NURTURING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

A GUIDE TO SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Christopher Bezzina
Daniele Vidoni

Institute for the Protection and Security of the Citizen

2006

EUR 22328 EN

The mission of the Joint Research Centre is to provide customer-driven scientific and technical support for the conception, development, implementation and monitoring of European Union policies. As a service of the European Commission, the JRC functions as a reference centre of science and technology for the Union. Close to the policy-making process, it serves the common interest of the Member States, while being independent of special interests, whether private or national.

European Commission
Directorate-General Joint Research Centre
Institute for the Protection and Security of the Citizen

Contact information
Address: Daniele Vidoni, JRC, TP 361, Via Fermi, 21020, Ispra (VA), Italy
E-mail: daniele.vidoni@jrc.it
Tel.: +390332785529
Fax: +390332785733

http://farmweb.jrc.cec.eu.int/CRELL/
http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int

EUR 22328 EN
ISBN 92-79-02754-9
ISSN 1018-5593
Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

CONTENTS

About the Authors

Dr Christopher Bezzina, B.Ed. (Hons.), M.Ed. Admin. (Hons.) (Massey, N.Z.), Ph.D (Brunel, U.K.) is a lecturer at the Faculty of Education, University of Malta. He is mainly responsible for co-ordinating the B.Ed. (Hons) and PGCE teaching practicum. He also runs courses in classroom management and micro teaching. Christopher is course leader of the Masters programme in Educational Leadership. He is involved with a wide range of schools on school development and school improvement initiatives. He has taught and done consultancy work both locally and abroad in the areas of teacher education and the professional development of teachers and educational leaders in countries such as Cyprus, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Sweden, The Seychelles and the United States. In 2004 he was a Fulbright Scholar at the State University of New York at Buffalo where he conducted research in schools as learning communities. He also taught on their Leadership Initiative for Tomorrow's Schools (LIFTS) programme which is directed for those aiming to take on leadership positions in education. In 2005 he was appointed visiting professor at the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna to lead the educational leadership component of their masters programme in education.

He is also involved in various European bodies, including:

- Executive Council Member of the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM)
- Member of the European Network for Teacher Education Policies (ENTEP)
- Administrative Council Member of the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE)
- President of the Malta Society for Educational Administration and Management (MSEAM)
- Board Member of the International Studies in Educational Governance Accountability and Management (EGAM) at the Alma Mater Studiorum Universita di Bologna.
- Latvian Science Council Foreign Expert.
- European Commission member of the Teachers and Training Cluster.

He is a member of various other international educational institutions.

His research interests are: professional development of teachers and school leaders, school development and school improvement, and school evaluation.

Daniele Vidoni , B. Pol.Sc. (Hons.), M.Ed. Admin. (Hons.) (Alma Mater Studiorum – University di Bologna, Italy.), is presently completing a Ph.D. in the Economics of Education at Boston University, Boston MA (USA), with a dissertation on "Using accountability over student results as a tool of governance of educational systems: the case of Italy." His work deals with comparative analysis of educational systems' laws and policies, with specific attention given to accountability, management models, and incentive systems.

He works for the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL) of the European Commission and specializes in project design, organizing conferences at national and international level; he has been involved in national and international research projects dealing with:
Alternative structures of educational governance ("Chelsea/Boston University partnership" - the role of universities in the actual management of an entire school district);
The creation of school accountability systems ("Lombardia accountability system," the development of longitudinal accountability systems for education using Value Added structures);
School management ("Emilia Romagna school management models," the role of school leadership in improving student results).

His recent publications are:
D. Vidoni (2005), "Why should teachers want school accountability? Lessons from a comparative approach to the subject" in Journal of Education Law and Policy, December 2005
D. Vidoni , D. Notarbartolo (2005), Una Scuola che Funziona (Rome: Armando)
D. Vidoni , A. Paletta (2005), "Italian school managers: a complex identity," ISEA 34 (1), 2006
D. Vidoni , F.E. Crema, E. Gori (2004), "Student evaluation and school accountability: bringing out teachers' professionalism," in International Journal of Education Law and Policy, special conference edition, December 2004

FOREWORD

In *Nurturing Learning Communities – A Guide to School-Based Professional Development*, Christopher Bezzina and Daniele Vidoni offer current and aspiring school leaders an engaging and very practical reader intended to help them confront the challenges of educational change.

The goal of "Nurturing Learning Communities" is to impress upon school leaders how important it is for them to liberate the potential that often lies dormant in contemporary school cultures. By engaging educators, parents and community members in more collaborative forms of decision-making and governance, Bezzina and Vidoni argue that school leaders can consciously nurture a professional learning community and wean their school from being 'a culture of dependency'. Furthermore, the authors make it clear that to be successful in nurturing a learning community, a leader must accept the fact that the work required will be on going, "a continual exercise involving learning and a lot of persuasion" (p.16).

In order to provide school leaders an understanding of what is needed to develop and nurture a professional learning community, this insightful text mixes sound empirical research with commonsense pragmatism that addresses the art, craft and science of educational administration by speaking, respectively, to the hearts, hands and minds of school leaders.

Bezzina and Vidoni begin their guide with a focus on skills of the heart, reminding leaders that motivating others requires one to start from within; to know and like one's self, to take control and think positively, to be flexible and accept reality; and, perhaps most importantly, to live fully by exploring the world outside of the school house; skills that will enhance one's ability to lead and build a learning community within it. Bezzina and Vidoni also identify what can be called tools of the craft, including Total Quality Management, planning, communication, case studies and reflective dialogue through video cases; tools which are to be used expressly for the purpose of developing and enhancing the functionality of professional work groups, which the authors argue are the basic units of organizational growth.

As noted, the recommendations made by Bezzina and Vidoni are well supported by the research literature on school leadership, change and professional learning communities. Moreover, the authors encourage participants in these emergent professional learning communities to continue to nurture their minds by joining academies, associations, summer institutes, and executive or masters programmes. In order to stay current with advances in their field, school leaders must commit to becoming lifelong learners.

In sum, "Nurturing Learning Communities – A Guide to School-Based Professional Development," is a recommended read for any educator who wishes to help his or her school become more responsive and flexible to change and, ultimately, more productive in terms of student performance.

Stephen L. Jacobson, Professor and Associate Dean
Graduate School of Education
State University of New York at Buffalo

INTRODUCTION

Educational Leadership: the challenges ahead

"As leaders, we recognize that … our hope sustains us. Our vision of what could be inspires us and those we lead. In implementing our vision, we accept the reality that we don't have all the answers. A servant leader's results will be measured beyond the workplace, and the story will be told in the changed lives of others. There is no scarcity of feet to wash. The toils and the water are available. The limitation, if there is one, is our ability to get on our hands and knees and be prepared to do what we ask others to do.**"**

Pollard in Hesselbein *et al*., 1996, p.248

Introduction

In various research studies conducted over the past ten years in a variety of cultures and contexts, leaders and others who were asked to identify factors/characteristics of effective leaders, point out values such as honesty, integrity, trust, care and compassion (Brown & Townsend, 1997; Kouzes & Posner, 1991; Mcewen & Salters, 1997; Sale, 1997; Swann, 1998). The search for authenticity, integrity and trust in and among members within institutions is very much a reality (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997; Duignan, 1998). As Duignan (1998, p. 20) points out "authenticity in leadership calls for a radical shift away from much of the traditional, conventional wisdom about leadership".

> "We see that people are not just resources or assets, not just economic, social, and psychological beings. They are also spiritual beings; they want *meaning*, a sense of doing something that matters. People do not want to work for a cause with little meaning, even though it taps their mental capacities to their fullest. There must be purposes that lift them, and bring them to their highest selves." (Covey, 1992, pp. 178-9)

Covey's quote illustrates the importance behind principle-centred leadership. Such leadership has its source in the intellect, heart, mind and souls of individuals and is sustained through meaningful relationships. At the same time it illustrates some of the central ingredients behind the type of educational leadership needed to act as a driving force which can spur us on through this millennium.

Covey's quote also highlights that the definition of leadership and practice very much depends on: the cultural conditions in which we work at micro and macro level; the field we are dealing with; the context in which it has developed over the years, hence its prehistory; the nature of its constituents; the issues involved; the agendas and predispositions of our leaders and policy makers; and the unique personalities which make up our organizations at the systems and school level.

The concept of leadership has to be understood within this wider context if countries/institutions want to make leadership not only directly meaningful but relevant to people's lives.

The paradigm shift that is taking place is one which focuses on the whole person, on people who want to actively contribute towards educational development in their respective organisations. They are therefore searching to give meaning to their existence not only to their existence as individuals (Duignan, 1998) but also as part of the learning community (Fullan, 1995; Keefe & Howard, 1997; Sackney, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1996). All this can only take place within a framework where ethics and values play a central role for effective leadership to take place (Brown & Townsend, 1997).

The central question which needs to be addressed is what mindset and type of leadership is necessary to break from the current bonds of dependency, to coin Fullan's (1998) term, and therefore lead our countries forward.

The context

A number of initiatives over the past few years express a move by central authorities to give more powers of responsibility and authority to the schools. All state primary and secondary schools have been developing school development plans for the past eight years and have been given the responsibility to administer an amount of monetary funds. Such a move expresses the view that school improvement can be brought about by concentrating development efforts on the school, hence seeing the school as the major unit of change in the education system.

This conceptualisation provides an alternative view to the centralised, prescriptive model of school improvement that many countries have been used to. Many schools have been used to working within a system which is hierarchical, centralised and bureaucratic. As a result, teachers and senior management team (SMT) members have grown weary through disillusionment and stress (Bezzina, 1995; Borg & Falzon, 1989). SMTs and teachers constantly find themselves sandwiched between a belief in democracy and participation on the one hand, and the daily experiencing of a lack of structures to function as decision-makers. In the past, schools have never been given the opportunity to develop into vital places of learning, into sites of professional inquiry and reflective practice (Bezzina, 1997, 1998).

