RHODES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE EXPECTED ROLES OF PRINCIPALS IN SCHOOLS

MANAGING CHANGE AT A SOUTH AFRICAN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY

A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF MY ORGANISATION WITH REGARD TO ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE, LEADERSHIP, DECISION MAKING, COMMUNICATION AND AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

RESEARCH PROJECTS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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By

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ABSTRACT

Schools, like all organizations, are undergoing radical changes in the way that their business is conducted. "One of the most significant of these is that leadership, rather than management, needs to be seen as the most crucial focus for institutional development and growth in the years ahead," (Whitaker, 1993).

In these projects I focus on three dimensions of leadership. First, a critical review of literature on the expected roles of principals in schools. Second, a case study of change management at a South African senior secondary school; and finally, a situational analysis of my organization with regard to organizational structure, leadership, decision making, communication and interpersonal relationships.

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A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE EXPECTED ROLES OF PRINCIPALS IN SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

This literature review will range over historical thinking about the roles of school principals, current schools of thought about principals and various topics of debate and controversy concerning school principals. It will also indicate such gaps as there appear to be in the literature and in the methodology used to investigate principals' roles.

HISTORICAL THINKING ABOUT PRINCIPALS

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Headmaster was an autocrat at the helm of an autocracy (Norwood and Hope cited in Morgan, Hall & Mackay 1983):

> The headmaster, in most English schools, certainly holds a position of absolute power, for which no analogy can be found in other professions whatever, a position, further, of authority and influence far surpassing all that is exercised by those of the same rank in other countries (p. 9)

Since this was the case in England, it is only to be expected that the status of principals in schools in the British colonies was, initially at least, similar. For instance, Caldwell (1988) points out that in Australia, power was centralized in the hands of principals until the early 1970s: decisions were taken by the principals and the staff simply carried them out. Grace (1995, citing Kogan, Johnson and Packwood [1984]) provides the following summary of power relations in respect of the school principalship from the 1940s to the 1970s:

> The orthodox view of school decision-making is that it is controlled by the principal. This view of his authority has persisted in the public view and was frequently mentioned by governors in our research. Bacon's (1978) research showed that it was still the most important position in the school and could wield greater power. The position of the principal is vested with a high degree of both formal authority and the possession of power. The Articles of Government give

> the principal responsibility for the internal running of the school but this is only concluded in general terms. The principal does in fact have control over the internal organisation, management and discipline of the school. He has the power to define his own role and, to a large extent, the structure of the school (p. 15).

In the United States, it seems, the situation was not much different. The American school principal has traditionally been responsible for managing staff, school programs, school premises, school resources, student attendance and student transportation. Staff management responsibilities include making decisions and keeping records regarding absences, benefits and travel (Wiles and Bondi 1983).

In the case of South Africa, as recently as 1992 Hartshorne argued that South African schools are characterized by traditional authoritarian modes. The role of the principal has been to enforce discipline and ensure that teaching and learning occur. This attitude is replicated in the classroom, with authoritarian teachers giving pupils little time for questions, discussion, active participation, group work and hands-on experimentation. He concludes by saying that the position of a principal tends to be filled by a strong-man in South African schools (Hartshorne 1992).

The traditionally hierarchical and authoritarian system of management in South African schools is underlined by both of the following researchers - Blasé, Blasé, Anderson and Dungan (1995) and Dimmock (1993). Historically black educational institutions in South Africa, in particular, are run on authoritarian lines (Van der Mescht 1996). Principals perceive their position to be unchallengeable, protected by a vast and powerful bureaucracy. They tend to gather all the responsibilities in and for an institution into their

hands, establishing school policy and making rules and regulations to govern all the activities and behaviour of teachers and students alike (Van der Mescht 1996).

According to Tewel (1995), in the twentieth century schools were typically organized hierarchically, with top-down decision-making, resulting in detailed rules and regulations that constrained innovation and flexibility. It seemed to teachers that administrators knew more and had a broader view of issues. Principals ensured a one-directional flow of communication, from top to bottom; members of staff were denied the opportunity to participate in meetings and the right to be consulted on decisions that were going to affect them. Principals ran schools according to their own beliefs and values.

Within this hierarchic structure, historically speaking, the emphasis on the role of the principal has fallen on productivity and control. Classical school management theory reflects principles of scientific management, which associate management with task completion, supervision and control. The scientific management movement favoured time and motion studies, involving systematic observation and measurement of workers, coupled with incentives payment schemes.

According to Taylor, people with appropriate instructions and agreed incentives could be expected to operate like machines to increase productivity (Hughes 1985). Taylor's theorizing did not consider human relations and reduced the value of man to that of a machine. Not a few school principals have sought to run their schools like machines, ignoring the needs and desires of their underlings.

In sum, historically speaking, school principals have been authoritarian, taking decisions on behalf of the entire organisation. Their role has been to supervise instruction and provide for staff improvement, to fit into an organisational hierarchy and, like a good soldier, carry out the demands of bureaucratic superiors (Morris & Porter-Gehric 1984); to be responsible for the improvement of instruction (Roe and Drake 1980) and to develop or implement policies and procedures resulting in the efficient operating of the school (Gordon and Schneider 1991). Thus the role of the principal has been seen as essentially functional, with the focus on control, efficiency, the completion of work and productivity.

CURRENT THINKING ON THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS

There has been a shift in the dominant conception of the role of principals, from one involving mainly the meeting and making of bureaucratic demands within a strict hierarchy, to one primarily committed to supporting the work of the professional staff; in sum, a shift from a conception of the principal as manager to one of the principal as facilitator (Walker 1996). As a facilitator, a school principal eases the way for others in the school community to emerge as leaders within a participatory environment. Walker also points out that principals are becoming more consultative, open and democratic.

Morris and Porter-Gehric (1994) argue that the basic model for leadership behaviour has changed from an authoritarian one (associated with time and motion studies of teacher efficiency), to a democratic one, characterised by the sentiment that a Head's relationship

with his or her teachers is one of a senior colleague and counsellor rather than overseer or boss. They also point out that involving teachers in making decisions may seem like risk-taking but is well worthwhile: indeed, to leave them out is to invite trouble.

A useful way of characterising this change is provided by Walker (1994), who describes the relocation of the principal from the apex of the pyramid to the centre of a network of human relationships, where he or she functions as a change agent and resource. In a collaborative team environment such as this, the role of the principal is shifted towards supporting teaching rather than controlling it. This would seem to be borne out by the research of Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (1994) on current roles of principals: they found that most principals viewed their current role as one of administrator, but their preferred role was that of an instructional leader, with the responsibility for disseminating new knowledge and skills in the professional setting of the school.

Beck (1996) asserts that the school principal is responsible for overseeing shared decision making at a school site and for ensuring that all stakeholders are indeed represented when key issues are being discussed. The emphasis on shared decision-making in current thinking cannot be over-estimated. According to Dimmock (1993), for instance, in Australia hierarchical forms of decision-making are quickly disappearing, with principals now being expected to consult and reach consensus with a wide range of individuals and groups. Decisions in school-based management are, therefore, made collectively and collegially by relevant stakeholders and not individually by the principal or deputy

principal of the school. Another way of construing this is as the decentralisation of decision-making (Dull 1981).

Dull (1981) also insists on the importance of principals' creating an open atmosphere in which staff members can feel secure in contributing creatively. The principal should synthesize these contributions in order to establish which beliefs and values are shared, because the need to achieve a shared vision for the school is paramount (Esp and Saran 1995). Thus for these writers, the primary role of the principal is to ensure that a common vision for the school is created and that the vision is translated into practice.

