fight but I was just forced to fight. You just can't stop it because the other person doesn't know I want to stop. So if a person pushes you in the corridor you push them back and it comes to a fight but now if he pushes me I just walk on past and say sorry even though it was him who pushed me, I won't hit him I just leave it and let it be. He will be surprised I didn't push him back and he will be the one thinking about it not me.

**Ntombi** I used to talk and talk about people and now maybe I have changed because I don't want to hurt anyone I'm talking to. I don't want to offend anyone I just feel for them and I didn't used to do that. I want to say the right things. It gave me more confidence too as we were courageous enough to ask the teachers questions about what is happening in the school this morning. ... I also want children after me to have a safer environment and to just have fun at school and in AVP I've learnt a lot of things and I think that if we share and we talk about our problems we can open peoples eyes how we see our world and what is happening in our world and yeah how we can change our world.

**Mrs Shali** AVP has changed me, it has given me new ideas and I thought they were really helpful. It will be better if AVP can be given to all the teachers and then they can also benefit from the workshop.

**Mrs Pils** I enjoyed the practical way that it is done, like solving conflicts, co-operating with each other and especially the 'I' messages. I think the AVP should be introduced as an extra mural activity and all the school should try to take part.

### **Comment**

Although this was only a small workshop the participants benefited greatly from it. Programmes such as AVP have the potential to prevent some of the difficulties that arise in our lives as well as providing a coping mechanism for them. AVP also appears to fit well into OD processes and can form a platform from which other changes may be introduced into an organisation. It has team building capacities as well as helping to promote self-esteem. Participants can also learn how to communicate better with each other and this is vitally important for OD interventions.

The presenters of the workshop agreed that it was successful and the sponsors have made more money available for another basic workshop which will be followed by the advanced and a trainer's workshop. This means that AVP will eventually be able to reach all school members and the surrounding community.

#### **4.9.2 Stress and Burnout**

Mr Shell attended a union workshop about stress in 2003 and had requested the school development committee introduce some of the coping mechanisms he learnt there to the staff. Stress has been identified as contributing to the high absentee rate experienced at the school. Too much or too little stress can reduce a persons' productivity and causes 'job compassion fatigue' (Olivier & Venter, 2003: 186). Many teachers lack the coping mechanism to combat excess stress effectively and this leads to absenteeism, alcohol and drug abuse, depression, frustration, hypertension and even heart disease. According to Van Wyk, in South Africa apart from the twelve percent incidence of HIV infection amongst the general teaching population, a teachers' life expectancy is four years shorter than the national average (cited in Olivier & Venter, 2003: 188). Their research showed that twenty percent of the teachers they studied were suffering from severe stress and they apportioned blame to the lack of achievement of learners, the lack of discipline, the noise levels, class sizes and the abolishment of CP.

Teachers who experience burnout are less sympathetic towards students, are less committed to and less involved in their jobs, have a lower tolerance for classroom disruption, are less apt to prepare adequately for class and are generally less productive (Neills, 2004: 1). Although the symptoms of burnout may be very personal, they are generally 'lack of' symptoms. The list includes a lack of energy, joy, enthusiasm, satisfaction, motivation, interest, zest, dreams for life, ideas, concentration, self-confidence and a sense of humour.

#### **Comment**

It became very obvious as the intervention progressed that many of the symptoms of stress and burnout were present amongst the staff of Acacia. There has been a growing awareness within the teaching profession that overwork by teachers is in the end counterproductive to creating a healthy learning community. Porteus, Valley and Ruth say that as educators we face one of the most challenging and underappreciated professions. Teaching is difficult even for teachers who love their jobs. It is impossible for those who do not (Porteus, Valley & Ruth, 2001: 25).

Mr Khoza as the gatekeeper very early on in the year had suffered a suspected heart attack. His indecisiveness over issues and inability to deal with problems could also be indicative of the stress he is under. Many of the teachers also showed signs of 'job compassion fatigue' and there are teachers at the school known to have alcohol problems.

#### **4.9.3 The ACE Course**

There are three teachers at the school who have been participating in the ACE course for English. These teachers have formed quite a strong working group within the school and this has helped strengthen their department. They meet once a week with Mrs J., the other member of their department to plan their lessons and share ideas on how to improve their teaching. They have instigated a reading programme with their grade eight and nine learners. The learners have to present their favourite book once a term and certificates are awarded to the best presentations. Other teachers are beginning to notice and comment on their successes and the positive impact it is having on the learners.

This group has the ability to influence the rest of the school and it would be good to continue to work with them on OD. Schmuck and Runkel recognise that it is not feasible to include all members of an organisation in one training event. When selecting a team from the school to develop further skills in OD the inclusion of these three could help ensure some sustainability of any change. When selecting people in this way it is important to ensure that the group regularly reports back the contents of their proceedings to the other members (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994: 86-87).