Moving from the shackles of dependency to one of autonomy is not easy. One cannot talk of such moves without really understanding the culture and climate that have evolved over the years which have led to the current situation and in actual fact determine, to a large extent, how people think and act. Present conditions and circumstances of schools could not have been planned to be more antithetical to their becoming centres of inquiry and change. Among the worst of these conditions are: isolation of educators (both teachers and school leaders) from one another; the fragmentation of the school day into separate subject matters; the apportionment of specific time per subject; the ratio of students to teachers; the lack of time for genuine reflection, sharing and critical inquiry amongst teachers (Bezzina, 1999).

Efforts to improve the effectiveness of schools depend on an understanding of the dynamics of schools. This implies exploring the actions and influences of teachers, students, education officials, parents, community members, the curriculum, and the ways in which these influences operate.

The current wave of reforms requires a careful re-examination of the concepts of power and authority. Leadership and management need to be redefined and a clear shift away from the traditional hierarchical control mechanisms manifested. What is often lacking is a strong and clear vision which is especially needed in times of change (MEU, 1998b). At the same time we need to challenge the boundaries of sameness to coin Walker and Walker's (1998) term, and celebrate and value differences.

As Senge (1990, p. 9) points out:

> "If any one idea about leadership has inspired organisations for thousands of years, it is the capacity to hold a shared picture of the future we seek to create. One is hard-pressed to think of any organisation that has sustained some measure of greatness in the absence of goals, values, and missions that become deeply shared throughout the organisation."

A dependency culture

Educational reform is often best represented as "pockets of innovation" (Fullan, 1998, p.10) with schools and their members mainly on the receiving end. The move towards decentralisation has been sporadic, fragmented, incoherent and without the necessary *visionary framework* to keep them going (Bezzina, 1998). Furthermore, decentralisation practices are creating more demands on schools which are now of a more intrusive quality as school boundaries become more permeable and transparent (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). The relentless pressures of today's complex environment have intensified the overload.

School leaders argue that educational reform lacks a conceptual framework which defines the way forward. As a consequence, this lack of a strategic direction has major implications in other areas of school administration (MEU, 1998b). It is imperative for the education authorities to establish the type of centralised and decentralised practices it wants; to create the appropriate structures and provide effective support services.

At the same time neither school leaders nor those at central level, are being prepared to take up the challenge of decentralisation. Leaders need to be involved in the *process* and the required *training* in order for them to create a sense of purpose and enough confidence engendered (Bezzina, 2003; Fidler, 1997; National Curriculum Council, 2004).

Organisations face *adaptive challenges*. Changes require that we clarify our values, develop new strategies, new ways of thinking and learning. Adaptive work is required especially when our deeply held beliefs are challenged, when ingrained attitudes have to be contested, when particular ways of doing things are questioned.

Providing leadership which moves away from a purely authoritative style of administration to a more collaborative style of management is extremely difficult. This is so for at least four main reasons. First, in order to bring about change, or rather to make change possible, those having executive powers need to break a long-standing behaviour pattern of their own, that of dictating what has to be done to all

problems as they arise. Solutions cannot remain the prerogative of one but reside in the collective intelligence of members at all levels.

Second, adaptive change is demanding on all those who have to experience it. New roles, new relationships, new values, new behaviours and new approaches to work have to be forged. This is quite a challenge that requires patience, practice and perseverance. And, one also has to accept the fact - for this itself is a challenge - that not everyone is willing to go through these inner changes.

Third, being prepared and willing to address change and development also raises the question of competence. Transforming individuals (administrators at central level, teachers and school administrators) into managers and more so leaders, who are willing to address whole school/community issues rather than concentrate on their own current prescribed area(s) is by far a more demanding and difficult task. Maybe nor everyone is capable of fulfilling such a role.

A fourth and final factor is that of ownership. Once responsibilities are delegated to the school site will school administrators be willing to manage their institutions not through a top-down model of administration but through a collaborative style of management? This raises the concern as to how far members are willing to take on responsibilities for determining the vision and way forward for their institutions.

Leading through this period which requires systematic change calls for a number of principles which will guide good practice. The next section will focus on an exploration and discussion of these principles.

Building a vision

In times of continuity and stability and in times of change education reform needs a set of core values and a core purpose which steers it forward.

Research on leadership and management has extolled the centrality of vision as the main ingredient behind effective change (Buell, 1992; Champy, 1995; Fullan, 1995). Terry (1993, p.38) clearly identifies the problems currently facing educational reform when he states that:

> "Vision is the heart of leadership because vision transcends political interests, testing the outer limits of the vested views that lock people into parochial perspectives, limit creativity, and prevent the emergence of new cultural and political realities. Vision designs new synergies. Vision challenges everyday, taken-for-granted assumptions by offering new directions and articulating what people feel but lack words to say. Vision speaks the unspeakable, challenges the unchallengeable, and defends the undefendable."

It is this *visionary activity* that is often lacking at central level. And, as Wheatley (1992) and Bhindi and Duignan (1997) argue, vision depends on the *intentionality* of those who want to work together and help shape the future. This is a forceful statement which presents challenges at a number of levels: Do individuals at central level desire, want to share their decision making power? Do they have a clear idea of what type of schools they want for the future? Do they really believe in the self-managing school? Do they believe in a collaborative and collegial style of

management? Do the education authorities understand the need to move from administering the education system to leading and managing it? Do school members want to enjoy the benefits and challenge that empowerment brings with it? These are crucial issues that need to be addressed and answered if there is ever going to be a genuine commitment to development and change (Wain et al., 1995). Bhindi and Duignan (1997, p.126) illustrate the challenge and at the same time the way forward:

> "A challenging task for authentic leaders is to help transform the goodwill, good intentions, good hearts and talents of organizational members into a vision, and a hope for a better future. Nurturing vision as a shared energy field helps instil a sense of community and interdependence in a group or organization, celebrates an awakening of the spirit in each individual and an enhanced sense of spirituality in relationships."

Collins and Porras (1996, p.66), very much in line with the work of Hodgkinson (1991, 1996) put forward a conceptual framework to define vision: "a well-conceived vision consists of two major components: core ideology and envisioned future … Core ideology, the yin … defines what we stand for and why we exist. Yin is unchanging and complements yang, the envisioned future. The envisioned future is what we aspire to become, to achieve, to create."

Core ideology

The core ideology defines the character of an organisation. It provides the glue that holds the organisation together as it grows. Any effective vision must embody the core ideology of the organisation, which consists of two distinct parts: core values - a system of guiding principles and tenets; and core purpose, the organisation's most fundamental reason for existence. One's core ideology is discovered by looking inside. Ideology is therefore authentic, not artificial.

Core values

Core values are the essential and enduring tenets of the learning organisation. It is the individuals within the institution which decide for themselves what values they uphold. It is essential for institutions to identify and define the values that are central to them and the way they function. For as Lang (1999, p.171) puts it "values 'move' people philosophically, psychologically, sociologically, physiologically." Collins and Porras (1996, p.67) who talk of values within the context of the business world put forward an important argument which is also relevant to us in the field of education (which is, in quite a number of countries, becoming more market oriented).

> "A company should not change its core values in response to market changes; rather, it should change markets, if necessary, to remain true to its core values."

There are no universally right set of core values. Usually companies have few values which stand the test of time. Schools have their own. Figure 1 illustrates some values which can be considered as core to a school or educational institution.

Core Values: the essential tenets of a learning organization

- Honesty, trust, integrity
- Hardwork, self/collective improvement
- Empowerment and creativity
- Service
- Holism

Figure 1

Core purpose

The core purpose explains the organisation's reason for being. An effective purpose helps to reflect the member's idealistic motivations for being in the organisation and working to fulfil its goals. Members need to have a clear understanding of their purpose in order to make work meaningful and worth pursuing. These often reflect the type of aims that schools highlight in their prospectus or brochures (see Figure 2).

Core Purpose: the reason for being

Some suggestions

To provide a holistic education to children entrusted in our care
To prepare children to live in a multicultural world
To prepare children to live in a technological world
To create learning opportunities for all members of the organisation
To be a role model and a tool for social change

Figure 2

Envisioned future

The second component of the vision framework is envisioned future. It consists of two main parts: clear aims and strategies used to achieve the aims / goals.

Aims

Aims need to be clearly stated, free from vague statements and therefore precise, such that members know when they have been achieved. Aims are to reflect the values and philosophy of each respective school and are underpinned by statements, as Rogers argues, which clearly show the vision and aspirations of the individual, the group and the organisation (1994, p. 20).

As schools embark on developing School Development Plans, school members need to be encouraged to articulate, amongst other things, a Mission Statement. This statement states the reason *why* an organisation is in existence, sets the direction, and provides the foundation for planning at all levels of the school. Whitaker and Moses describe a Mission Statement as "an inspiring declaration of a compelling dream, accompanied by a clear scenario of how it will be accomplished" (in Lashway, 1997, p.2). Fritz (1996) argues that organisations will advance when a clear, widely understood mission creates tension between the real and the ideal, encouraging people to work together. If the vision of a school is not being articulated in practice, then it is meaningless. The life of a school must embody that vision and bring it to life (Green, 1996).

Articulating a mission statement may be considered a simple and straightforward exercise. However, for this mission statement to be truly representative of what the school community believes in then it must come from within the individuals. 'Having' a mission is one thing, being mission-driven is quite another. Pearson (1998) argues that for this to take place educators must cultivate an "inner edge". This inner edge comes from relating differently with ourselves and one another. It requires a deeper knowledge about self and a deeper connection with our purpose for living.

This unifying effect is especially important in those school settings which are entrenched in an 'isolation culture'. The Mission Statement needs to be translated into various aims which school members identify as essential to reach their ideals. The aims no longer belong to specific individuals but belong to the institution as a whole where all members have a role to play. For some, the development of the Mission Statement was a straightforward, simple task. However, as international studies suggests (e.g. Schwahn & Spady, 1998), and experiences proving, the Mission Statement needs to be seen as an evolutionary process that requires continuous reflection, action and education. Through such a process the goals are challenged and challenging.

Strategies

Devising aims is an important step in the process of improvement as it helps school members identify where they are and what directions they want to take. However, the process does not stop there. It is essential to formulate strategies of how the stated aims are to be achieved. As such each identified aim can have a number of strategies that will be tackled in order to achieve stated aims.