Tewel (1995) agrees that it is important for a principal to develop a clear vision and then to employ it consistently in all his interactions with staff, parents, and students, always using these links to create opportunities for others to adopt his vision and make it theirs. Tewel also argues that the principal must foster a sense of trust and security among the different constituent groups at the school so they can undertake the often risky, threatening task of changing the status quo. He also concludes that communicating the purpose and vision of the school through words and actions is one of the principal's most important roles.

Squelch and Lemmer (1994) have summarised the role of principals as follows:

> First and foremost the principal should be a good teacher . . . . The principal should be in a position to advise his or her staff on all educational matters relating to pupils. A principal has to be a good manager. This implies an ability to plan, organise, supervise and motivate people. The principal should be a good communicator since he spends most of his time communicating with staff, pupils

> education departments, parents and the broader community. The principal should act as public relations and marketing personnel. With competition among schools on the increase, principals have to be able to actively market their schools (p. 11).

This latter function is recognised in the first of two metaphors that Walker (1991) maintains underpin moves towards team approaches to school management. The first is the market metaphor that calls on schools to become more flexible and adaptable. The second is the collaboration metaphor that values participation, collegiality, empowerment, shared leadership and professionalism at a school level.

This latter metaphor places emphasis on human relations. Mayo in Musaazi (1983), for instance, points to the significance of the relationship between workers and management and among each other for productivity. Barnard, in Musaazi (1983), also stresses the importance of human relations in the communicative, teamwork approach.

In conclusion, democratic principles may be seen to prevail in current thinking about school Heads. Principals are seen as agents of change in their institutions. They are regarded as senior colleagues, counsellors and facilitators, rather than bosses, and the decision-making formerly centralized in their hands has been decentralized. They must nevertheless take the lead in developing and disseminating a shared vision of and for their school among all stakeholders.

SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT ON THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS

The **functionalist** school offers a static, one-directional view of leadership in which the superordinate or leader leads an anonymous, unquestioning mass of subordinates or followers (Smith 1995). This school of thought dominated an earlier era when principals made all the decisions and a teacher's duty was to comply and not to ask questions. The functionalist view of the school principal's role thus lent towards support for an authoritarian style of leadership.

A **structuralist** view of the organisation sees it as composed of groups which share some values and interests but at the same time necessarily differ on issues such as power and wages (Astin and Schemi 1980). In the structuralist view, conflict, though inherent in organisations, can also be a catalyst for development and change. Smyth (1994) argues that another dimension of structural theory would be to view leadership as a dialectic relationship in the social construction of reality that involves ongoing interaction. A dialectic perspective on leadership within a school involves taking into consideration all human agents - pupils, parents, teachers, support staff, as well as the principal - in the formation of a social institution whose structural properties are simultaneously the medium and outcome of social acts (Giddens 1979, cited in Smyth 1994).

According to Astin and Scheme (1980), the **humanistic** school emphasizes that adults need to share responsibility rather than to be cast in childlike, dependent roles in their work settings. The humanistic school maintains that the most satisfied organization is the most efficient: the social and psychological needs of employees must be satisfied in order to ensure co-operation and efficiency. In this view, a principal's role is to keep the

institution and its employees happy in order to maintain a high quality and standard of education.

TOPICS OF DEBATE AND CONTROVERSY ABOUT PRINCIPALS

Blase (1995) asserts that effective school principals typically fail to include teachers in decision-making, or limit their involvement significantly. This is partly because teachers rarely identify their fundamental needs, values and aspirations, and simple compliance is the typical response of teachers to effective principals. Effective principals articulate their vision, set their goals, explain their expectations and, in large part, determine the means to achieve such ends.

Other writers, like Leithwood (1994), maintain that effectiveness is compatible with participatory decision-making. However, even those who support the inclusion of teachers in decision-making have misgivings. According to Dimmock (1993), several principals expressed the reservation that an increased allocation of time for decision-making committees comprising teachers would reduce classroom effectiveness. One principal stated: "The more you pull a teacher out of the classroom, the less the student gets attention."

Therefore Dimmock expresses the concern that the more teachers are involved in decision making and management, the more teaching time is lost and the more students are neglected.

Tewel (1992) points to the argument for a decreased need for the school principal. Some writers who have advocated shared leadership with teachers in the form of management teams wonder why a principal is actually needed. The assumption is that such teams can take all decisions regarding the activities and running of the school.

However, Bennett (1992) argues that the principal is necessary to shape the organisational conditions necessary for success, such as the development of shared goals, collaborative work structures and climate, and procedures for monitoring results. He says that the principal plays a pivotal role in school organisation and management. Furthermore, Smyth (1994) argues that many researchers have concluded that a principal's leadership is essential to initiate and sustain school efforts. According to Smyth, the model Australia currently favours is one where the principal is the central facilitator of all the activities of the school.

Esp (1995) believes that the new-found power of school governing bodies can and does cause problems for some head teachers (and indeed for some chairs of these governing bodies). According to Esp many heads would like governors to be involved but are worried that over-bureaucratic systems might inhibit their ability to manage and teach effectively.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY USED TO INVESTIGATE PRINCIPALS

According to Baron and Howell (1974), studies of administrative processes are carried out through the scrutiny of documentary evidence, through interviews and questionnaires, and

by direct observation. Baron and Howell (1974) caution that while documents indicate official intentions and policies, they cannot alone cover the full range of possible activities or relationships of the parties involved. They claim that each approach has its own particular limitations, and each may be more appropriate at a different level of enquiry. However, collectively they can provide a reasonably full and convincing picture. Blase (1995) also accepts the desirability of a variety of methods of investigation, including surveys, statistical profiles and, most importantly, the qualitative methods of in depth case studies.

In the view of Glatter, Preddy, Riches, Masterton (1988), most research on school principals has taken the form of case studies of individual schools, with the part played by the principal being only one aspect of the study. Morris and Porter-Gehric (1984) point out that the research method used to gather material on the principal's work activities is formally known as ethnography, a variation on the anthropologist's field-based strategy of living with the subject. Ethnographic techniques require direct on-site observation, with the researcher present at all times. In one particular project, each of the principals studied was accompanied by one member of the research team and directly observed on the job for up to twelve working days, not necessarily sequential, over the course of three school years. Typically, the principal's working day began around 7:45 a.m. and continued until 4:00 or 5:00 p.m., though he or she was also followed into the late afternoon or evening if engaged in professional responsibilities related to the principalship.

GAPS IN THE LITERATURE, METHODOLOGY OR APPROACHES USED TO INVESTIGATE PRINCIPALS

While Tewel (1992) argues that concepts of transformational leadership are attaining increasing popularity in the literature and among school reformers, Schlechty (1990) observes that there is no consensus as to how these are to change the principal's leadership role in instruction. He also points out that there is still a lack of clarity about what skills and capacities school leaders actually need to succeed in these transformed education settings.

Roe and Drake (1980) agree that professors of educational administration tend to have immersed themselves in the search for theories, while having given very little consideration to identifying principles to serve as guides to administrative action.

Blase (1995) notes the existence of a gap in descriptions of facilitative-democratic approaches to leadership, which rarely appeared in the professional literature generated during the 1980s. At the same time, effective principals were often described in theoretical or general terms as operating within open, collaborative and participatory systems. Grace (1995) asserts that there is little evidence available to assess the extent and the nature of participative school management and governance in the 1970s.

Similarly, Dimmock (1993) argues that there is limited empirical evidence to indicate whether the management model for school governance has proved suitable or effective.