#### **4.10 SUMMARY**

Prinsloo states that while any OD is being introduced and implemented the guidance of trained and skilled OD consultants is required (Prinsloo, in van Deventer & Kruger, 2002: 184). My position with the school was that of a researcher, not a consultant. In other research of OD interventions in schools I have read, the researchers have been members of the school or institution (Neshila, 2004, Irvine, 1999 and Kadyakapita, 1998). I think that it might have been easier for me to plan meetings and carry out interviews if I had been a part of the organisation. The school was aware of their shortcomings and did not enjoy sharing embarrassing situations with a stranger, especially one who was a mere student carrying out experimental research.

Schools like Acacia are subject to many interventions and being the ‘most successful’ school in the township and close to RU they often have students coming into the school and trying different techniques with the learners. Some have been successful and others just minor irritations. Because of the nature of the students research it tends to only be short lived and I think that some of the teachers at the school had the impression that I was just another ‘one minute wonder’.

#### **4.10.1 Challenges for OD**

When implementing a change process one has to ensure the organisation is ready for change. Using the indicators for readiness (Schmuck & Runkel, 1994: 56) Acacia school did appear ready. They did have hope that things could be better, they did find pleasure in working together and the step they were taking to change was not an unreasonable distance from where they were.

Glover maintains that when a change is introduced confident professionals will easily adapt and adopt it if they think it is worthwhile. Others will need handholding to make the change. Then there are the ones who might change if a ‘certain percentage’ of their colleagues are changing and then there are the ones who will never change. Glover calls this ‘certain percentage’ the ‘critical mass’ needed to bring about change and estimates it at 40-50%. Throughout my research at the school I had less than 50% participation and some of those may have been less than willing and this could have been a major contributing factor in the failure to sustain the intervention (Glover, in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004: 27).

Another key factor for the intervention not being sustained was the lack of support and commitment of the principal. As mentioned earlier (see 4.2.2) the principal is a gatekeeper of the school and as such an important person to help lead and manage the change. Van der Mescht notes that “there is a lack of leadership in this country – there are plenty of people who can carry out orders but they do not want to make decisions. Principals, especially those who come from the apartheid era are more like implementers than innovators” (Van der Mescht, 2004). Mr Khoza is a prime example of this and he has also not been trained in leadership and management skills. His involvement with the WSD is providing some training but he needs support to help him implement the skills he is learning.

Mr Khoza will have to learn how to take a firmer stand against misconduct amongst the staff and the learners. The Employment of Educators Act (ELRC, 2003: C2) clearly outlines procedures to follow in cases of misconduct. The act is in no way draconian rather it seeks to support constructive labour relations and ensure corrective not punitive measures.

We did not investigate the problem of resources at the school or the difficulties experienced with the DoE but they are accountable for some of the troubles the school is experiencing. The DoE is supposed to have subject advisors and Educational Development Officers (EDO's) to assist schools in their development. In the Eastern Cape the situation was described by Godden as 'a system operating on crisis management' (Diko, 2003:4). Sixty percent of EDO positions are unoccupied and the government is unable to fill them because of the gross overspending of the education budget. The regional secretary for the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) commented "the Department is forgetting about the children and only thinking of how to save money" (Naki, 2004: 7).

Ngongo confirms the large number of districts being understaffed and the 'lack of professional skills, knowledge and expertise' that has impacted negatively on the support and development of schools (Ngongo, in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004: 51). This situation means that the EDO's are so overworked they are not able to function well as school advisors but seem to end up as little more than messengers, reporting between the DoE and the school. The messages are often in the form of directives and are relayed in a very autocratic manner. This does not encourage the development of good relations between the school and the DoE.

#### **4.10.2 Successes of the OD**

Change did take place at the school and it did make a dramatic difference to the teaching and learning over the five weeks that PP was implemented. Sadly it was not sustained but there are a group of competent teachers who want change and are willing to make it work. Those teachers as can be seen by the AVP, the plans for the stress workshop and the ACE group, are still seeking further change. These teachers have professional pride and want change to succeed. The learners also want change and would like to be part of the process.

Those who took part in the AVP wish to become trainers so the rest of the school can find alternatives to violence.

It is interesting to note that the drive for change is not coming from the top down but the bottom up. There are now three supporters on the SMT and so it is to be hoped that the SMT as a whole will be able to respond to the aspirations of the staff and give them its full support.

#### **4.11 OVERVIEW**

It was clear the staff felt the school was dysfunctional and this distressed many of them because they had strong feelings of professionalism. They were able to identify the problems and suggest solutions but were unable to move forward in a sustainable way. There was an obvious sense of helplessness and frustration. The question is why is it like this? Perhaps it is the legacy of apartheid, or the many changes happening in education with their burgeoning 'add on' administrative load leading to stress and burnout.

The members of staff however responded very positively to the OD intervention and the early success of the PP provided hope that change could be achieved. Despite the lack of sustainability of the original action plan, change in different forms is ongoing in the school. Small groups are supporting each other and working towards improving discrete areas within the organisation.