These strategies will involve staff in the process of action planning which help to ensure that plans do not remain on paper but are translated into action. Through this process individuals need to monitor developments so as to gauge progress and adjust accordingly. Progress checks will be made easier when success criteria are established. Success criteria are performance indicators which help to give clarity, point to the standard(s) expected, and give an indication of the time-scale involved (Ainscow et al., 1996).

Facing up to the challenge

From all this it is evident that for central authorities and schools to improve they require changes in values, practices and relationships. The education authorities need to develop a culture dedicated to serving people, acting on trust, respecting the individual and making teamwork happen across boundaries. What is needed is both a *technical* challenge and an *adaptive* one. Whilst the latter remains the major challenge as people learn new ways of doing things, develop new competencies and begin to work collectively, staff will also need to receive expert advice and support.

The rest of this introductory chapter points out the tremendous amounts of energy needed to develop the *human side of management*. In educating and training leaders of schools and departments, the focus is often mostly devoted to technical proficiency and neglects the area of character. We tend to focus on areas like financial management, strategic planning, data analysis, etc., and probably we are good at developing these. We tend to view leadership as an isolated component, as something

to be added on to other skills. However, as Teal (1996, p.36) points out, instilling in people capacities such as courage and integrity that are necessary to behave like great leaders is not an easy task. These capacities cannot be taught and as a result many tend to downplay the human element in managing. *Managing an organisation is not merely a series of mechanical tasks but a set of human interactions* (Bell & Harrison, 1998; Combs, Miser & Whitaker, 1999).

We are all fully aware of the literature that highlights the characteristics of an effective leader (e.g. Harris et al., 2003; Mortimore & Mortimore, 1991). We are also aware of the growing demands we make on leaders, demands that at times are impossible to meet. For a start, they need to acquire the traditional management skills in resource allocation, finance, cost control, planning and a few other areas. We also expect them to master the management arts, such as strategy, persuasion, negotiation, writing, listening and speaking. We also require them to demonstrate the qualities that define leadership, integrity and character – areas such as vision, passion, sensitivity, insight, understanding, commitment, charisma, courage, humility and intelligence. We also expect them to be friends, mentors and/or guardians. Yet, what stands out is that we need leaders who are "full-blooded creatures who are politically and spiritually aware, credible, earthly and practical" (Duignan, 1998, p. 21-22).

So, whilst the list of demands is on the increase and therefore the particular characteristics/qualities that are required, we need to create opportunities for people to develop them. For, whilst some leaders may be born, all competent leaders become. Darmanin (1998) states that people may be trained to become effective leaders; most leaders, unfortunately, find themselves in leadership positions, without being adequately trained, prepared or exposed beforehand. Leadership also requires a practicum component which often leadership training and development programmes tend to neglect (Harvey et al., 1999; Jefferson & Edwards, 1998). A lot of work can and needs to be done at this level.

Given this context, the final section briefly explores a number of areas which leaders need would need to explore at both the personal and collective level to bring about a paradigm shift in the way we conduct educational reform.

The leaders of today need to focus on developing the following areas:

- **Learner**

The principle of lifelong learning needs to be upheld and practised by the leader (Crowther & Limerick, 1998). The leader needs to promote an environment where active learning can take place; where mistakes can be made, and lessons learnt. Learning needs to be seen as a social activity (Downs, 1995) where everyone has a role to play in helping people to learn.

- **Imagination**

The visionary leader makes 'mental leaps' which take 'what is now' into 'what could or should be'. Imagining draws from a deep understanding of what already is and is grounded in experience.

Tied to this is the quality of creativity. Creative leaders are capable of inventing new and original ways of seeing reality, creating new energy and life into the organisation. To be creative, the leader must become an agent of change, especially

transformational (Lashway, 1995). A crucial characteristic of the leader is that of setting the example, of communicating one's beliefs and ideas through one's own behaviour. Today's leader has to be visible – to be seen to be believed.

♦ **Promoting values**

Underlying an organisation's goals is a choice of a specific set of prioritised values. The leader of the 21st century should be one who creates a culture or a value system centred round principles (Covey, 1992).

The principles that leaders need to uphold are based on personal integrity, credibility and trusting relationships (Kouzez & Posner, 1991), and a commitment to ethical and moral values such as compassion, humility and service (Manz, 1998). It is through the authentic witness of such qualities that organisational structures, processes and practices are built, nurtured and sustained.

♦ **Empowerment**

We tend to recall with admiration those leaders who delegate their authority, who make subordinates feel powerful and capable. The leader who allows subordinates to feel ownership and responsibility for the tasks being tackled become part of what Mintzberg (1991) describes as an "empowerment loop". This means that leaders feel empowered by their subordinates. The subordinates hand back trust, support and praise to the leader, and this helps to strengthen the leader and the vision.

♦ **Collegial leadership**

Once vision and values have been defined and communicated, the next critical step is the liberation of the individual so as to create a collaborative approach to decision making. Leadership cannot remain the prerogative of one single person. It has to become team based, collegial. Today's leaders need to be trained to master the art of forming teams, to collaborate through teams rather than directing through edicts. Shared leadership encourages a horizontal extension of power (DuFour, 2004; Lambert, 2005; Patterson & Patterson, 2004). The future calls for an extension of that power vertically downwards to involve all members of staff.

♦ **Heroic**

> "Management at its finest has a heroic dimension because it deals with eternal human challenges and offers no excuse for failure and no escape from responsibility. Managers can be as thoughtless and selfish as any other human being, but they can also be as idealistic and as noble."(Teal, 1996, p.42-43)

The qualities expressed so far verge on the heroic. When we state that we expect leaders to create a vision and a sense of purpose and value where there is none; where they are expected to bring people together when isolation is the rule; when they often have to lead a lonely life facing the harsh criticism of one and all; and of standing firm to the values they uphold in spite of the pressure. … Are these not the very reasons why they are called to be leaders?

Without question, the current climate of reform has changed the role of heads. Today's school leaders function in a constantly changing environment and serve

students with greater and more diverse needs than ever before. Yet, they are expected to show marked improvements more quickly and with fewer resources at their disposal. They are expected to improve the quality of teachers; maintain safe schools; and turn staff, parents and the community into communities of learning. Under the watchful eyes of parents, the education authorities and the wider community, heads are challenged to lead and to learn simultaneously.

Naturally, such qualities are not easy to nurture. The starting point has to be the *person as individual*. The leader as an authentic person, is one who believes in himself/herself, who is willing to start from the self by challenging the self, by examining one's own current thinking and way of doing things. This is the leader as learner; he/she is one who is prepared to challenge oneself but at the same time willing and expects to be challenged by others and by the social context they are working in.
It is indeed challenging and personally demanding for the leader to stop and reflect, to challenge one's way of thinking and doing. It is a road not many may wish to take. At the same time, it is important for leaders to identify a person who is willing to be their mentor ~ their critical friend ~ who can support their personal/professional development. This step requires breaking from the bonds of independent thinking/working and isolation we are used to (Bezzina, 1997, 1999, 2003). This would be a step in creating the climate and culture that is required for empowerment and collegiality to be experienced and celebrated. This can be done by speaking about the school's vision often and enthusiastically, by encouraging school members to work in different groups (e.g. departments/year levels; cross-curricular, creative arts) so as to experiment, and put ideas to the test.

As people learn to work individually, in pairs, in groups, in schools and outside, they learn to infuse practice, as Duignan (1998) puts it, with a higher purpose and meaning since at the basis of their discourse and actions are the values and attitudes they have helped develop. It is through such processes and actions that individuals discover that they perhaps can make the impossible possible.

Conclusion
The list, which is purposely not finite, helps to illustrate that great leaders are engaged in a continual exercise involving learning and a lot of persuasion. Getting members to do what is best – for the school community, their students, themselves – is often a struggle because it means getting people to understand and want to do what is best, and that requires integrity, the willingness to empower others, courage, compassion, tenacity and great teaching skills. Good leaders also thread very carefully the grounds they are working in. They learn to move slowly, assessing their own leadership styles and the school's culture before diving in. Change is a slow process, not a one-of event. It requires time, patience, perseverance, commitment to one's ideals with a clear focus on enhancing teacher performance and student learning.

Such a person is also one who is willing to ignore resentment and gives criticism its due. They are willing to delegate, to listen and treat people with respect. Such people are often described as motivators, people who are capable of motivating members enough to follow their goals. But it is more than that; as Teal (1996, p.42) states, these people help to instil a sense of excitement in their followers and “stir our souls”. Good leaders help to identify and celebrate the social core of human nature. They

help to bring individual talents to fruition, create value, and combine these activities with enough passion to generate the greatest possible advantages for every group member.

Leadership is a difficult undertaking. It takes exceptional, sometimes heroic, people to do it well. The right blend of people who have a strong purpose in life can help us to break away from the bunker mentality currently facing us and define our future as we walk it.

References

Adair, J. (1983) *Effective Leadership*. London, Pan.

Ainscow, M., Hopkins, D., Southworth, G. and West, M. (1996) *Creating the Conditions For School Improvement*. London, David Fulton.

Bell, J. & Harrison, B.T. (1998) *Leading People: Learning from People*. Buckingham, Open University Press.

Bezzina, C. (1991) "Improving the Quality of Schooling in Malta", *The International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol.5, No.4, pp. 14-18.

Bezzina, C. (1995) *The Maltese Primary School Principalship: Perceptions, Roles and Responsibilities*. PhD thesis, Brunel University, School of Education, UK

Bezzina, C. (1997) "Restructuring schools in Malta: the road to improvement", *The International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol.11, No.5, pp.194-202.

Bezzina, C. (1998) "Making Quality Work: The Changing Role of Education Officers and Subject Co-Ordinators". Paper presented at the MUT Conference *The Roles of Education Officers and Subject Co-ordinators as Agents of Change and Development*, 25-26th April.

Bezzina, C. (1999) *Opening Doors to School Improvement: an introductory handbook*. Malta, MUT Publications Ltd.

Bezzina, C., Cassar, V. & Triganza-Scott, A. (2003) *Educational Leaders in the Making*. Malta, Indigobooks.

Bhindi, N. & Duignan, P. (1997). "Leadership for a New Century: Authenticity, Intentionality, Spirituality and Sensibility". *Educational Management & Administration*, Vol.25, No.2, pp.117-132.