CONCLUSION

The historical overview revealed that principals have typically implemented an authoritarian style of leadership. Lines of communication took one direction, from top to bottom. Principals were located at the apex of a pyramid-style hierarchical structure. The system favoured male appointments to headships because men were perceived as being strong and forceful. Parents and other stakeholders in education were not involved in decision-making.

Current thinking on the principal's role tend to adopt the perspective of power sharing. Power sharing entails the sharing of responsibilities and inclusivity in decision-making: power is decentralized and a democratic approach adopted. Although there are differences of opinion as to what precisely the principal's role should be, there is agreement that all stakeholders in the education process should be involved in bringing about change in schools.

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MANAGING CHANGE AT A SOUTH AFRICAN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL : A CASE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

This study was undertaken at Dalindyebo Senior Secondary School, which is situated in a remote area of the Eastern Cape near Umtata. The school was chosen because of its progressive profile and its record of outstanding results.

My target group in the study was the education stakeholders serving in the school governing body (SGB). I have handpicked my participants from the SGB. Those participating in the study were the principal, a teacher, 3 students who were not serving in the SGB and a parent member of the SGB. Groof, Bray, Mothata and Malherbe (1998:107) argue that although many South African schools have always tried to operate in democratic way, co-operative governance has been at the discretion of the principal and dependent on his or her personality.

The principal of Dalindyebo Senior Secondary School was resistant to change and did not see any significance in putting learners in the SGB while they were unable to execute their learning properly. He concluded by saying that learners would never be included in the SGB because that would delay the progress of their studies. Groof, Bray, Mothata and Malherbe (1998:107) argue that we should not forget that the majority of black schools (the majority of schools in South Africa) did not have governing bodies per se. They argued that the so-called school governors tended to have symbolic powers rather than actual authority.

This study focuses on how change is managed in schools, drawing its data from interviews with the six participants. The results of the interviews are analysed according to categories or themes suggested by the data collected.

RESEARCH GOALS AND CONTEXT

The goal of the research was to investigate a SGB's experience of how change is managed in a Circuit 9 school in the Umtata district, in the light of all the changes that have taken place in the present democratic era. Groof, Bray, Mothata, Malherbe (1998:107) believe that the changes brought about by the South African Schools Act of 1996 call for some analysis of issues/challenges facing schools in terms of co-operative governance. They argue further that during the 1990's legislative developments resulted in school governing bodies gaining more power and responsibility and in 1992 powers of school governing bodies were extended widely in two particular areas; first, they could determine a school's admission policy and, second, they could levy compulsory school fees.

Green (1995:200) maintains that at present there is a triangle of co-operation between the school, the parent and the pupil that forms such an important part of a school's success that it must be at the core of the aims of instruction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This section of the study reviews relevant available literature on change management in education, with particular reference to the involvement and participation of stakeholders, the communicative process, the notion of shared vision and change. This literature will be drawn upon in the analysis of the data. It also broadens my understanding of change management in education.

INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

The South African Schools Act (1996) highlights the principle that there must be a partnership among all stakeholders with an interest in education. The Act stipulates that the democratisation of education requires partnership between the state, educators, parents, learners and other members of the community in the vicinity of the school. It places particular emphasis on the involvement of parents in the education of their children.

However, it is essential that the crucial participation of teachers not be neglected. Blasé (1995:36) contends that if teachers are involved, motivated and empowered, students and communities will not be far behind the movement toward change. Stakeholders like teachers are more likely to implement decisions when they have been involved in making them. The problem, as Blasé points out, is that school principals typically fail to include teachers in decision-making or limit their involvement significantly. He argues that

"effective" principals communicate: they articulate their vision, set their goals, and explain their expectations. Dunham (1995) offers the following guidelines for effective change management:

> Teachers need to be informed and consulted about their opinions and feelings so they can be active participants in the changes that are affecting their work. They should participate with the head, senior management team and middle management in working out a careful strategy for change which should be clear about their objectives and agree on realistic targets. They should share their disappointments about things that do not happen as intended. (p. 24)

Smith (1995:55) argues from the general principle that whatever is being changed and how the change proceeds needs to be "owned" by all those involved in the process. To be successful in managing change, for instance, one has to recognise what motivates teachers and how this motivation can be harnessed by the whole organisation in a way that makes it easier to achieve objectives. Smith (1995:55) points out that, if they are to be involved in the process of change, teachers will inevitably have to take on a leadership role. The entire staff needs to feel a sense of ownership and commitment to the process and its anticipated end results (Whitaker 1993:88). Whitaker (1993:88) argues that through the involvement and collaboration of teachers and other stakeholders, it is possible to maximise the human resources and skills, commitment and energy of individuals in order to create a potent and catalytic mix for successful change and development.

According to Dimmock (1993:59), school-based management demands greater participation by staff and parents in the policy and decision-making processes of the school. Relevant stakeholders should make decisions in school-based management

collectively and collegially, not individually through the principal and/or deputy principal of the school. Principals must liaise and interact with consultative groups and attend to the interpersonal dynamics of the collaborative process (Chapman 1992, cited in Dimmock 1993:59).

Smith (1995:55) argues that leaders must consult all appropriate individuals in an attempt to achieve as much consensus as is possible. The idea of stakeholders should also be worked on and reassessed; for instance, by regularly asking them what things need to be changed or what sort of innovations could be introduced into the school (Morris and Everard 1990). To facilitate this, one has to convene groups of stakeholders and give them a question to discuss; for instance, what do we do well and what do we do badly? Morris and Everard (1990) insist that this has proved useful and productive.

In a study carried out in England and Wales on how principals manage change, Glatter, Preedy, Riches and Masterton (1998) point out that principals establish various committees and working parties in order to involve the staff in the consultation and planning process of change. However, they note that while principals spoke about the importance of staff participation and consultation, they reserved the right to make the final decision. While consultation was very important, action had to result because talking without anything happening could be very demoralising (Glatter et al. 1988:81).

Groof, Bray, Mathata and Malherbe (1988:110) contend that the new structure of governing bodies does allow for considerable parent involvement on substantive issues

that extends beyond the traditional fund-raising activities and tuck-shop duties. They argue that parents are now placed in a very strong position and, effectively, have the power to influence decisions on very fundamental issues; for example, school budgets, language policy and discipline.

On the other hand, they argue that parents can lack the expertise to serve on governing bodies as some have very little idea of what the governance of a school entails. Moreover, parents are often ignorant and uninformed with regard to the management of a school. In addition, working hours and responsibilities prevent parents from effective involvement in school management.

Hopkins, Dinscon and West (1994:138) argue that schools have long enjoyed considerable support from parents. Their involvement ranges from fund-raising and organizing social events through parents-teachers associations (PTA), helping with supervision on residential trips and day visits, reading with children, running the school bookshop, selling uniforms and helping with many other activities. However, it is interesting to note that although the school has sought to involve parents in a supportive role, there has never been an invitation for them to participate in the decision making process or in formulating school policy. Groof, Bray, Mothata and Malherbe (1998:107) observe that school governing bodies have become more responsible for the governance and management of schools and, following the South African Schools Act, parent and community responsibility and accountability have increased.

THE COMMUNICATIVE PROCESS

Dalin (1993:48) argues that if co-operation and ownership of the process of change are to be achieved among teachers, basic communication built on trust and openness is vital. He also argues that change processes call for active and productive communication lines on both horizontal and vertical axes; that is, among teachers as well as between principal and staff, and staff and students.