The way in which management functions at the school was identified as a major problem in the initial SDF. The 'Imbewu' project, which involved some management training, has had little impact on improvement in the school so far. Niemann, Brazelle, de Wet, Heyns, Niemann & van Staden (2002: 132) question whether behaviour dimensions in a management context can be changed by means of training programmes. At the end of their pilot study they did not find many changes in the ways that principals managed their schools. The only improvements achieved were in the task structuring and organising of work. Madasi (2004: 70) recognised similar deficiencies in the management training programmes available in the Eastern Cape and further investigation is essential in this area.

It may be asked whether the managers of the school see themselves primarily as change agents within the school or as agents of implementation of departmental policy. Tyala (2004: 107) researched teamwork amongst SMT's in township schools in Grahamstown where he discovered what he terms 'nervous' leadership. This is the tension between the principal being expected to work in a team but also ultimately being accountable for any failure as this would lead to loss of face or embarrassment. This, Tyala explains, is the reason why principals prefer to work 'solo' (*ibid*: 108). He found principals claimed to be accountable to the DoE, deputy principals to the principal and HOD's to the deputy principal. This shows that democratic management is not yet a reality in the SMT. The management of the school therefore do not see themselves as change agents but still operate as a bureaucratic organisation following passively instructions from above. It is interesting to note that in this hierarchy there is no clear accountability related to the learners.

In the next chapter I conclude my research by drawing together summaries of all the previous chapters. I talk about the potential value of my study and I make suggestions for continuing research at Acacia High School. I review the limitations of the study and suggest ways in which it could have been improved.

## CHAPTER FIVE – SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

*Look not back in anger, nor forward in fear but around in awareness*

*Ross Hersey*

### 5.1 SUMMARY

In this study I have described an OD intervention process and presented the experiences of some of the participants. It took place in a previously disadvantaged school in the Eastern Cape. Over the past ten years there have been many changes in the education system, not only the Education Departments but also the curricula have changed dramatically (see 2.3). Some schools appear to be coping with the changes but many of the historically disadvantaged schools continue to lag further and further behind. The aim of the intervention was to discover if OD could help bring about any improvement to the culture of learning and teaching in the school. OD is a long term process and it was hoped that by introducing the school to the methods of OD they would be able to instigate a process of change.

In chapter one I described my reasons for embarking on this line of study: how disturbed I was (and still am) about situations some of these township schools find themselves in and the fact that for some democracy has not brought about any real change. I provide the context of Acacia school – how it has a deteriorating culture of learning and teaching, a demoralized staff and an increasingly turbulent environment.

In chapter two I presented a review of the literature that surrounds the introduction of change to schools. I provided a brief description of the South African situation to highlight why change is essential. Following this I described some of the methods of change being used by various organizations throughout the world and some of their limitations. I introduced OD by outlining part of its history as well as its processes. I also described various reasons why I thought that OD with its system of planned change was one of the best methods for schools and I provided some examples of OD interventions that have been successful. I highlighted some of the possible barriers to change and the importance of the OD facilitator.

In chapter three I outlined the paradigms I worked in and the methods I used to carry out this research. I worked in the interpretive and critical paradigms and carried out a case

study of an action research method. I described the tools I used to gather the data, namely journal entries and observations as well as interviews. I also explained how I managed to maintain a valid, ethical and rigorous method whilst carrying out the study.

Chapter four is a linear, narrative presentation of the data as it was collected over the six months period. I analysed the data as they were presented to make it easier for the reader to understand some of the processes taking place. The data included the presentation of the initial SDF workshop which was followed by formal as well as informal interviews with teachers and learners at the school. Photographs of the school are included to give a clearer picture of some of the situations to be found at Acacia. Project Punctuality the 'action plan' is described by the participants as well as the procedure for introducing it to the school. I provided comments after each section of data and these helped provide a more comprehensive understanding of the situation.

I presented some of the ongoing plans for improvement at the school, which provide hope for continued change at the school. These are the AVP project, a planned stress and burnout workshop and the English ACE group. The AVP provides hope because it tackles some of the underlying issues of violence that exist in the school and the surrounding community. It also helps to improve communication between people and helps build up self-esteem. The stress and burnout workshop will be a very good way to help people cope with the very turbulent environment they find themselves in. The ACE group continues to work together in a small unit improving their own section of the English department which should help to influence some others at the school.

## **5.2 POTENTIAL VALUE OF RESEARCH**

Arising from the data were a number of aspects that made the intervention a success, others that need attention, revaluation and further action were highlighted.

## **5.3 ASPECTS NEEDING ATTENTION**

### **5.3.1 Sustainability**

The sustaining of change in South Africa appears to be a major challenge to many organizations. Peters cites four major interventions that have been introduced in the Eastern Cape all of which had problems sustaining change. He partly blames apartheid for

this as most of the ideas and practices involved in the interventions are new to the principals and teachers involved (Peters, in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004: 40). Interventions require a degree of openness and willingness to be involved in democratic processes which apartheid did not encourage. In my study at the school I found many of the people I interviewed to be open and willing to participate in the OD process but it seemed that there were also some reluctant ones.

Change requires regular monitoring and evaluation as it progresses. This did not happen at Acacia so the problems with the process of change could not be effectively dealt with. This was due to the numerous postponements of development committee meetings the principal cancelled because of his other commitments. Problems arising from the process of change could not be dealt with and until there is an effective delegation of responsibility to the committee itself then sustainable change will continue to be blocked.