Borg, M.G. & Falzon, J.M. (1989) "Stress and Job Satisfaction among Primary School Teachers in Malta", *Educational Review*, Vol.41, No.3, pp. 271-9.

Brown, J. & Townsend, R. (1997) "Developing an Ethical Framework", *Thrust for Educational Leadership*, Vol.27, No.3, pp.12-14.

Buell, N. (1998) Building a Shared Vision: The Principal's Leadership Challenge", *NASSP Bulletin*, Vol. 76, pp.88-92.

Champy, J. (1995) *Reengineering Management: The Mandate for New Leadership*. New York, Harper-Collins.

Collins, J.C. & Porras, J.I. (1996) "Building Your Company's Vision", *Harvard Business Review*, September-October, pp.65-77.

Cooper, R. & Sawaf, A. (1997) *Executive IQ: Emotional Intelligence in Business*. London, Orion Business.

Covey, S. (1992) *Principle Centred Leadership*. New York, Simon & Schuster.

Crowther, F. & Limerick, B. (1998) "Leaders as Learners: Implications for Postmodern Leader Development", *International Studies in Educational Administration*, Vol.26, No.2, pp.21-29.

Darmanin, A. (1998) Competent leadership for the new millennium, *The Sunday Times*, April 5th, p.44.

Downs, S. (1995), *Learning at Work: effective strategies for making things happen*. London, Kogan Page.

Duignan, P. (1998) Authenticity in Leadership: the rhetoric and the reality. Paper presented at the ATEE 23rd Annual Conference, Limerick, Ireland, 24th - 30th August.

DuFour, R. (2004) "What is a Professional Learning Community?", *Educational Leadership*, Vol., No. pp.6-11.

Fidler, B. (1997) "School Leadership: some key ideas", *School Leadership & Management*, Vol.17, No.1, pp.23-27.

Fritz, R. (1996) *Corporate Tides: The Inescapable Laws of Organisational Structure.* San Francisco, Berrett – Koehler.

Fullan, M. (1995) *Change Forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*. London, Falmer.

Fullan M. (1998) "Breaking the Bonds of Dependency", *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 55, No. 7, pp.6-10.

Fullan, M. & Hargreaves, A. (1996) *What's Worth Fighting For In Your School.* New York, Teachers College Press.

Green, H. (1996) "The mysteries of leadership", *Managing Schools Today*, Vol. 1, No.3, pp.14-16.

Hargreaves, A. & Fullan, M. (1998) *What's Worth Fighting For Out There.* New York, Teachers College Press.

Harris, A., Day, C., Hopkins, D., Hadfield, M., Hargreaves, A., & Chapman, C. (2003) *Effective Leadership for School Improvement*. London, RoutledgeFalmer.

Harvey, M., Clarke, R., Hill, S. and Harrison, B. (1999) "Preparing the Way for Partnership in Establishing a Centre for School Leadership", *Educational Management & Administration*, Vol. 27, No.2, pp.155-166.

Heifetz, R.A. & Laurie, D.L. (1997) "The Work of Leadership", *Harvard Business Review*, January-February, pp.124-134.

Hodgkinson, C. (1991) *Educational Leadership: The Moral Art.* Albany, NY, State University of New York Press.

Hodgkinson, C. (1996) *Administrative Philosophy: Values and Motivations in Administrative Life*. New York, Pergamon.

Jefferson, A. & Edwards, S. (1998) "Communication: An Essential Dimension in the Training of Educational Administrators", *International Studies in Educational Administration*, Vol. 26, No. 1, pp.39-44.

Keefe, J.W. & Howard, E.R. (1997) "The School as a Learning Organization", *NASSP Bulletin*, Vol.81, No.589, pp.35-44.

Kouzez, J.M. & Posner, B.Z. (1991*) Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It.* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Lambert, L. (2005). Leadership for Lasting Reform, *Educational Leadership*, Vol. No., pp.62-65.

Lang, D. (1999) "A New Theory of Leadership: *Realwert* versus Apparent Good", *Educational Management & Administration*, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp.167-181.

Lashway, L. (1996) "Facilitative Leadership", *ERIC Digest*, Number 96, EDO-EA-95-4

Lashway, L. (1997) "Visionary Leadership", *ERIC Digest*, Number 110, EDO-EA-97-2

Management Efficiency Unit (1998a) *Strategic Review – School Management and Administration.* MEU, March, Malta.

Management Efficiency Unit (1998b) *Operations Review- Education Division*. MEU, May, Malta.

Manz, C. C. (1998) *The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus: practical lessons for today*. San Fancisco, Berrerr-Kowhler.

Mcewen, A. and Salters, M. (1997) "Values and Management: the role of the primary School headteacher", *School Leadership & Management*, Vol.17, No.1, pp.69-79.

Mortimore, P. & Mortimore, J. [eds] (1991*) The Secondary Head*. London, Chapman. National Curriculum Council (2004) *Quality Education for All: The Realities and Challenges facing Boys' and Girls' Secondary Schools in Malta*. National Curriculum Council, Secondary Education Focus Group, March.

Patterson, J. & Patterson, J. (2004) "Sharing the Lead", *Educational Leadership*, Vol. No., pp. 74-78.

Pearson, C.S. (1998) “Deep Change and spiritual intelligence”, *Inner Edge*, Vol.1, No. 1, pp. 3-4.

Rogers, R. (Ed.) (1994) *How to write a School Development Plan*. Oxford, Heinemann.

Sale, J. (1997) “Leading from the Heart”, *Managing Schools Today*, Vol.6, No.9, pp.16-19.

Sackney, L. (1998) Leadership for the Learning Community. Paper presented at the ATEE 23rd Annual Conference, Limerick, Ireland, 24th-30th August.

Senge, P. (1990) *The Fifth Discipline: the Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. Sydney, Random House.

Sergiovanni, T. (1996) *Leadership for the Schoolhouse*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Swann, R. (1998) “Compassionate Leadership in Schools”, *International Studies in Educational Administration*, Vol. 26, No. 1, pp.21-29.

Teal, T. (1996) “The Human Side of Management”, *Harvard Business Review*, November-December, pp.35-44.

Terry, R.W. (1993) *Authentic Leadership: Courage in Action*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Wain, K. *et al.*, (1995) *Tomorrow’s Schools: Developing Effective Learning Cultures*, Members of the Consultative Committee, Malta.

Walker, A. and Walker, J. (1998) “Challenging the boundaries of sameness: leadership through valuing difference”, *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol.36, No.1, pp. 8-28.

Wheatley, M.J. (1992) *Leadership and the New Science: Learning about Organisation from an Orderly Universe*. San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler.

Whitaker, K. S. and Moses, M. C. (1994) *The Restructuring Hand book: A Guide to School Revitalisation*. Boston, Allyn and Bacon.

CHAPTER ONE

Exploring the role of the Contemporary School Leader

Headship today implies much more than administering a school. The call is for heads to develop into visible leaders.

> *Educational leaders must create artful ways to reweave organizational tapestries from old traditions, current realities, and future vision. This work cannot be done by clinging to old ways, emulating principles from effective schools and excellent companies, or divining futuristic images from what we imagine the next decades will be like. Rather, it takes a collective look backward, inward, and ahead. It is a process of transformation.*
> Terrence E. Deal, from Healing Our Schools: Restoring the Heart, in Schools as Collaborative Cultures, A. Lieberman (Ed)

A new interesting phenomenon arising in the midst of the move towards greater devolution of authority to the school site is that the education authorities are finding it extremely hard to find candidates wishing to take on the responsibility of headship in primary and secondary schools.

The reasons for this may be obvious to one and all. Headship, within the context of decentralisation, implies more responsibilities, more work, longer hours and no professional salaries or conditions of work to justify such demands. No arguments are required around this obvious statement,

More interesting is the question *"What does the job of the head of school entail?"* This is an important question for as we strive to improve the leadership potential of school administrators, we must first try to better understand the world of the practising administrator.

This could, however, prove difficult. It could be compared to painting an accurate watercolour of the Maltese coast during a wintry day with north-westerly winds. The artist strives to get the exact hues, shapes and moods, yet they change with every gust of wind and cloud formation. A head of school's office is in constant motion and filled with an amazing range of potentially volatile – though thought-provoking – human interactions. Their job descriptions can never adequately describe the variety of politically charged activities, problems and responsibilities included in each and every day.

These responsibilities may include addressing teachers' and learners needs, serving as a quasi-professional qualified architect, crisis management counsellor, surrogate parent, mediator and traffic warden.

Changing schools, changing roles

Schools today are in the midst of examining the work that teachers and students, amongst others, should be engaged in. The need to 'transform' the teachers world and their work, as Lieberman and Miller (1999) stated, is indicative of the challenges we face. Teachers who are engaged in reform are involved in two major developments – "they are reinventing school, and they are reinventing themselves" (p.19). In this respect the role of the head is a central one. The new realities, the new challenges that await us help us to confront existing work habits and patterns (see Figure 3). Change is always accompanied by challenge. The head needs to help teachers confront old habits, attitudes and behaviours in themselves and others. School leaders will need to see how they can address the new social realities of teaching, especially in a context of devolution of authority to the school site.

Figure 3: The New Social Realities of Teaching

From	To
Individualism	Professional community
Teaching at the centre	Learning at the centre
Technical work	Inquiry into practice
Controlled work	Accountability
Managed work	Leadership
Classroom concerns	Whole-school concerns and beyond
A weak knowledge base	A broad knowledge base

One of the key roles of the contemporary head of school is to serve as an instructional leader, who, in turn, promotes teacher growth. As a school head one must help teachers identify instructional goals and offer his/her support as they work towards achieving those goals. The contemporary head needs to observe teachers in the classroom and provide constructive feedback. He/She can and should encourage teachers to watch one another teach, to learn from one another (Gordon, 2004). The head needs to create opportunities for teachers to meet and share ideas and concerns (Wald & Castleberry, 2000).

The need to be data driven and goal oriented

Leaders need to have a vision about where things need to go and be committed to that vision. Naturally, school goals will be different, depending on the unique needs of the students. School leaders must determine the learning needs of the school's population and then create an instructional programme to meet those specific needs. Identifying needs requires time and commitment. It requires that discussions and meetings are held, that research is conducted so that a number of options can be identified. Once a decision is taken then one needs to monitor developments and be prepared to change if the evaluations indicate that adjustments need to be made. As a result, heads need to be more nimble, more agile.