Dunham (1995:120) agrees that change can be managed better when principals receive as much information as possible, i.e. upwards, downwards and sideways. He also claims that such flow of information reduces uncertainty and the risk of rumour and misinformation. Schools with a fragmented communication structure, with isolated teachers and isolated work units, will have a particularly difficult job. The emphasis is on working together towards the common goal. Dalin (1993:56) stresses the fact that when working relations are conducive, communication is effective. It is up to principals to recognise the need for team work in schools.

Schmuck and Runkel (1994:127) argue that features of effective interpersonal communication within a team or organisation include openness, communication of feelings, eliciting personal resources and trust. Among these, openness and trust are the most important.

Green (1995:203) argues that parent bodies must be kept well informed and should be given the opportunity, perhaps through a newsletter, to communicate with parents. The parent representatives on the governing body are key people in this regard.

SHARED VISION

According to Whitaker (1995:70), a shared vision can uplift people's aspirations, create sparks of excitement, compel experimentation and risk-taking and increase the courage to succeed. Dunham (1995:120) agrees that the development of shared vision in an organisation promotes commitment, but cautions that it is important not to let the process get out of hand, or it will take a huge slice of the human and time resources available to the school.

Miles (1987, cited in Bennett, Crawford and Riches 1992:38) stresses that vision involves two dimensions: the first is a shareable and shared vision of what the school could look like, which provides direction and driving power for change, and criteria for steering and choosing options. The second dimension is a shared vision of the change process itself. As far as the latter is concerned, the early involvement of the staff in the planning stage is vital for effective change management (Dunham 1995:120).

Dalin (1993:45) argues that change is a collective process demanding partnership and collaboration, conceding that this is often hard, given how much time and energy can be wasted in groups. He also argues that initiatives for change may come from within the school as well as from the surrounding social or political environment. Whitaker (1995:70) maintains that a shared vision can never be officially prescribed, in that it needs both to bubble up from within the organisation as well as to filter down, connecting personal visions as well as opening up discussions of realities in order for change to take place.

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Whitaker (1993:88) believes that it is through the quality of working relationships that organisational success is achieved and change accomplished. He argues that there must be healthy and conducive working relationships in an institution for change to take place. Morris and Everard (1990) believe that the principal is responsible for establishing such relationships, keeping the "common room sweet" and ironing out administrative problems. Any crises that arise in the school should be solved in an amicable manner.

Dalin (1993:39) stresses the importance of the internal human relations in a school: among students, teachers and leaders; in the classrooms; in the playground; and in the staffroom. He also argues that the quality of an organisation is often reflected in the relations among people: between groups and between the leaders and those who are led. He stresses that it is important for schools to strive for good human relations.

According to Mpati and Ripinga (1982:15), it is ultimately up to administrators to ensure harmonious working relationships in order to succeed in mobilizing others for the task of building up an educational institution worthy of the name. Follett (cited in Gorton 1983:65) emphasized that it is just as important for an administrator to concentrate on meeting the personal needs of employees and developing co-operative and harmonious relationships among them, as on achieving the productivity goals of the organisation.

Spear (1994:137-138) argues that it is crucial that the SGB chairman and head teacher relationship should be a close one and, initially, a series of meetings is essential to establish an effective working relationship based on a sharing of expertise and mutual confidence.

CHANGE CAPACITY

Dalin (1993:56) argues that in order to succeed with change the school has to build its change capacity. In his view, change capacity is a function of the competence and confidence of the teachers and other actors. The former would include both the ability of individuals to perform a given task and of participants in a group to achieve something together. The motivation and capacity of staff develop gradually as they open up, trust each other and feel a sense of belonging in the school.

Whitaker (1995:80) argues that traditional management and organisational structures in schools have tended to reinforce an external locus of control, inhibiting the full flowering of human capacity in both pupils and teachers. He cites Frederick Herzberg's classic studies of human motivation. Herzberg found that people tend to resist change and appear demotivated when:

1. Those in management positions create too many rules, regulations and bureaucratic procedures for staff to comply with.
2. Managers exercise strong supervision and carry out regular checks on quality and output.
3. There are poor and inadequate rewards for work done.
4. There is low morale, involving difficult relationships, conflicting values and divisive attitudes.
5. The working conditions are poor with a lack of facilities and resources.

Herzberg's arguments emphasize that for change to take place staff should be intrinsically motivated, involved in decision making and encouraged to contribute to the

smooth running of the school. Change capacity flows from inclusiveness in all the activities of the school, and is impeded by top-down control.

To summarize, the literature survey reveals that change management requires that all the relevant stakeholders be involved (especially teachers), that a variety of communication routes be encouraged (sideways, upwards and downwards); that there be a shared vision both of the school and of the process of change among stakeholders; that teachers are not only consulted about any change that is to take place in the school, but actually participate in the decision-making process and that the principal maintains healthy change-capacity and conducive working relationships throughout the school.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted within an interpretive paradigm. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:126) argue that in interpretive research it is the researcher who is the primary instrument for both collecting and analysing the data. They further argue that to do better interpretive research, one has to undergo some personal change. They explain (1999:124) that interpretive research relies on first-hand accounts, tries to describe what it sees in rich detail and presents its findings in engaging and sometimes evocative language.

METHOD

The case study method was used to investigate SGB's experience of change management at a school. Colin (1995:85) argues that the case study approach to research involves the construction of a detailed qualitative description of the behaviour and experience of a single individual case.

Cohen and Manion (1994:106), however, argue that a case study is designed to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of a unit with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population to which that unit belongs. According to Colin (1995:85) the case study method permits the exploration of hidden aspects of human behaviour such as thoughts, feelings and subjective perceptions.

SAMPLING

I have used purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, the researcher handpicks the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of a judgement as to their typicality or value in a data. Kerlinger (1986:120) also argues that purposive sampling is characterized by the use of judgement and a deliberate effort to obtain representative samples by including presumably typical areas or groups in the sample. I chose the principal, a teacher and a parent who are members of the school governing body, as well as 3 students.

TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS

I collected the data by interview. Cohen and Manion (1994:272) point out that interviews allow for greater depth of data collection. I used unstructured interviews and observation; procedures characterised by their openness, flexibility and freedom allowing, for instance, for questions to be prompted by the responses of interviewees. Colin (1995:86) argues that unstructured interviews allow questions to be pursued in an exploratory fashion and in greater depth. Cohen and Manion (1994:273) also point out that the unstructured interview is an open situation, having greater flexibility and freedom.

I asked questions of each of my respondents in different venues on the school premises and recorded their responses as they spoke to me. Depending on what these were, I also asked follow-up questions so as to dig deeper for information. I asked my respondents open-ended questions to enable them to respond as fully as possible. The questions that I asked were formulated so as to offer guidance without prescription and were not always worded as they appear on the interview schedule (as contained in the APPENDIX). Unstructured interviews gave me a chance to re-phrase the question when the respondent did not understand it. As Vockell (1983) pointed out, the major advantage of the unstructured interview lies in its flexibility.

ANALYSIS

Colin (1995:86) argues that pieces of information from an informant can be sorted into categories and their significance evaluated in terms of theory. I analysed the data into

broad themes and categories as these emerged from the literature and the interviews. For instance, units of general meaning were noted and reduced to the units relevant to the research question. Units that seemed to be the same were clustered and some common themes were identified. The data was then analysed in terms of those themes. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:139) emphasize that a key principle of interpretive analysis is to stay close to the data, to interpret it from a position of empathic understanding.

INTERPRETATION OF DATA

SHARING OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The principal said: "My strategy to change management is to make everyone in the school responsible for all activities that take place." He argued that the sharing of responsibilities enabled everyone to feel that he or she is part of the school. "I delegate some of the duties to the members of the SGB and students, so that they can develop a sense of ownership about the school."