### **5.3.2 Management**

Rault-Smith claims that the single most critical factor for a good school is the principal and she is certain you will not find a competent, organized, positive manager in a dysfunctional school (Rault-Smith, in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004:47).

As mentioned in the literature review (see 2.1.1) many of our school principals have not been trained in management and leadership. In Christie and Potterton's study on 'resilient' schools they found the principals of these schools were generally strong managers and leaders (in Gultig, Ndhlovu & Bertram, 2002:95). Despite the turbulence surrounding these schools they managed to do things for themselves. They swept up the litter and cleaned the classrooms, they fundraised for more resources. Many of the teachers at Acacia do try to uplift the school and cope in whatever way they can given the difficulties surrounding them but there is a lack of cohesive organizational effort. This makes it very frustrating for them.

Rault-Smith cites a number of ways the principal should lead the school:

- His or her number one priority should be teaching and learning and team building amongst learners, staff and parents can help to raise the expectations of the school and motivate it to change.
- The principal should be the caretaker of the school ensuring reasonable class sizes, provision of resources and implementation of policy through mediation between the SMT and DoE

- H/she must be innovative knowing that more of the same will do no more than produce more of the same. Analysis should be led by the principal to prepare for school development programmes. Motivation is the principals responsibility.
- H/she must monitor and support the teaching and learning, keeping in touch with every aspect of the school by walking around

(Rault-Smith, in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004:47).

It was clearly indicated by the teachers that teaching and learning were not a priority at the school; they came after the DoE and the union. The other qualities are also sadly lacking at Acacia and whilst I acknowledge that change cannot be imposed on people some skills training has to occur if the school is to be turned around. Rault-Smith says that ultimately if change cannot be achieved then some of these dysfunctional schools should be closed rather than subject endless numbers of learners to a system which is failing them (Rault-Smith, in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004: 46). Since Acacia is purportedly the ‘top’ school in the township it would be wrong to close the school but a real paradigm shift will have to occur to ensure the managers see the learners as a priority and delegation of tasks as an effective method of improvement. They will also have to overcome their fear of change and learn to abide by decisions that have been made.

I think that the training will have to be sanctioned by the DoE though as Mr Khoza did not appear to respect the intervention from an experimental research project of a Rhodes University student.

### **5.3.3 Dependence on DoE**

Christie and Potterton also note that the resilient schools may depend on the DoE for guidance (in Gultig, Ndhlovu & Bertram, 2002: 99) but they did not rely on them for instructions or concrete support. They also noted that some principals were better informed on policy than their local district office. The relationship between Acacia and the DoE is one of subordination; it would be unthinkable for Mr. Khoza to question or refute any request the DoE makes. This is a major problem for autonomy at the school. Teachers are feeling less and less in control as more and more changes are introduced and they find themselves having to do things because they have to, not because they believe in them or even want to do them. For many teachers planning has become almost impossible and they have given up trying. According to Euvrard it:

affirms the philosophical assumption held by many teachers that they live in a religious and socio-political world that is not of their making and which is beyond their capacity to influence'

(Euvrard, in du Plooy & Westraad, 2004:74).

In the Eastern Cape where the DoE itself is in a state of upheaval the situation is even more dire with a dysfunctional department leading a dysfunctional school. This can only lead to the creation of greater chaos. It has already been mentioned in the previous chapter about the shortages of EDO's (see 4.10.1) and the overspending. This has led to even more cutbacks and Acacia school who complained at the start of the SDF about the class sizes and lack of resources will have to contend with even greater class sizes next year as they have recently been told they have to lose seven more teachers. This figure has been calculated by administrators in the DoE based on student numbers and subject choices. This shows that the school is to a great extent controlled by people who are far from it and who never have to see the results of the decisions they have made.

#### **5.4 SUCCESSES**

The process of OD was successful in that 'unfreezing' of the staff occurred. The staff recognized from the findings of the SDF that existing practices in the school needed altering. They did begin to move towards change with the introduction of Project Punctuality which ran smoothly for five weeks. The teachers noticed the difference in their teaching; the learners also noted the differences within the school, even parents commented about the improvement. The overall effect was extremely positive. The teachers wanted the changes to be sustained but unfortunately due to the circumstances mentioned above they could not.

It is very interesting that the changes in Acacia were being pushed from the teachers themselves. Most changes in organizations are implemented top down and that brings about resistance but in Acacia the reverse seems to be true. The teachers were very concerned about their professional image and their frustration was being unable to do the job they had been trained to do. This caused them a lot of stress and most of the time they did just give up the struggle. However if the SMT could learn the skills of OD the school does seem to have the 'critical mass' (see 4.10.1) necessary to bring about a sustained change.