Sharing responsibility and authority

The kind of learning environment that is here being highlighted requires a school leader to clearly articulate the vision and create a sense of mission. But one cannot stop there. School leaders need to empower others to carry out that mission. Leaders need to learn what it means and what it takes to bring people together. We assume that adults should find it easy to get together and do things in a collegial way. However, experience shows that it is far more difficult for us adults to get together

and do things in a collegial and collaborative manner since we have been through an education system and work in environments where isolation and self-centredness is the rule of practice. Breaking from the bonds of isolation and dependency will be far from easy, as quite a number of heads will easily attest too (Crowther *et al.*, 2002).

Naturally, developing staff, and indeed making any instructional decisions, should not be the sole responsibility of the head. This is the ironic twist of leadership: a head is ultimately accountable, but not solely responsible, for success.

The type of developments that are needed in our schools requires the nurturing of various structuring principles; these principles include the values of co-operation, sharing, honesty and trust. Heads need to have the ability to give power away, to trust in the ability of others to do a good job. This can be quite a challenge to heads since literature shows us that some teachers do not want to accept the responsibility that accompanies empowerment, and others want to avoid the leadership and power it offers.

However, the key to success is in believing in one's staff and constantly working at creating opportunities for teachers to take decisions. As teachers become more accustomed to making decisions they will overcome their uncertainty and become more confident in their own expertise.

Naturally, the trail will be fraught with risk. Heads who are visionary allow teachers to take risks. This means that mistakes can be committed. If a teacher wants to try something and it does not work, we need to learn to ask, "What did we learn from that"? rather than say "I told you so!" Teachers may have answers, but may not realise they have the answers. The leader's job is to encourage teachers to test their ideas while monitoring student progress. Teachers must become the scientific explorers of their profession.

Fighting tradition and building trust

As ideal as it sounds, establishing a culture that supports teacher leadership and shared decision making is far from easy. Even in some of our so-called good schools this is seen as a real challenge.

Today's leaders have to establish school cultures that help teachers feel that they are at the centre of the development and change process. Problems often result when heads and teachers have a rather vague notion of what shared decision making is. Many leaders do not clearly explain the role that each member plays in the decision making process. So, teachers give their input and are disappointed if the head's ultimate decision does not reflect their thinking. Teachers feel frustrated and let down and as a result feel less inclined to engage once more in the process.

Such disillusionment can be avoided however, if and when school leaders focus on doing two things: listen and communicate. To lead others is a human thing. To be effective one needs to have well-developed human relations skills. The question beckons: how much opportunities / training have we been provided in this essential area of human development. We often assume that people are just good at it. It is one dimension that should not be taken for granted. In fact, quite a number of teacher education programmes, including ones that are specifically earmarked for the professional development of school leaders are addressing this dimension.

Listening is one of the most critical skills any leader can develop. Listening conveys caring, and when people know how to care, they begin to trust. Once they begin to trust, they open up and take risks. Whatever institution we work in we need to ask ourselves how far are we developing these human dimensions which in the end nurture the commitment and desire to improve, to give of oneself?

A Head should always listen and show teachers that he/she is willing to help them, to listen to them. It is easy to fall into the trap of being overcome by the day-to-day minutiae. The contemporary Head is a leader of people and we should never lose sight of this essential dimension in our role. Create opportunities to meet teachers in a structured and formal manner – individualised meetings are extremely helpful; allocating time for teachers to find you in your office; attending year/ grade/departmental meetings …
Informally, go to the staff room, share a coffee, chat about mundane issues, do things socially.

Teachers need to see that you are interested in them as persons. They are not cogs in a machine. Give them opportunities to evaluate your own performance. Ask them to give their own reaction of your leadership. You will gain a number of insights and maybe a few surprises! The key is to keep the community involved and informed.

Assess your leadership qualities. All leaders need strong personality traits to assert influence and function. Some of these attributes are internal, such as vision, but they always have to be complemented by external qualities, such as high visibility, to produce the utmost from team members. A team leader needs to be both facilitator and inspirer, one who provides it with the facility to make decisions and the support to grow.

The role of head: unpredictable but enlightening

Furthermore, each decision must be made with skill, immediacy and a certain permanency, without consideration of the sand that is clouding our decision-making abilities. The important question we have to address is: are we constantly 'satisfying' or are there occasions where we can 'optimise'. Evaluations, personnel decisions, circulars from the education authorities, and union issues are but a few of the shrubs that may impede vision and challenge leadership potential.

The role is indeed unpredictable. It is a fertile ground which can only be truly understood through ***witness*** and ***experience***. The role of head provides a spectacularly enlightening look at the inner workings of the tumultuous world of an educational system called school.

The role today calls heads to move away from running a school from a pedestal, aloof and away from the other members of staff (i.e. to administer) to one which promotes a camaraderie born from mutual survival, and develops a person's inner strength as he/ she becomes more adept at supporting others (i.e. to lead).

During those few moments in the eye of the tempest, wind-tossed school administrators are struck by a heart-felt joy as they take a moment to observe a child,

parent or programme that may have been positively impacted by their choice to become a school head.

Being a visible leader

Given this current state of chaos, how can school administrators rise above the storm? How can they meet the challenge of providing the leadership needed by their schools? One strategy is to begin to lead visibly. The lack of clarity regarding administrators' roles can result in increased scrutiny and a suspiciousness that undermines leadership.

Reaching out to students, staff and community members and sharing what your world is like may give you the emergency first aid that you need. It may allow you to stay afloat in times of turbulence.

It may free up time that had been spent defending what you do, so you can devote precious moments to providing the leadership that is so desperately needed in our schools today. It will also help to nurture the so much needed empowerment in others as we move forward to address the challenges that face education today.

An honour and a privilege

The head of today needs to appreciate (and be appreciated!) that he/she can make a difference. It is also important for heads and their staff to believe that the ultimate power to change is in their heads, hands and heart. Being a head today is indeed hard work. The real challenge is not the demands of the national curriculum but the need for developing an inner conviction and commitment towards developing a collegial and collaborative approach – one where people are willing to bring about desired change based on human beliefs.

References

Crowther, F., Kaagan, S.S., Ferguson, M. & Hann, L. (2002) *Developing Teacher Leaders: How Teacher Leadership Enhnaces School Success.* Thousand Oaks, California, Corwin Press.

Gordon, S.P. (2004) *Professional Development for School Improvement: Empowering Learning Communities*. Boston, Pearson.

Lambert, L. (2003) Leadership Capacity for Lasting School Improvement. Alexandria, Virginia, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Lieberman, A. & Miller, L. (1999) *Teachers – Transforming Their World and Their Work*. New York, Teachers College Press.

Reinhartz, J. & Beach, D.M. (2004) *Educational Leadership: Changing Schools, Changing Roles.* Boston, Pearson.

Robbins, P. & Alvy, H.B. (1995) *The Principal's Companion: Strategies and Hints to Make the Job Easier*. Thousand Oaks, California, Corwin Press.

Wald, P.J. & Castleberry, M.S. (2000) *Educators as Learners: Creating a Professional Learning Community in Your School.* Alexandria, Virginia, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

CHAPTER TWO

Motivators of People: starting from *within*

This brief chapter is aimed at all school leaders who are doing their utmost to create a warm and conducive culture which helps the school move forward in times of constant change. Leaders at all levels are indeed facing challenging moments often of an essentially moral purpose.

We all enjoy the company of cheerful, enthusiastic and growth-oriented individuals. We gravitate to them and try to emulate them. Such people often share seven characteristics which leaders require if they want to be motivators of people rather than demotivators. These characteristics are: knowing yourself, liking yourself, taking control, flexibility, thinking positively, accepting reality, and living fully. Let us examine each of these leadership characteristics.

1 Know yourself

Knowing yourself implies knowing your values, the values you uphold, the values you project, the values you live. It means being able to answer the perennial question, "Who am I, and what aspects of life mean most to me at this point in life?" Only after answering this question can individuals order their priorities and live by their values. When that happens they gain self-respect and feel good about themselves and what they do.

School leaders who know themselves recognise not only their strengths but also their weaknesses. Knowing their abilities and deficiencies allows them to be comfortable in delegating responsibilities to those who are more capable in identified areas.

Knowing yourself also means building enough self-confidence to believe in oneself, in what you are worth and what you can give.

> "When we reach into the most fundamental basis of our being, we find a pregnant void, a web of relationships. When somebody asks us to talk about ourselves, we talk about family, work, academic background, sports affiliations, etc. In all this talk, where is our 'self'? The answer is nowhere because the self is not a thing, but … a narrative striving to connect with other narratives and become richer" (Kofman & Senge, 1993, p.14)

2 Like yourself

We often tend to ignore this characteristic as we engage ourselves in addressing organisational needs. People who like themselves focus on their strengths rather than their weaknesses. They think positively. They set high standards for themselves. They set achievable goals and celebrate their success. Such people express their satisfaction openly. They assert themselves, openly expressing their thoughts and taking control of their decisions rather than letting others control them.

Leaders who possess this quality can establish a positive climate in their schools by empowering others, by valuing diversity, by focusing on individual and collective strengths, by setting high standards, by rewarding improvement, by celebrating success and establishing a set of values that everyone associates with and lives.

3 Taking Control

Self-confident people take charge, make decisions, and take responsibility for the consequences. We know of many school leaders who, even in the highly centralised system we had in the past, were willing to risk and take the road not taken since they were convinced that was the best thing to do. They are ones who do not blame themselves or others when things go wrong. That is often the easy way out. These leaders are doers and therefore do their best to focus on the problem so as to solve it.

Taking control here is not of the coercive type. Rather they try to exert their influence by clearly delineating rules, expectations, and consequences. By empowering others, they send out clear messages (to those who want to hear!) that they believe in others and want to create opportunities for them to take the initiative necessary to bring about improvement.