Siko, a teacher, argued that the sharing of responsibilities in the school commits the members to the change that prevails. Siko believes sharing responsibility is in itself one of the greatest changes, because the principal used to do everything on his own.

Bula, a parent said: "I work very closely with teachers although I'm the parent. For instance, when 'Tall Madiba' visited our school, I was earmarked to look after the chefs with regard to refreshments." Bula also said: "We are monitoring the school water

project as for now" (this involves co-ordinating activities and giving assistance where possible). In other words, parent members of the SGB are acting as project facilitators in the school. Bula felt that this represented a change in the life of the school: parents sharing responsibilities with teachers.

Students interviewed agreed that certain responsibilities were shared among members of the school community. Students said: "We have an obligation of conducting prayers in the morning. During some occasions in our school, we become ushers, showing people where to park their cars and where to get coffee or tea and also where they should sit in the tent."

To conclude: if, as Holt and Hinds (1994:21) argue, partnership implies a sharing of information, responsibilities and skills, then an ethos of partnership definitely prevails at the school.

WORKING COMMITTEE

The principal announced that he had established a working committee that includes members and non-members of the SGB at the school. By "working committee", he explained, he means a committee which represents all the stakeholders at the institution, whose main purpose was to formulate and establish a school constitution and, in consultation with members of the staff where appropriate, to develop school policy. This committee also meets to discuss any issues relating to change in the organisation.

When formulating proposals or recommendations, the committee first prepares a draft and presents it to the people affected before drawing up the final document. The committee also encourages other members of the school community to make an input in writing concerning whatever issue they are dealing with. The principal confirmed that this committee is also charged with evaluating the failures and successes of change.

Siko said that the working committee provides an opportunity for sharing ideas and visions of how the school should be. He continued: "Parents, teachers and students are represented in the working committee as means to achieve the common goal about the school." Bula pointed out that the committee is involved in matters relating to day-to-day activities at the school in order to ensure that high standards are established or maintained: "We are also involved in the working committee so that we can set up standards for our school."

Students, on the other hand, said that they had no comment to make on the working committee because they are not part of it. "Our principal is not in favour of including students in any committee that will be comprised of parents and teachers," they said. Students said that they simply had to comply with whatever directives their administrators gave to them. It would therefore appear that the principal's failure to include student representation on the working committee was a source of disaffection. For the process of consultation and the management of change to be fully effective, all stakeholders need to be included.

COMMUNICATION

The principal declared: "I am accessible, my arms and doors are open to all the stakeholders." He insisted that communication at the school was not restricted to one direction only, i.e. from top to bottom, but that there was a two-way process of communication in operation: "I give out and also receive information as a result of communicative process that takes place in the school."

Siko echoed this by saying: "The principal is accessible to everyone and is ready to talk to anybody." Siko also endorsed the view that there is two-way communication between the principal and his staff. "All the changes in the school are communicated to the members of the staff in a staff meeting." In addition, according to Siko, the principal welcomes contributions of ideas, visions and opinions from staff members. Bula confirmed this, pointing out that the principal and staff interact directly.

Once again, students had a different viewpoint. They said: "In reality there is a white solid line between us and the principal." They argued that they were simply on the receiving end of changes introduced. Students also asserted that it was a rule at the school that the principal did not argue or enter into debate with students. The fundamental right of students to be part of the SGB is infringed and, therefore, they feel most perturbed.

PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING

The principal's view is as follows: "I consult and encourage teachers to participate in staff meetings [but] always reserve the right to make the final decision in any issue at hand." He continued: "Ideas and contributions from the members of the staff are respected and taken into consideration . . . Teachers and stakeholders are invited to a meeting that has to take a decision so that they can be part of the decision taken." The principal felt that teachers wanted to be involved in decision-making, especially those decisions that are going to affect them directly or indirectly.

Siko confirmed that some decisions in the school were taken jointly, saying: "Some matters related to the smooth running of the school are discussed in a joint meeting of all the stakeholders in education." He cited, by way of example, matters such as the drawing up of school policy and a school constitution. Siko felt that hearing the ideas of other members gives one an opportunity to become aware of different versions of the issues on hand and that the decisions eventually taken after all the versions had been considered were that much more "concrete" – practical and reliable.

Bula indicated that it was the relaxed atmosphere in their meetings which was conducive to the contribution of their ideas. He credited the principal with having created this participatory environment in the school.

Students, however, complained: "We have never been at a meeting with the principal together with his staff. We do not participate in decision making." Students indicated

that they were not represented on the school governing body. They asserted that the management, together with the members of the school governing body, took decisions in the school. This is illegal. The South African Schools Act (1996) stipulates that a SGB must include teachers, students and parents. Government officials usually term the SGB the "three legged pot," in that it is composed of students, teachers and parents.

SHARED VISION

The principal's opinion was that "the vision of the school is shared by the staff members." He went on to say: "I put the cards on the table for us to play. Teachers and stakeholders are involved in pre-planning . . . I facilitate [the process] by inviting ideas from the teachers and affected people about the vision of the school." The principal stressed that the sharing of a vision for the school promotes the commitment of staff to the change process.

Siko confirmed the transparency of the process: "You see, the principal does not conceal things . . . There is a co-operative unit, and the principal tells us his vision." Siko asserted that the sharing of a vision enables continuity at the school, for instance in the event of the principal's leaving. Bula approved of the way in which the vision for the school is shared because he feels it enabled the exchange of different points of view on how the school should be run and what things needed to be changed.

The students interviewed said: "We too have a vision for our school but there is no way that we can contribute our vision because of our school culture of not including students

in matters related to the school management." Students hoped that the day would come when they would be able to show society that they can think intelligently and creatively about matters which concerned them and come up with good proposals concerning changes in their school.

In the research carried out in South Africa by Groof, Bray, Mothata and Malherbe (1998) about the contribution of learner governors, they concluded:

- They can promote honesty and trust among all stakeholders.
- Make other governors aware of their needs.
- Students will co-operate more . . .They will bring forth pupils needs and feelings.
- They can bring about a mutual respect among educators and learners alike.
- ... inform parents what students expect from them.
- Help in disciplining other students.
- Inform us about their needs [and] promote openness. (p. 107)

This shows clearly that learner governors can play a very meaningful role in school governance when they are included.

DISCUSSION

The interpretation of the data reveals that members of the school community, including those represented on the school governing body, share similar perceptions of change management in the school. The single exception is the student body, which has a different perception. They are not included in the school governing body or the "Working Committee." This reflects the traditional view of not giving students an opportunity to participate in matters relating to the running of the school.

Members of the SGB indicated that responsibilities are shared among the staff. Students also agreed that certain responsibilities are delegated to them, though, as the data reflect, these are limited. There would seem to be some anomaly in the fact that students are expected to assume certain responsibilities even though they are not included in the school governing body.

In the light of the South African Schools Act (1996) the school governing body should encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary service to the school. According to the Act, learners in particular are responsible for educational tasks assigned to them.

The interpretation of the data shows that communication in the school flows in two directions, from top to bottom and bottom to top. It also shows that the principal is accessible, though not to the students. Similarly, it is revealed that teachers and parents participate in decision-making, and that the principal encourages them to participate in meetings. Yet, students were never invited to any meeting, nor do they take part in making decisions concerning matters that affect them. The data also shows that students are expected simply to obey school rules and comply with decisions taken.