## **5.5 LIMITATIONS**

In my methodology chapter I point out the time factor as being limiting to a study of this nature since change can be such a slow process. With hindsight I now realize that one of my main limitations was one of authority. The bureaucracy which still exists in the DoE and in the minds of many of its employees, especially in this case the school principal, was the main stumbling block for my study. The consequent six weeks delay in introducing OD to the school meant a shorter time for implementation and evaluation of the action plan. If I had the opportunity to repeat the research I would seek full support from the district office first before approaching the school principal. My original letter of introduction was from my lecturer at Rhodes to the principal (see appendix D).

Not working at the school itself restricted my observations to periodic visits where a 'pot luck' situation existed in availability of staff to talk to and observe. Being on site for the duration might have provided me with a more detailed description of people's perceptions of the intervention as it proceeded. Although I did gain the confidence of a number of teachers there were some who still regarded me with suspicion. Once again there is the hangover from apartheid when there was a system of inspection at schools and I think some of the teachers did not trust my intentions. As time went by these grew less and so I think doing the study over a longer period of time should be recommended.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

Finally I would like to conclude with my own personal observations about the intervention. I think it was a worthwhile study and it has made a difference to a number of teachers at the school. Change did happen albeit for a short time and this has provided hope for some of those teachers who saw the school slipping into dysfunctionality. Many teachers are caught up in a 'catch 22' situation; they want to leave the profession as they see little hope of successful change but at the same time they are very concerned about abandoning their learners.

Some of the key values of OD were introduced, there was a process of planned change and some participants became empowered in a democratic way. The difficulty remains with the hierarchical system of management that exists in the school and it is doubtful that OD can truly succeed where people are trapped in compliance mindsets. However we should not capitulate before chaos and despite the stumbling blocks I feel OD has shown it has a very useful role to play in initiating change. If the DoE gave its full support to OD the principals

with 'nervous leadership' might feel more able to allow the democratic process to develop and be sustained.

Had the PP continued for a longer period it could have become an accepted norm and therefore a part of the school culture. More changes could have followed. However the slipping back into dysfunctionality should not be viewed as a failure of OD but as a further step in the learning process.

The most important thing for me is the continuation of the process of change. It may not be OD as described in the textbook but there has been a growing awareness amongst the staff that change from within the school is possible. Change is essential if the promises of the constitution of South Africa are not to remain meaningless words on a piece of paper. For the sake of the learners I hope that real change can be implemented and sustained.

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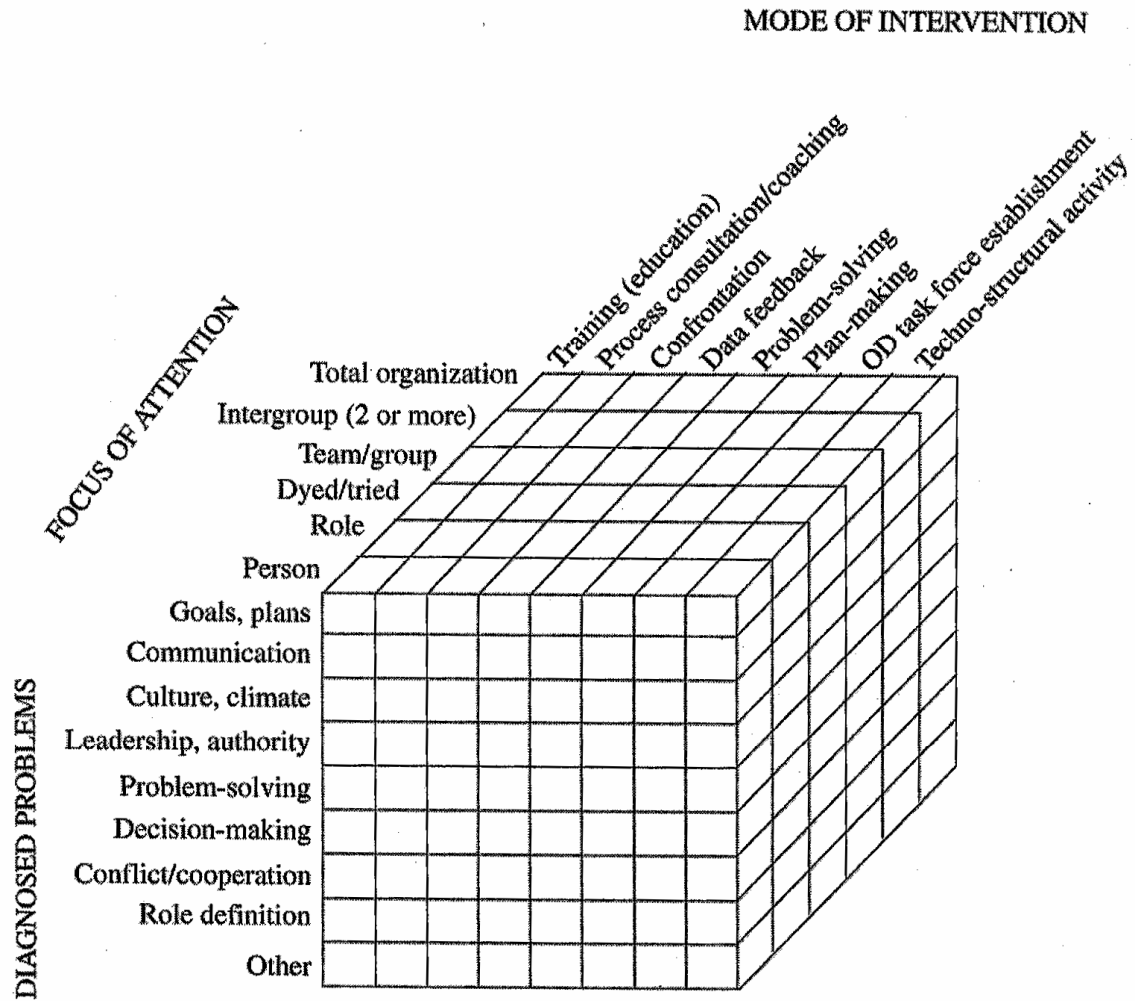
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# APPENDIX A - THE OD CUBE