4 Thinking Positively

As Tim Hindle says " Time can sail past for some people and drag for others. Which of the two applies to you depends mostly on your attitude" (1998, p.28). Different people have different ways of enjoying themselves. One needs to make time to do the things one enjoys as this helps us to retain a positive outlook towards life. It is important to be aware of the tasks that give you pleasure and make sure that they are spread out in your weekly schedule. Plan regular leisure outings. In addition, try to cultivate a positive outlook, even when not engaged in the tasks that give you pleasure or satisfaction. With a positive attitude to life, it is much easier to manage your time and solve issues at work. Start focusing on feeling good about yourself and your life. This will help you to be objective and constructive in dealing with difficult people or challenges.

5 Being Flexible

Flexibility is a key ingredient in any job or facet of life. The flexible person knows and appreciates that every issue/problem has several solutions. They understand the need to be willing to listen to alternative views, to modify their behaviour, to change their perceptions, and to try out different alternatives. Your way cannot be the only way forward. Such a perspective and style of management can only spell disaster.

The flexible person acknowledges changes in oneself as a sign of growth. Such a perspective does not only pay lip service to the concept of lifelong learning we are so used to hearing about, but also helps to create a lifelong need to learn. Flexible people are willing to immerse themselves in new situations, in working with others to challenge the status quo. They are individuals who revel in new insights.

Flexible, growth-oriented leaders model growth for their members of staff and create a climate that encourages one and all to seek growth opportunities within and outside the school. Such leaders go out of their way to see that their staff has the necessary facilities, structures and opportunities required for personal and collective growth to

take place. They are excited when the staff brings forth new ideas, when they share their successes and failures, when they ask for help, when they provide constructive criticism. They are ones who express this excitement throughout the school and all this helps to create a warm climate where everyone knows that they are important and can contribute to the welfare and development of their school.

6 Accept Reality

These are indeed hard times, especially for us who grew up in a different era with the things that confront us being so different from the ones we were brought up in. Yet, those leaders that have accepted that reality is different take pride in their accomplishments. By accepting the fact that children have changed, being influenced as they are by so many social influences, good and not so good, they relate to them differently than those who expect the youngsters to act as they did ten or twenty years ago.

Realistic leaders also acknowledge that the teaching community in the schools themselves have changed and that education now involves a more complex set of issues and relationships than we have ever addressed or experienced.

Realistic leaders communicate honestly and truthfully with their staff, encouraging them to face reality and providing them with support in confronting difficult issues of a personal and professional nature.

7 Living Fully

The best educators live fully. They do not live and die for education. They write, read, travel, visit museums, go to the theatre, do voluntary work, enjoy a social and athletic life. They have varied interests and lead exciting lives. School leaders should enrich their school environment with their out-of-school experiences and to encourage staff members to do the same. If, and where educators bring their own backgrounds, interests, etc. to the school, quality education often results. Education is more than books and teaching in the classroom.

Needless to say leaders cannot model qualities they do not possess. They must motivate themselves to become upbeat and growth-oriented individuals if they expect to find or nurture those traits in others. But, those leaders who succeed in developing the motivational characteristics described here will be rewarded with school climates where not only they but their staff know themselves, like themselves, exercise control, are flexible, accept reality and live life to the full.

Managing time successfully involves more than just organizing workload. Work will suffer if you do not schedule regular breaks to recharge your batteries. As Hindle argues “To recharge your batteries you must lead a well-balanced life and schedule time off…” (1998, p.61).

References

Hindle, T. (1998) *Manage Your Time*. London, Dorling Kindersley.

Robbins, P. & Alvy, H.B. (1995) *The Principal's Companion: Strategies and Hints to Make the Job Easier.* Thousand Oaks, California, Corwin Press.

Wald, P.J. & Castleberry, M.S. (2000) *Educators as Learners: Creating a Professional Learning Community in Your School.* Alexandria, Virginia, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

CHAPTER THREE

Investing in Performance

As more and more schools take School Development seriously an area that needs to be explored and eventually institutionalised is a process of how to gauge performance within the school.

An important question that immediately comes to mind when addressing such a topic is *'How can you tell what improves student achievement?'* Heads of school and teachers can offer their opinions and tell stories of what is happening in the schools. However, that is not enough. Officials within the education authorities also need a more rigorous, thoughtful process for evaluating initiatives at the school site. The way we look at quality and how it is addressed in schools is the most critical challenge currently facing our schools and the education authorities. Defining quality and how it is going to be assessed and measured are issues of constant debate. An approach to address this is Total Quality Management (TQM).

But first, let us relate to the term quality.

What is quality?

Quality is an elusive concept. Webster's Dictionary defines 'quality' as "peculiar and essential character, degree of excellence." With such an ambiguous definition, how can educators expect quality and know when it is achieved? How can we get students to focus on quality? Is quality the same for all students? And, as Arcaro (1995) states: "Does getting a mark of 100 in a test indicate that quality work has been done? How important is quality in our classrooms? What about the curriculum? What if I don't cover it all?" (p. 15).

There are no easy answers to these questions. In fact, initially we may end up raising more questions and finding few answers. We must first come to terms with what quality means to us as individuals and as teachers.

Instituting a quality programme does not mean that quality does not exist in schools or classrooms. Quality implies expecting the best from each and every student, and not just from the top-level ones. Quality means continuous improvement. It means doing little and big things better, setting and achieving higher standards, working together, and taking a long-term perspective.

Quality also implies working more collaboratively amongst us as adults as we work together to provide a better programme to the students. It also implies involving students directly in their learning so that there is a stronger link between what is taught, how it is taught and what is learnt.

Total Quality Management

Total quality management (TQM) is a management philosophy developed by W. Edwards Deming based on his experiences in US industry before and during the Second World War. The subsequent adoption of TQM by Japanese industry, but not

by the USA, is widely credited for the formers miraculous post-war economic reconstruction and the massive trade imbalance between the two countries. Deming in his book *Out of the Crisis* (1986), in which he summarized his ideas and exhorted the US industry to adopt them as the Japanese had done so successfully.

Although TQM was originally intended for the industry sector, Deming pointed out that his management principles could be applied equally well in the service sectors.

TQM is built around the idea that individuals can always improve their work by learning new techniques and applying them. People can master techniques such as how to use the six management and planning tools required to resolve issues. This approach satisfies people's natural urge to do a better job and to see tangible improvements. TQM emphasizes organization-wide *commitment*, integration of *quality improvement* efforts with organizational *goals*, and the inclusion of quality as a factor in *performance appraisals*.

TQM represents a change in the way quality is perceived. Whilst initiated in industrial circles the words highlighted in italics in the previous paragraph do ring a bell in education circles. It is the concept which is central to our discourse. The TQM approach is aimed at achieving what Schroeder (1989) describes as zero defects, that is a quality mentality in which the work force strives to make a product or service conform to desired standards. How can we focus on reaching defined standards in the field of education?

- Insist on well-documented evidence on results in student achievement before investing in or expanding education initiatives. One major implication behind such a move is the emphasis on teachers viewing themselves as lifelong learners, reflective practitioners and action researchers. No easy task, but one which School Development Planning needs to take into account. Therefore, the values behind the professional development of all school members need to be firmly established within the ethos and the climate of each school. Not only that, such value systems and hence professional attitude towards the education profession needs to be well and truly established at central level.

- Ask tough questions about suggested reforms and those already in place: 'What are the intended goals of a strategy, and how can we know if they are achieved?' 'How do we gauge progress along the way?' 'How long do we allow a programme to operate before deciding whether to continue, expand or abandon it?' 'How do we build in rigorous, periodic evaluation processes within the school to measure the progress and impact of education initiatives on our students?'

- Put together a diverse package of initiatives combining the best of the 'old' with the most promising of the 'new'. Judiciously mix better-researched approaches, such as an early emphasis on reading, with more cutting-edge initiatives, such as using technology to improve teaching and learning.

- Be sure any initiative includes plans to evaluate progress and measure success.

- A comprehensive, long-term plan that focuses on improving teaching and learning is needed. Commit yourself to plans that aim to improve student learning in your school. Establish good working relationships with education officials who can and should support you to achieve the goals you have set out in your School Development Plan.

Indeed, none of the points raised here are easy tasks but already in a number of schools there are excellent examples of good initiatives under way. It is important to monitor such initiatives both at the school site and from outside so that you can celebrate good practice as to how to improve performance. Here we have only scratched the surface of this vast area, but hopefully offered the reader an opportunity to stop and reflect and consider, maybe reconsider, what you are doing within your own school as you work towards investing in performance.

References

Arcaro, J. (1995) *Creating Quality in the Classroom*. London, Kogan Page.

Deming, W.E. (1986) *Out of the Crisis: Quality, Productivity and Competitive Position.* Cambridge, MA., Cambridge University Press.

Schroeder, R.G. (1989) *Operations Management*. 3rd ed., New York, McGraw-Hill.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Commitment to Learning

There are no age barriers when it comes to innovation and personal development.

LET us start off by telling you about a book Christopher was introduced to some years ago. It had the intriguing title *From Age-ing to Sage-ing* and had one clear message – no matter what our age it is never too late or too early to learn and develop. We should banish words such as 'retire' from our vocabulary.

Older people are sages and we should help them transfer their wisdom and experience to those with the energy and excitement to make things happen. Retirement has nothing to do with age. There are as many people who have truly retired at 25 as there are people still living life to the full at 70.

So, rather than cowering in the corner and leaving innovation to those whipper-snapper leaders, follow these few pointers to personal development.

1. Think …. act

Reflective practitioners are doers. They turn their dreams and ideas into action. Thought and action require a lot of effort, a commitment to try out new ideas. Both are synonymous to growth, both are required as we seek to make and turn our efforts into learning experiences.

2. Getting started

Making that crucial first step is the most daunting. You have to know what you want to achieve. Reflection, discussion, sharing, trying, risking, allows participants to identify ways and means of fulfilling one's goals. You may not have a clear picture, you may not have enough information, however, this should not stop you from getting started. Start with what you have got and learn as you go along. Take up the challenges as they arise. Adapt according to the forces that come into play.

3. Pursue excellence

Trying out and testing new ideas, getting feedback and forecasting your next move will move you towards your ultimate goal. Using Deming's PDSA cycle, which represents the beating heart of the school, will help reach excellence. PDSA stands for Plan, Do, Study and Act. The concept is derived from John Dewey's work and his emphasis on meeting regularly to discuss progress and innovation, always with the intention of refining efforts relative to results.