The data revealed that the principal is ignoring Section 23 of the South African Schools Act which prescribes the composition of governing bodies when he deliberately excludes learner governors from the SGB.

Parents in the school governing body are not aware of the provisions of the South African Schools Act. They are silent about the exclusion of learner governors.

CONCLUSION

Traditionally, the principal was at the top of the school hierarchy and disseminated information and decisions to the staff. The consultation and participation of stakeholders in the affairs of the school was unknown.

The data gathered in this study shows that at Dalindyebo Secondary School there has been a change in the way decisions are arrived at. It shows that stakeholders are consulted and participate in decisions that are made at the school. The only members of the school community not benefiting from this new dispensation are the students, who are given certain responsibilities but excluded from participation in decision-making and management. The process of consultation is superseded by the traditional view that adults cannot be ruled by "children."

RECOMMENDATIONS

Groof, Bray, Mothata and Malherbe (1998:111) argue that parents are now placed in a very strong position and, effectively, have the power to influence decisions on very fundamental issues, for example the school budget, language policy and discipline. However, parents in many rural areas are uneducated and have inadequate expertise to

pursue such functions. My research singled out only one school in Circuit 9 for this study, therefore it is not wise to generalise about findings. Nevertheless, as a typical rural school it is not unlikely that the situation at this school is similar to that at many other rural schools.

In South Africa, the general philosophy behind the legislative changes and the establishment of co-operative school governing bodies is a desire to make schools more accountable and legitimate, to improve the quality of education and to increase efficiency in management. But there is no guarantee that this will be realised in practice. The actual practice of co-operative school governance will require more than legislative mandates.

I therefore recommend that for co-operative school governance to function effectively and efficiently, the following should be done in our circuits and districts:

- Schools should co-opt parents and community members who have particular expert knowledge e.g. lawyers and accountants to serve in their SGB.
- Workshops should be conducted in order to empower school governing bodies with an understanding of their powers and duties with regard to school governance. The Schools Act empowers parents and makes specific provision for parents to participate in substantive issues which principals and teachers cannot ignore but this not enough as many of the parents who serve in SGB's in rural areas are unschooled.
- Circuits should conduct training on financial and conflict management.
- Training should be done by experts in those particular fields.

- There should be monitoring of the implementation of these changes.
- There should also be continuous evaluation of any changes to check their success or failure.

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APPENDIX
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. How was the democratic election of governing bodies conducted?
2. What sort of problems did you encounter during elections?
3. How should the school governing bodies be constituted?
4. Do you regard co-operative school governance as the most effective means of governing schools? Give reasons for your answer?
5. How do you take decisions?
6. Can you regard yourselves as effective governors? Give reasons for your answer.

A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF MY ORGANISATION WITH REGARD TO ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE, LEADERSHIP, DECISION-MAKING, COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this work is to look into some aspects of my school, seen as an organisation. I intend to analyse the school in terms of organisational structure, leadership, decision-making, communication, interpersonal relationships, school discipline, and parental involvement.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MY ORGANISATION

My organisation is a public school which is situated in a remote area of Umtata, Eastern Cape. It has five permanent classrooms (built by the government) and four temporary classrooms (built by the community); there is no purpose-built principal's office, storeroom or staffroom. The school is well fenced and the school grounds are neatly kept.

I, as the principal, share one classroom with my staff: a single room, therefore, functions as both principal's office and staffroom. While sharing the staffroom with my subordinates has deprived me of any sense of privacy, it has helped build team spirit among us. It has also helped me to supervise my subordinates' teaching activities without appearing to over-assert my authority. For instance, my physical presence in the staffroom has made the chances of teachers not attending classes unlikely.

The school introduced a commercial stream in 1992 in order to address the drastic changes in students' career needs. Presently the school has an enrolment of 565 students, with 15 teachers including the principal.

The school has maintained a record of good results every year. It has a high throughput rate from grade to grade. This has been achieved in large measure through unity and cooperation among the members of the staff. Staff members all

partake in the overall organisation and management of the school in varying degrees and ways.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The schematic of my organisation forms a circle: at the centre is the school, surrounded by the principal, deputy principal, staff, heads of department, educators and school governing body. All these people play an important role in the smooth running of the school. Their goal is to achieve a sense of working together in addition to realising the common objectives of the organisation.

In our organisation members of the staff have equal opportunities to participate in decision-making. Most decisions are taken by all the members of the organisation or by a decision-making team appointed for the purpose. If the term *collegium* designates a structure in which members have equal authority to participate in decisions which are binding on each of them (Bush 1986:50), then our organisation practises a form of collegiality. The principal, deputy principal and the heads of department in my organisation are known as facilitators. The head or principal, then, can be characterised as the facilitator of an essentially participative internal process (Bush 1986:61). This form of organisational structure encourages members of staff to play an active role in educational activities in the school.

The members of the staff serve on various committees that have been established at our school to co-ordinate learning and extra-mural activities. These committees have decision-making powers, although they do inform the principal about the decisions they have taken. As a result of the committees' work, the activities of the school run smoothly.

Bush (1986:51) points out an extensive committee system is typical of the model. I would agree that the extensive committee system helps to get everyone on

board; however, I must also point out that in the context of my organisation the committee system can be frustratingly time-consuming. Committees tend to fail to meet deadlines, despite all the efforts I have made to encourage them to deliver on time.

My organisation is governed by a democratically elected body known as the school governing body (SGB). The idea of the school governing body was introduced by the government, which has now legislated that all public schools must establish school governing bodies. According to the South African Schools Act (South Africa 1996) the SGB must be constituted as follows: 7 parents, 2 teachers and 2 students, with the principal being an ex officio member.

This body is meant to ensure transparency in the management of the school and, importantly, to involve parents in the process. The SGB plays a very important role in the school. It promotes the interests of the school by seeking to ensure that learners receive the best education possible. In accordance with the South African Schools Act, the SGB articulates a vision or mission for the school and draws up school policy in consultation with members of the staff. It is also involved in assessing the needs of the school and budgeting accordingly.

The SGB has developed ways of fund-raising such as concerts, civics days and collecting a certain amount for building funds from parents, after proper consultation with parents. These funds are actually used for both development and maintenance at the school, for instance to repair damage done to school property.

The school governing body encourages parents to frequently check their children's progress at school. It also tries to ensure that conditions at school are conducive to learning and teaching. In short, the SGB is well-informed about the needs of students, parents and educators in school. Problems such as suspicion of

mismanagement of school funds and other minor conflicts have been eliminated as a result of the establishment of the school governing body.

According to the South African Schools Act (South Africa 1996), the democratisation of education means that stakeholders such as parents, educators, learners and members of the community must have the right to participate in the activities of the school and have a say in decision making concerning the way the school is run. Holt and Hinds (1994:15) describe the way in which the school governing body of my school is working in terms of a model known as Halton's model of school effectiveness. They argue that before a school governing body can make any meaningful decisions, it must establish a corporate view of quality.

The SGB in my organisation has taken the time to sit and talk about the quality and quantity of items the school needs. These quantities are then prioritised, and the most urgent items on the list attended to first. The members of the SGB know exactly their responsibilities and workloads because all members participate in the process of discussion and prioritising. Duties are delegated to individuals and committees, who report back to the SGB as a whole.

Holt and Hinds (1994:20) believe that heads and governors are capable of "partnership". My school as an example would seem to support this view: partnership is highly visible between head and governors in my organisation because they share information, responsibility, decision-making and accountability. In sum, they share a sense of purpose.