**Figure 5.4 The OD cube – a scheme for classifying OD interventions**



Source: Schmuck and Miles (1971)



6. Management was also identified as a 'sorry' what do you think are the main problems with management?

7. If you were part of the management team, what would you do differently?

## APPENDIX C - OD CONTRACT

### OD AGREEMENT CONTRACT

Agreement entered into by the OD facilitator and the staff members at .... High School.

Hereby, I, Mrs P. Mitchell (M. Ed. Student at Rhodes University 2004) wish to confirm to the staff members my commitment to conduct a Survey Data Feedback in fulfillment of my M. Ed. Course requirements. I will be involved in the discussion of issues identified by the staff and will provide feedback to them for validation

I undertake to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of all the data sources and no information whatsoever will be disclosed except by the permission of the data source if s/he allows.

NAME

SIGNATURE

P. Mitchell

## APPENDIX D – LETTER OF AUTHORITY



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

DEAN OF FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Tel: (+27) (46) 603 8393 • Fax: (+27) (46) 622 8028 • e-mail: G.Euvrard@ru.ac.za

To whom it may concern

### **COURSE REQUIREMENT FOR EDUCATION LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT MODULE**

Successive education policy documents and legislation have identified management development as a crucial core component of education transformation. This Education and Leadership module is designed to assist educators develop their whole school development capacity.

To this end students are required to undertake an organisation diagnosis as part of their course requirements. They are required, at the invitation of an education organisation, to interview and/or observe, preferably with one or two elected organisation members, organisation members about some mutually agreed upon aspect of organisational life. The purpose for inviting organisation members to participate as co-facilitators with students is so that they too can learn some organisation diagnosis skills that they can continue to exercise in their organisations.

The data gathering team will then feed back the data or its interpretation to members for their validation thereof. Organisation members should be in agreement as to the accuracy and adequacy of the diagnosis.

The students are not required to do anything more than feed back the data. However, past experience shows that organisations often like to take the process further. Any organisation that would like to continue the process is welcome to invite the student/s to continue or to contact me.

Please would you permit the student/s to introduce the change management approach known as Organisation Development to your organisation and then to work out a mutually agreed upon diagnostic exercise with members.

Your support for and assistance with this exercise is much appreciated. Please be free to discuss further any matters with me.