The PDSA Cycle shown in the figure below consists of four steps:

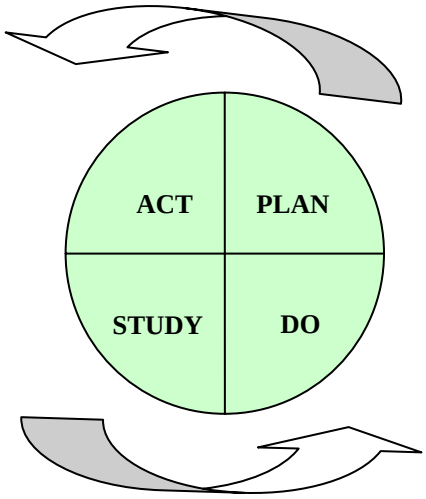

Figure 4: PDSA Cycle

Step 1: Plan with a team and decide what information you need to move forward. The first step is developing a plan or process of study and analyze (for example the way a lesson or series of lessons are taught, or an assessment process developed). What can be done to improve it? First, you must organise the team to develop the plan. Then you can determine what data you currently have, what additional date you need to assess the improvement, and possibly how the data will be used. You cannot proceed without a plan.

Step 2: Do it. Carry out the plan on a small scale or pilot scheme so that improvements can be experienced.

Step 3: Study or check the data on the effects of the improvement or innovation. Make the necessary changes or improvements.

Step 4: Act on what you learned on the initial findings. Either implement the innovation on a permanent basis or go back to Step 1 and modify.

Learning involves a constant movement back and forth between thinking and action. The learner not only hears and processes the information but also experiments with it and then documents and reflects on the results.

4. Express enthusiasm

Individuals put in a lot of hard work. Nurture their commitment with enthusiasm; this will encourage enthusiasm in others.

5. Use encouragement

It is essential for group members to feel welcome and wanted. People learn best from those they value and respect. This does not happen automatically. We earn this through what we do (i.e. actions) and what we say (i.e. communication). Once people are motivated they will give more of themselves. Provide opportunities for members

to receive feedback on their work. As individuals we can often feel isolated from the rest. Create time to talk and discuss work, to share and evaluate progress.

6. Be objective

You need to be able to stand back and look at developments. In this regard, having a colleague or mentor with whom you can share and discuss developments can pay dividends. Therefore, be objectively enthusiastic.

7. Focus on the here and now

Your present attitudes and dispositions can determine future success or failure. Looking to the past and to things that didn't work before will hinder development.

8. Set priorities

Concentrate on what tasks need to be tackled. Do not put off the unpleasant or boring tasks as these will effect your concentration.

9. Emphasise quality

Time and effort do not always go hand in hand with good results or success.

10. Exercise regularly

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy is no cliché. Set aside time to exercise. When the brain is tired, exercise will help you to rest and revive yourself. When the body is tired, exercise the brain by brainstorming ideas or reading.

The main theme behind these ten points is that of learning – a commitment to learning as a lifelong, continuous process. Learning is a daunting task. Whilst it can be seen as a two-way street some might also see it as a double-edged sword. The encouraging news is that more and more people are nowadays appreciating the value of learning throughout life. Yes, it is risky for all those who wish to benefit from a learning experience. But risk can be turned into challenges – challenges which people are willing to take responsibility for.

References

Deming, W.E. (1986) *Out of the Crisis*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press.

Rogers, R. (ed) (1994) *How to Write a School Development Plan*, Oxford, Heinemann.

Schacter-Shalomi, Z. & Miller, R.S. (1995) *From Age-ing to Sage-ing*, London, Warner Books.

Schmoker, M.J. & Wilson, R.B. (1993) *Total Quality Education: Profiles of Schools that demonstrate the power of Deming's management principles*. Bloomingtom, Phi Delta Kappa.

Scherkenbach, W. (1991) *Deming's Road to Continual Improvement*. Knoxville, SPC Press.

CHAPTER FIVE

Managing your own Mind

Training our mind's way of thinking can have a marked effect on the way we relate to ourselves, to others and our job. In this chapter a positive approach to thinking and thought processes is presented.

The mind is its own place and in itself
can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven

John Milton

Educators can draw on a plethora of techniques which can help them enhance their performance of work. One strategy which is often overlooked, however, is the self-management of one's thought processes. And, if we agree with Seligman's (1991) findings that individuals can choose the way they think, then this has important implications for educators who work in challenging environments which are calling for a lot of interpersonal communication (conflict!).

Opportunities or threats?

Dealing with one's own thought patterns demands inner leadership strategies. The theory of inner leadership stresses the importance of the person's ability to establish and maintain constructive thought patterns (Manz & Neck, 1991; Neck & Manz, 1992; Neck & Milliman, 1994). Just as we develop both functional and dysfunctional behaviour habits, we also develop functional and dysfunctional patterns of thinking. These mind-sets influence our perceptions, the way we process information, and the choices we make.

Two contrasting patterns of thinking are **opportunity thinking** and **obstacle thinking** (Manz, 1992). Whilst the person who engages in opportunity thinking tends to focus on constructive ways of dealing with situations and hence sees them as challenging opportunities, the obstacle thinker is one who is constantly identifying reasons for not doing anything. Both types can be **within** each individual.

Dysfunctional thinking is a challenge not only individuals have to contend with but whole institutions, if we want to create and establish schools as learning communities. This is no easy task given the existing culture of most schools and the ingrained attitudes within our teaching profession. If, and when individuals take up the challenge to address the inner self than we can truly say that a paradigm shift that Marilyn Ferguson (1982) spoke over twenty years ago will be taking place locally.

Burns (1980) identified ten categories of dysfunctional thinking that need to be explored, confronted and replaced by more rational thoughts. Among these, some profile require specific attention:

Over generalization. One generalizes a specific failure or bad result as an endless pattern.

Mental filtering. One dwells on a single negative detail, thus distorting all other aspects of reality.
Disqualifying the positive. One writes off rewarding experiences.
Jumping to conclusions. One draws negative conclusions about certain situations even when there is not enough evidence to do so.
Magnifying and minimizing. One exaggerates the importance of negative factors and minimizes the importance of positive factors.
Emotional reasoning. One interprets reality through the lens of negative emotions.
Labeling and mislabeling. One uses negative labels to describe oneself, others or an event (e.g. "I just can't do it." "It will be another meaningless meeting").
Personalization. One blames oneself for negative events or outcomes that are due to other causes.

Such negative, dysfunctional ways of looking at oneself, at others, at work and at all life chances that can be created for self and others need to be tackled. The question and hence the challenge, **'How can educators learn to engage in less dysfunctional thinking and in more opportunity thinking?'** According to Neck & Barnard (1996) they must learn to analyze and manage three things:

- internal dialogue (self-talk)
- mental images (visualization), and
- beliefs and assumptions (ibid., p.25)

The major implication behind this is that we need to give ourselves quality time - time to engage in a dialogue with oneself so as to influence our own behaviour, our own feelings, our own self-esteem, and even stress level. Educators who manage to bring their self-defeating self-talk to a level of awareness and who rethink and reverbalise these inner dialogues stand a good chance of improving their own performance (ibid., p. 25).

Let us consider the following scenario which a number of readers may certainly associate with:

> *A parent has just gone to the Head of School complaining about a particular teacher and wants to move her son to another class. The teacher is angry and frustrated. He knows that the child has a behaviour problem which he is trying to address. He has in fact devoted even his own 'free' time to be with the child. The teacher senses a feeling of failure - a failure not only with the child but also with the child's parents.*

The teacher can actually give in and blame himself as inadequate. This is, however, a dysfunctional way of looking at things and at oneself. To alter such a destructive belief it is important for the teacher to identify the dysfunction and change the thoughts into positive ones. Self-talk here plays a central role in helping the teacher handle this situation. Thoughts such as the following will help.

> *I probably need to communicate more effectively with those parents and make them more aware of my efforts to help their son. If, however, I am not successful and they still want to move their child out of my class than I mustn't take it personally. Other parents have*

provided me with positive feedback about the way I teach and relate with their children.

This is a positive approach to a situation which can be viewed as having only negative outcomes for the teacher. The teacher may go even further than this and take up the challenge further by saying

I'm going to do my utmost to have the parents convinced that I'm doing my best to understand their son and that they play a central role in my efforts.

After such self-talk the teacher may also use mental imagery before meeting the parents. Using this technique the teacher would picture himself listening to the parents' concerns, providing information, being supportive and generating ideas and solutions. He may even visualize the parents leaving the meeting happy and convinced that their son is in good hands.

This is definitely optimism at its best! It assumes that teachers are willing to undergo such a process every time they are dealing with day-to-day issues. Well, putting it simply and bluntly, if we do not adopt a positive approach than the lack of self-confidence will only generate a sense of failure which will in turn become reality.

For educators to improve their performance, confidence and mood, practicing inner leadership techniques is essential. Trying out the following technique has been found extremely beneficial in enhancing performance whether in class or elsewhere (Manz & Neck, 1991).

This approach consists of five steps:

1. Observe and record your existing beliefs and assumptions, your self-talk and your mental imagery patterns.
2. Analyze how functional and constructive these thoughts are.
3. Identify and develop more functional and constructive thoughts to substitute for any dysfunctional ones.
4. Try substituting the more functional thinking when faced with a difficult situation that crops up.
5. Continue monitoring your beliefs, self-talk and mental images, and maintain the new, more functional ones you have adopted.

What this technique illustrates is that successful educating requires preparation, persistence and practice. As educators we need to be extremely optimistic and determined in our thoughts and actions. Effective self-management of the mental skills discussed here can give educators the tools they need for optimal performance.

References

Burns, D. (1980) *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy*. New York, William Morrow.

Ferguson, M. (1982) *The Acquarian Conspiracy*. London, Paladin.

Manz, C.C. (1992). *Mastering Self-Leadership.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall.

Manz, C.C. & Neck, C.P. (1991) Inner Leadership: Creating Positive Thought Patterns. *The Academy of Management Executive*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 87-95.

Neck, C. P. & Barnard, A.W.H. (1996) Managing Your Mind: What are you telling yourself. *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 53, No. 6, pp. 24-27.