LEADERSHIP

Van der Mescht (1996:13) argues that leadership is rooted in the grand narratives of history, inspiring the life-changing events that are part of our cultural heritage. He gives examples of charismatic world changers: Moses led the Israelites to the

promised land; Gandhi inspired India to independence; Shaka led the Zulus to glory, and Mandela liberated South Africa.

On a much more modest scale, principals are also agents of change in their institutions. Leadership is about influencing and guiding followers in a direction, to action and to an opinion. The school principal influences the activities of the school and also provides the necessary guidance when change takes place. Like other leaders, principals should have a vision of the destiny of the people they are leading.

Morris, Robert and Emanuel (1994:13) argue that leadership behaviour in England has changed from an authoritarian model to a democratic model, in terms of which a principal's relationship with teachers is that of a senior colleague rather than that of an overseer.

Today principals are expected to involve teachers in decision-making and make it a point that teachers participate in decisions that are going to affect them. Teachers, for their part, can be expected to commit themselves to decisions they have been instrumental in making. This is what is meant by a democratic style of leadership. While some think that in this context "Democracy" means that their will should prevail, or that they can do whatever they want, what it actually means is that every member of an organisation is given an equal opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the smooth running of the organisation. The corollary is that every member should act responsibly.

While the leadership of my organisation is driven by a vision, teachers are encouraged to contribute towards the formulation and elaboration of that vision. Members of staff are in any case all involved in devising strategies for putting the vision into practice. Leadership's major role is to facilitate all the activities of the school and teachers are expected to co-operate in a variety of ways. For instance, when the school curriculum has to be changed, teachers are consulted as to what

material needs to be included and what excluded. They might be asked to focus on the career needs of their learners in future work places and come up with appropriate ideas of how the new curriculum can best be implemented. Or the teachers could be asked whether they see the need to change the school curriculum considering the changes in our society and in the field of work. In this way leadership would be facilitating change and expecting co-operation thereafter.

Squelch and Lemmer (1994:10) describe leadership as a process of encouraging and influencing people to co-operate in achieving goals that are perceived to be mutually satisfying. This can only take place when the goals of the organisation are established by the people affected; the members of the staff themselves. The leadership of my organisation believes in participatory decision-making and, hence, focuses on teamwork, individual involvement and interpersonal relations. The leadership believes in delegating tasks and responsibilities and motivating individuals. The end result is that teachers are actively involved in the smooth running of our school.

Bush (1986:59) believes that the style of leadership is strongly influenced by the nature of the decision-making process: my organisation has adopted a democratic style of leadership which observes a process of participation of stakeholders in the planning of school activities. This kind of leadership creates commitment among staff members to the decisions taken. Musaazi (1984:64) argues that in democratic leadership decisions about organisational matters are arrived at after consultation and communication with various people in the organisation.

In my school, teachers seem to be comfortable and happy at work. Teachers are committed to the goals of the school and the school climate is conducive to everyone working hard for the betterment of the school. This extends even to extra-mural activities, such as sport, where teachers endeavour to develop the talents of the pupils. Teachers do not need be supervised in order to pursue their

duties, but are determined and dedicated in their work. I believe that this is all due, in large measure, to the shared governance practised in my school. Blase, Anderson and Dungan (1995:116) believe that shared governance makes the principalship a more doable job and creates an atmosphere of collaboration and collegiality that brings greater gratification to teachers and principals.

Bush (1986:50) argues that in the democratic model, power is shared with staff rather than remaining the preserve of the leader. With power comes responsibility. For instance, routine school returns such as education management information system (EMIS 1.1) and (EMIS 1.2) are done by delegated teachers. The principal only checks whether the return has been completed correctly, and if so, appends his signature. In my organization, admissions are done by the teachers and only problems are referred to the principal.

Musaazi (1986:61) argues that delegation is another way of developing staff professionalism and enabling teachers to take up leadership roles. He also asserts that delegation enables a real decentralisation of power by increasing the number of levels at which decisions are made.

The principal of the school developed strategies to bring his staff together. A spirit of teamwork prevails: for instance, if teacher A is not clear about a certain section in a subject, he or she is readily welcomed by teacher B for any assistance in that particular subject. There is no doubt that this atmosphere is, at least in part, a result of power-sharing at the school.

DECISION MAKING

Decisions in my organisation are made openly before the members and the entire process of decision-making is regarded as transparent. Moreover, these decisions are taken collectively by members of the organisation. Participatory decision-making creates a sense of ownership among staff and therefore leads to a more

positive attitude toward the organisation. Participatory decision-making also creates a more professional environment within the school: our experience is that when teachers are given an opportunity to participate in decision-making, they take full responsibility for their jobs and teaching becomes a more respected profession.

Teachers feel that they "own" decisions that they have been involved in and tend to be fully committed to implementing them. Participatory decision-making is admittedly a slow, time-consuming, often chaotic and sometimes a frustrating process. Important decisions often require that teachers and administrators make significant changes in their behaviour and such changes take time. Yet, whatever the initial cost in terms of time and efficiency, the principal believes that staff members are capable of making good decisions for the school, often better than those made by an individual.

Whitaker (1983, cited in Bush 1986) a former primary head, claims that

> There is likely to be an improvement in the quality of decisions made if all those involved in the life of the school have the opportunity to participate in solving problems relevant to them . . . decision-making can become a positive and dynamic force in the school. (p. 54)

Through participation, individual members of the organisation get the opportunity to identify and nurture their potential and skills. Their sense of self-esteem is also enhanced in that, after each act of participation, there is an individual sense of achievement. French and Bell (1995:94) agree that participation enhances performance and individual well-being.

Teachers in my organisation take decisions at various areas of school management. They take decisions about the teaching and examination timetables. They also take decisions on extra-mural activities, including the number and nature of home and away sports fixtures, educational activities such as dramatic productions and aspects of curriculum development.

COMMUNICATION

Communication in the school is characterised by the free flow of information from staff to principal and vice versa. This contributes handsomely to the social, academic and professional well-being of an organisation for, through communication, ideas are shared, differences are negotiated and problems are ironed out.

Communication in my organisation is direct rather than written so as to minimise the risk of misunderstanding.

Blatchford (1985:76) argues that communication is a high-risk business and the chances that you and those with whom you are attempting to communicate will fully understand one another are slender indeed. However, the odds are slightly shorter if one talks rather than writes. Members of staff listen to the principal and the principal listens to the staff. Direct communication allows room for questions and discussion, so that everyone receives an explanation and no one is left in the mist, as it were. Furthermore, a problem such as teacher absenteeism is being addressed and reduced by constant communication with the teachers concerned.

Tewel (1995:57) believes that every opportunity should be used to spread information about ongoing activities and accomplishments in the organisation. Such communication can take the form, according to Smith (1995:32), of whiteboards, staffroom diaries, formal memos, minutes of meetings, staff meetings. All these resources can help to maintain manageable and important information flow inside the school.

Communication in my organisation takes various forms, including vertical, horizontal, lateral and diagonal. Vertical flow refers to the upward and downward direction of communication through the different levels of the school's hierarchy.

Information is passed down or up the line of authority through memos, directives, policies and programmes of action. An important point about the vertical flow of organizational communication is that messages moving in the formal network are extremely important to the people who send them and those who receive them.

Horizontal flow indicates that communication moves among organizational members at the same level. A principal, for instance may provide information to another principal who, in turn, passes it to other principals. The major purposes of horizontal or lateral communication are co-ordinating tasks, problem solving, sharing information with colleagues, resolving conflicts and building rapport. For example, principals communicate so as to share information and skills, to ensure some uniformity among their various schools and to build friendly relationships with their peers. Lateral communication may occur either formally or informally. Two superintendents working on ways to finance the introduction of a new curriculum would need to communicate formally, while teachers talking with each other in a lounge or planning room during class periods when they are not teaching, are communicating informally.