Yours sincerely

Dr Clive Smith

Email: c.o.smith@ru.ac.za

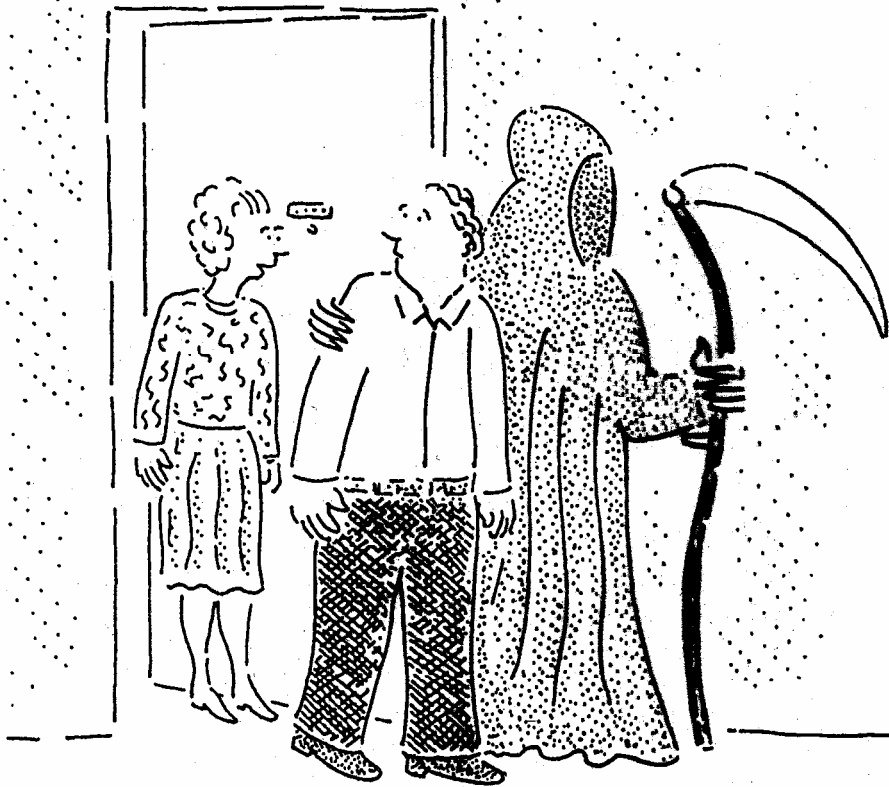
APPENDIX E – CHANGE BRINGS FEAR

---

WE DON'T WANT TO MAKE YOU CHANGE  
IF YOU ARE HAPPY

WE ONLY WANT TO HELP YOU TO CHANGE  
IF YOU ARE NOT

Tel: (046) 603 8111 • Fax: (046) 622 5049 • e-mail: registrar@ru.ac.za



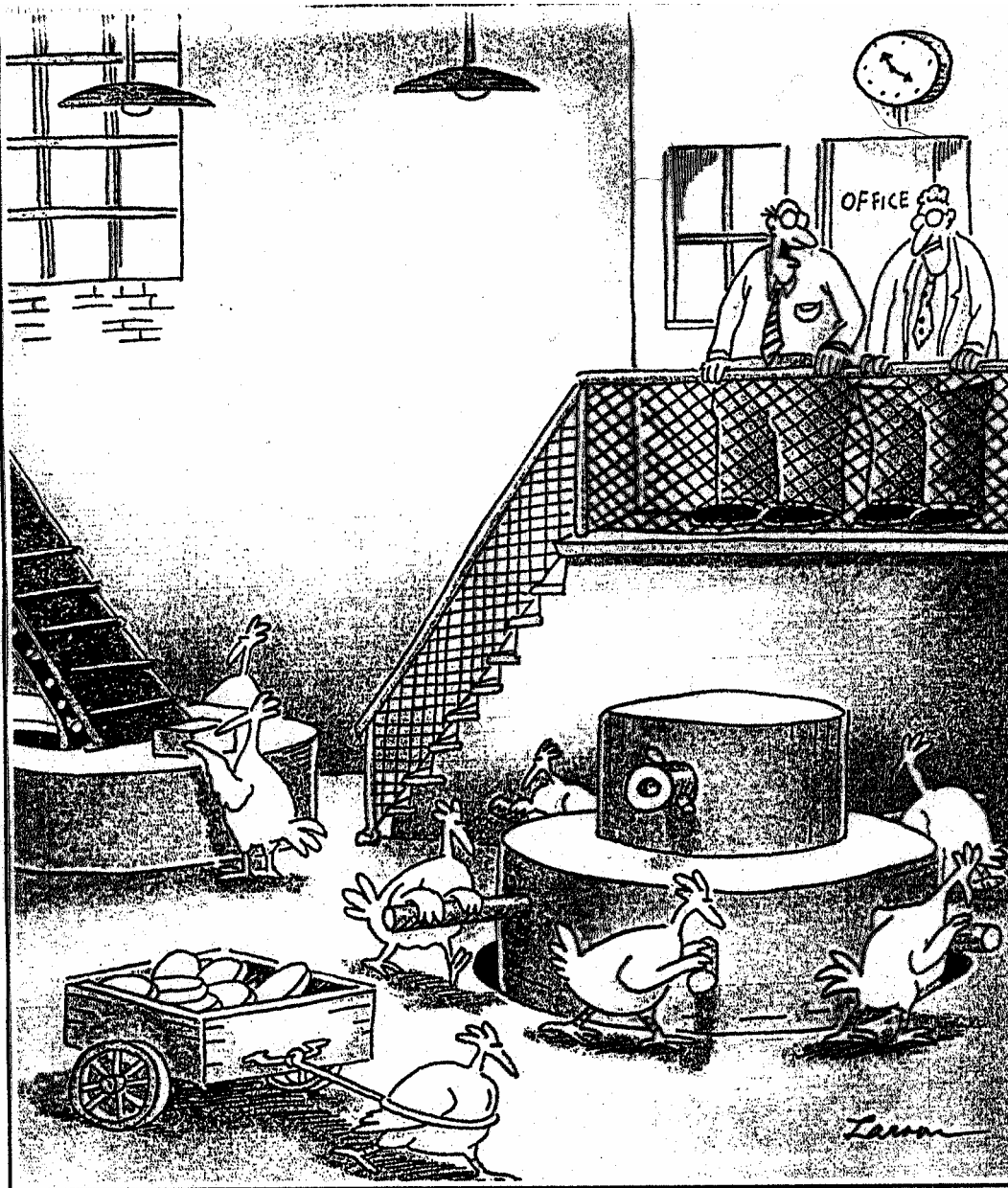
MANKOFF

*"Relax, honey—change is good."*

---

awing by Mankoff; © 1993 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

## APPENDIX F – WORKING CHICKENS



"Oh, yeah! They work real hard, all day long, seven days a week! ... And here's the best part—for chicken feed!"

## APPENDIX G – FRUSTRATED TEACHER

Many teachers are feeling disenchanted

With the profession

Frustrated with the never ending changes,

Overworked and demeaned as professionals

Powerless and unappreciated.



APPENDIX H – FULL BRAIN

CHANGE IS JUST ANOTHER WORD  
FOR GROWTH OR LEARNING!  
WE CAN ALL DO IT, AND ENJOY IT  
IF WE WANT TO!



"Mr. Osborne, may I be excused? My brain is full."

## APPENDIX I - DRAFT MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

### ACACIA PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL

#### OUR VISION

To be an outstanding academic institution, which proudly affirms her cultural heritage, African identity and which is proudly committed to academic excellence, sound moral values, acceptable social values, confidence, individual growth and embracing human rights, with a view to the betterment of our society.

#### **OUR MISSION**

In pursuit of the above, the institution commits herself to instilling a conducive teaching and learning environment to produce learners who are innovative, analytical, balanced and adaptable, with a love for lifelong learning who can contribute to the advancement of the South African society in particular and Africa and the World in general.

*The institution accordingly undertakes to:*

1. Instil in each learner and educator self-confidence and self-worth to realise their full potential in the following:
  - *Learning and developing through academic pursuit and ensuring supportive structures for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds*
  - *Character and personality growth*
  - *Inculcating sound moral values of honesty, reliability and accountability*
  - *Adopting eternal spiritual values*
  - *Consolidating a positive self concept and respect for others*
  - *Promoting a need to uplift the community through empowerment of each individual*
2. *Involve the school community in activities for the upliftment of the school and surrounding community*
3. *develop shared values that embrace human and civil rights*
4. *acknowledge and be sensitive to the problems created by the legacy of apartheid, rejecting all forms of unfair discrimination and ensuring that appropriate and lawful corrective measures are employed to redress past imbalances*
5. *provide staff and learners with access to relevant learning environment*
6. *play a leading role in establishing a culture of environmental conservation*

7. *promote a culture of tolerance and mutual respect with regards to fundamental human rights and differences in point of views, culture, sexual preferences, religion etc., thereby creating an appropriate environment for learning teaching and services*
8. *promote a culture of transparency by basing our decisions on considerations that are clear and known by the school community*
9. *promote a culture of democratic participation in decision making practices and bodies through the relevant democratically elected structures*

**OUR MOTTO**

**KNOWLEDGE IS LIFE WITH WINGS**

## **APPENDIX J - ACACIA HIGH SCHOOL**

### **SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

#### **PROJECT PUNCTUALITY**

**STARTING DATE: MONDAY 17 MAY 2004**

##### **1. LEARNERS**

- Must be at school by 7:50 (ten minutes to eight). The first bell rings at 7:50 indicating to them to go to class
- At 8:00 am learners must be in class ready for the first lesson
- The gate will be locked until break time. The gate will be controlled by the security men and teachers who are free
- Learners who do not have a teacher (because the teacher is absent) will be taken care of by a free teacher. Mrs Fikelephi and Rev. Ndabeni will make the necessary arrangements. The learners will be supervised in the hall only when there are not enough teachers to take all the classes
- Class representatives will carry a period register to mark all learners who are not in class and this must be signed by the subject teachers
- Learners have only 5 minutes to move from one class to the next. They are not allowed to go to the toilets unless they have permission from the subject teacher
- Learners are not allowed to play ball anywhere in the school yard during teaching time
- The break will be 50 minutes long and the gate will again be locked when the bell rings and opened at the end of the school day

##### **2. TEACHERS**

###### **2.1. TIMES:**

\* Arrival – up to 7:40 am and the signing of the attendance register

- Morning briefings – 7:40
- 7:50 – Briefing ends and teachers go to classes
- 8:00 – First lesson starts

**NB:** the morning briefings are exactly that and not times for meetings and the raising of issues that need discussion.

2.2. The register must be signed both in the morning and at the end of the school. Failure to sign will be viewed in a very serious light

2.3. Teachers who are going to be away must leave work with their HOD's for the learners. The HOD will co-ordinate this and may enlist the help of a neighbour

2.4. Teachers must be in class at all times and ensure that the learners are given a fruitful learning experience

2.5. The BREAK will be 50 minutes long. Teachers will be expected to use the last five minutes walking to class so that when period 4 starts they are in class and ready for the learners. Ms Planga will ring the hand bell five minutes before the end of break for the teachers.

2.6. If a teacher has some business to attend to outside school during break, that must be done during break and not beyond. The teachers must first obtain the Principals permission for that.

2.7. ALL TEACHERS must keep a period register, using class lists. Attendance problems must be referred to the Std HOD during or at the end of the week

2.8. Teachers will not be locked out. But they could find themselves standing among late learners and this could be embarrassing. Please avoid it.

2.9. Release learners immediately at the end of your period

### 3. NON-TEACHING STAFF

3.1. Security Men – Gate duty for most of the day and will be assisted by teachers

3.2. Administration Clerk: must ensure that bell times are kept accurately