At my school, teachers and students may voice their complaints directly to the principal, thus by-passing the vertical channel of communication. Bush (1986:50) indicates that in democratic models structures are assumed to be lateral or horizontal, with participants having an equal right to determine policy and influence decisions.

One advantage of democratic communications model is that problems which may arise at a school in the absence of its principal can be more easily tackled by the other members of staff.

> My organisation adopted this approach in order to help the school function smoothly.There has been no case, for instance, of departmental officials arriving at the school and not being attended to because the principal is not available. There are effectively no barrier lines between teachers and the

principal. The principal is the "first amongst equals." According to Baldrige, Curtis, Ecker and Riley ([1978:45] cited in Bush 1986):

> The collegial leader is at most a "first among equals" in an academic organisation supposedly run by professional experts . . . The basic idea of the collegial leader is less to command than to listen, less to lead than to gather expert judgements, less to manage them to facilitate, less to order than to persuade and negotiate . . . The collegial leader is not so much a star standing alone as the developer of consensus among the professionals who must share the burden of the decision. (p. 60)

Owing to this approach, there is a sense of professionalism among the teachers in my school.

For the management of an organisation to be visible and accessible to the members, teachers and students must feel free to approach the principal formally or informally about matters concerning them or the organisation. Teachers have to be comfortable with coming either to a principal individually or before a shared governance body to say, "what we're doing here is not working" (Blase, Anderson and Dungan (1995:114).

This is undoubtedly the case at my school. Teachers seem to be very open to the principal and to their colleagues. This openness has created room for trust and team building. Morgan (1986:2) indicates that for democratic leadership to work, there should be a complete exchange of ideas. As a result of a free flow of ideas between leadership and the members of the staff, tensions and fear of leadership do not exist in my organisation. Schmuck and Runkel (1994:123) describe the notion of openness in terms of giving information that both parties need in order to get work done, or of describing the feelings that are generated by people working together. The point they are making here is that one should be open about the situation prevailing at the moment.

Openness in my organisation has built unity and created trust amongst the members of staff. McCregor (1967, cited in Schmuck and Runkel, 1994:127) defines trust as the confidence that the other person will not take unfair advantage of one, either deliberately or accidentally, consciously or unconsciously. Trust is built between two people when each person is convinced that the other is motivated and competent to sustain the relationship. Sound lateral communication channels within an organisation are the best guarantee of trusting collegial relationships.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The environment at my school is one in which teachers feel free to contribute their ideas. The leadership has achieved this by getting to know the feelings and opinions of teachers and students so as to cater for them within the organisation. There is also a free flow of information from the principal to the staff and vice versa through formal and informal conversation. Open channels of communication have been paramount in achieving this. For instance, the principal and members of staff are used to getting together during tea-time sharing coffee and biscuits, experiences and opinions. This helps to establish and maintain unity and trust among the members of the organisation. It is, of course, true that some teachers will seize such an opportunity to indulge in gossip and non-constructive conversation. This cannot be helped and should not stop one from bringing teachers together.

I am not saying that all is well with regard to human relations among the staff: there are some difficult people, but they do not intimidate other members into being less positive about the school. For instance, some teachers tend to get ill during examinations and in this way examinations are disrupted because marking of scripts does not meet the schedule and submission of marks is late.

The relationship between the leadership and members of staff is harmonious and healthy. The principal of my organization, together with the school governing body, maintains that work of sound quality is produced where there are sound relationships among members of the organisation. Sound relationships in my organisation help motivate the teaching staff to do a reasonable amount of work without being pushed by anybody. Mpati and Ripinga (1982:15) indicate that management should ensure a harmonious working relationship between the leader and his assistants in order to pave the way for effective teaching and the smooth running of the school.

While we rub shoulders in terms of academic and personal affairs on the school premises, we still maintain respect for each other's privacy. This kind of relationship gives courage to the members of staff and also motivates them to be committed to their work. Hughes (1985) cites Mayo's conclusion that the relationship of workers with management and each other may be more significant in affecting productivity than streamlined procedures and incentives. Mayo believes that the fundamental problem in all organisations lies in developing and maintaining dynamic and harmonious relationships.

In a school, a lot depends upon the principal. The principal at our school considers each teacher's welfare in the school. For instance, if a teacher is sick permission to see the doctor is granted immediately and, because the principal is perceived as being caring and considerate, warm and harmonious relationships prevail in the school.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Why school discipline? School discipline is essential for maintaining order and harmony in a school and for providing a climate in which students can learn free from disruption and chaos. In our organisation, we act in compliance with the South African Schools Act and pupils are no longer punished through the

infliction of pain. They are rather encouraged to behave in an acceptable manner. They are also given responsibilities that acquaint them with basic leadership skills. These responsibilities include the duties of class monitors, taking care of school grounds and keeping the gate closed for those who arrive late at school. These tasks are undertaken in turns by groups of students.

One factor that makes a meaningful contribution towards school discipline is that students are actively involved in taking decisions about the way they should be punished for various kinds of misconduct. When students are involved in the development of school rules and regulations, they tend to accept the rules and behave in an acceptable manner.

Of course, some students do misbehave and corrective actions are taken. While they are no longer punished with the infliction of pain, they are reprimanded through counselling and by being made to do manual work after school or during break. Squelch and Lemmer (1994:41) argue that today discipline is regarded as a positive way of encouraging and promoting appropriate behaviour and is more concerned with promoting self discipline, co-operation, mutual respect and responsibility.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

In my school, the teachers view parents as important in supporting the education of the children. Parents can support their children by assisting them in reading and homework at home. Parents can also look at his/her pupil's work to see whether a child is progressing well at school. However, many of the parents do not speak English and have never been at school. Heckman (1996:153) suggests that these particular parents could not adequately support the education of their children in the manner of more well-to-do parents.

However, these parents show some interest in the education of their children through the motivation they get from the school. Some parents volunteer to participate as teachers and resourcers. We invite parents to assist in the school for story telling and beadwork. Our school is effective because it receives the full and active support of the parents and teachers. Squelch and Lemmer (1994:99) argue that parents can be involved in a school in various ways, such as developing a school policy, drafting the school budget, liaising with the parent community, holding meetings and taking part in fund raising. However, Lemmer's view is accepted and workable when parents are well educated and informed about national policies governing the schools. Lemmer also argues that parents may be involved in a number of non-educational activities such as organising social events and assisting with extra-mural activities.

The point Lemmer is making is good. Not being formally schooled does not mean parents must be excluded or cut off from the school. Indeed, parents must be accommodated where they can fit in the school to support and encourage their children.

According to Sergiovanni (1984:6) schools and universities are viewed as open rather than closed systems, as integral parts of a larger environment, not as bounded entities isolated from their environment. They (schools and universities) receive inputs, process them and return outputs to the environment. Parents are part of this environment. As a result there is constant interplay between school and environment.

CONCLUSION

My organisation has assumed a collegial structure, in terms of which members of my organisation participate in decision-making. The channels of communication are always open and communication may proceed by any route, horizontally and vertically.

The relationship between the principal and the staff is conducive to self-disciplined teaching and learning in the school. Since he is working with professional colleagues and acknowledges their expertise and skills, the principal sees his leadership role as that of a facilitator. In short, the organisation is essentially democratic, emphasising the full participation of members in its running (Bush 1986:50) and reaping the rewards of greater productivity.

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