Neck, C. P. & Manz, C.C. (1992) Thought Self Leadership: The Influence of Self-talk and Mental Imagery on Performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 14, No. 7, pp. 681 -699.

Neck, C. P., & Milliman, J. (1994) Thought Self-Leadership: Finding Spiritual Fulfillment in Organizational Life. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 9, No. 6, pp. 9-16.

Seligman, M. (1991) *Learned Optimism*. New York, Alfred A. Knopf.

CHAPTER SIX

Developing the inner edge

Quality development in our schools requires an inner commitment by all school members. Connecting purpose with living is essential.

Cultivating the inner edge

The move towards greater devolution of authority to the school site is also bringing forth with it a spate of professional development courses in the broad area of school development planning. Practically all school senior management team members have been through various sessions on what can be termed 'how-to workshops' as school administrators are learning how to plan, carry out an audit, set-up management teams, etc. One assumption driving such programmes is that increased knowledge about leading creates better school leaders.

But to truly transform education so that all students can achieve to the best of their abilities, educators must also cultivate what has been described as the "*inner edge*". This inner edge comes from relating differently with ourselves and one another. It requires a deeper knowledge about self and a deeper connection with our purpose for living. It means being mission-driven rather than having a mission. It means working as vigorously inside ourselves as we do on the outside, material world of schooling. It means acknowledging that the unseen spirit that builds bridges with the self and with others cannot be ignored.

These are the principles that many schools now have to grapple with. Whereas before everyone, to a large extent, led his/her own life independently of others, and therefore functioned effectively or ineffectively without anyone noticing or bothering now we are seeing that each and every person can and must make a difference to the plan that the school charts and implements. All schools are slowly realising that those that are willing to undertake that personal journey which will effect their own personal development as they seek to improve self and others, are finding many a stumbling block.

Whilst many are willing to take up the challenges and risks involved in taking responsibility of their future, others do not want to upset calm waters and are dreading the opportunities that are being created to challenge the status quo.

There is a growing awareness that leadership now requires something more than content expertise. Some see personal and spiritual development as synonymous with leadership development. Yet in most leadership programmes the important work of developing a spiritual inner edge is very much left to chance.

Developing a spiritual inner edge means that each individual must strip himself/ herself of any illusions of powerlessness. Each of us creates much of the reality we live. Many are those who constantly blame the system and as a result never commit themselves to any drive towards development. Developing a spiritual edge implies

giving up defeatist, self-fulfilling prophecies. It means embracing a proactive stance rather than a reactive one and believing in each other's potential.

Spiritual development, very much like physical and cognitive development, does not just happen. As Pearson (1998) and Sardello (1995), amongst others, point out heightened spiritual efficacy requires actively developing the capacities in three areas: awareness of spiritual influence, assessment of spiritual conditions and strengthening of spiritual intelligence.

Naturally, given the nature of this publication we cannot go into any details about these areas. It will suffice to mention that individuals are encouraged to look into themselves and to question their own inner beliefs as to who they are, what they are doing and why they are doing it in given ways.

Reconnecting spirit with the work of teaching

As school members are being encouraged to take on a more direct and participative role in determining their school's vision and direction this implies that they have to overcome the climate of isolation and dependency that they were used to and start thinking and working in a collaborative fashion. No easy tasks, as quite a lot of schools are realising. Over the years particular school members may have stopped trying, they may have been discouraged by people and events. Others do not have the desire or the skills to work with others. Others may have developed new priorities which do not embrace their role of educators.

When leaders and followers stop believing in themselves and their role, they stop trying. Content and process-based staff development alone cannot change this dynamic. This is a spiritual condition which has to be felt and faced. Going through it is the only way out; the only way out for those who really want to make a difference in the schools they form part of. This does not necessarily embrace everyone!

Building bridges

So how does a leader start this journey? There are varied ways of going about it. Here we will just mention the most obvious ones. One way is to help all staff members reconnect with the feelings of power and joy that brought them to teaching and learning in the first place. Encourage members to write them down and then to share them in an open discussion. Going back through the years and telling stories about high points in their lives can energize the staff. Such positive energy contained in past events is brought forward to charge present action.

Another method is that of using team building exercises. These will help members experience a state of connectedness with each other. And, the majority of people are hungry for a spirit of community.

Engaging in role plays and simulations also help members tackle issues such as mistrust and conflict. Try videotaping and analyzing some discussion for evidence of negative words and body language. These types of activities can open dialogue about the spiritual state of a school community.

By addressing the self and more so being involved in school issues (simple, easy to carry out and in a short span of time) helps to nurture a spirit of community. This will help them to embrace the new demands and challenges facing schools.

If a group/school accepts the challenge to address the state of development or inertia that they are faced with they can turn cynicism into hope, failures into successes, dreams into reality. The spirit of success depends on the willingness to cultivate the inner edge. Is this the challenge that awaits you?

CHAPTER SEVEN

Becoming a visible learner

Sustaining the professional development of school administrators is crucial to the quality of life that can be nurtured in schools.

A few years ago Ronald Barth, a leading American educator, expressed his concern about the concept of learning by presenting the following scenario:

> Picture this: A family is eating dinner together. Books on a nearby shelf – "First Year as Principal" and "Principal" – hint at what mom or dad does for a living. A child asks, "So, mom, what did you learn at school today?"

Barth argues that asking what you learnt in a school today is as vital and persistent a question for adults in schools as it is for students themselves. And, he warns that the risks of depriving educators the central enterprise of schooling – learning – are larger than we ever imagined.

One of the major tasks of school administrators is that of leading others toward learning. But, *we cannot lead where we will not go ourselves.* For us to be successful as educators we must create time to engage in, model and make visible to the school community our own learning.

Impediments to becoming learners

Unfortunately, few administrators enjoy a good reputation as learners. One can think of various impediments (excuses) that stand in the way of administrators:

- **I do not have time**
  There is no downside to my not spending time on my own learning. There is a dramatic downside, however, if I do not attend to these hundred other things.

- **Baggage of the past**
  What can I learn from such courses? What they are going to say I have already heard it before.

- **Reward of learning**
  It would mean more work. I would have to go back to school and announce to staff members that I have learned something promising and want to move in a 'new' direction.

- **Admitting you do not know it all**
  To be a learner is to admit imperfection. The world thinks I know how to do it all. Administrators need to be seen as credible, to inspire the confidence of teachers, students and parents.

  On the other hand, who inspires more confidence? Who is the better leader? The administrator who already knows it all, or the one who is a lifelong, insatiable learner?

Career development
Often the professional development (PD) for school administrators is mainly of an ad hoc nature with nothing academic or professional organised for heads of school. What is definitely lacking is a career development structure and strategy which extends from pre-service preparation through induction into the workplace and throughout the length of their career.

Given the move towards greater school autonomy the career development of school administrators has to be taken seriously. The education authorities in conjunction with Faculties of Education or other institutions need to provide a variety of PD programmes that allows for professional development to take place.

The following are just a few recommendations. They are based on the belief that PD calls for providing collegial opportunities to learn that are linked directly to solving authentic problems. Conventional strategies for professional development are often ineffective and wasteful (even financially) because they tend to be shallow and fragmented.

The new strategies proposed here promote sustained interaction among participants, emphasize substantive school-related issues, and help participants become lifelong learners.

1. **Academies or Associations**
   These would involve participants in various groups (e.g. heads of school, subject co-ordinators, education officials) meeting regularly to discuss issues of direct concern. Such sustained interaction allows for more meaningful engagement and discussion.

2. **Heads of School Summer Institute**
   This could take the form of a three to five day programme (ideally residential) which would help to ignite productive work on various aspects of leadership. Foreign examples show speakers prodding and coaxing school leaders to focus on an examination of their educational values; ongoing discussion group focus on the application of the theories presented; and individual reflection provides time to apply the discussions to their school setting and their own leadership styles.

3. **Executive Programme**
   These programmes would allow various post holders within the education authorities to come together to work, learn, practice in ways that enable them to develop the skills and knowledge they need to build the resiliency and generative capacity of everyone in their regions across the country.

4. **Joint Masters**
   Linking with foreign universities to provide learning opportunities for school leaders, and leaders at other levels. This would provide learning opportunities that current programmes do not and cannot offer. The international mix allows for growth that internal, of country-based programmes cannot offer independently.

These are merely four examples which the reader and policy makers consider important for the PD of all educators. In order for such strategies, and others like them, to be introduced, developed and sustained over time, the education authorities need to make a written statement regarding the value of professional development.

The following statement can serve as a model. The statement lists the attributes and indicators that will need to be introduced if it is to be implemented and not merely paid lip service.

> *School leadership is a quest to shape a complex, dynamic, exciting entity called a school into a place not only where all children acquire valuable knowledge and skills but also where children and adults alike are valued, respected and challenged to be their best.*

1. **Attribute**: The education authorities agree that PD is a cornerstone of school reform, and should be a routine part of the work of teachers and administrators.
   - *Indicator*: Central authorities aggressively communicate the importance of PD across all districts.
   - *Indicator*: Formal job descriptions affirm the importance of PD and include it among routine job responsibilities.
2. **Attribute**: All school staff have the basic knowledge and skills to help all students achieve to high and challenging academic standards.
   - *Indicator*: PD in all subjects is readily available to all members of staff.
3. **Attribute**: School staff have sufficient experience and training to make informed decisions as to how to handle school transformation.
   - *Indicator*: PD is supported at the school-site through existing structures and processes and a support structure at central level.
   - *Indicator*: School development plans include plans for professional development that are clearly linked to school goals.
   - *Indicator*: Schools have the authority and the financial resources to fulfill the aims identified in their approved school development plans.
   - *Indicator*: Schools have the authority to structure the school in such ways as to facilitate PD.
4. **Attribute**: The education authorities have an incentive system in place that encourages and supports participation in school transformation efforts and related professional development activities.
   - *Indicator*: All those pursuing PD initiatives receive 'credit' toward promotion and salary increments for participation.
   - *Indicator*: Attendance at PD courses are accredited to post-graduate qualifications by the University.
5. **Attribute**: There is continuous evaluation of PD and evaluation is carried out to review, plan and provide feedback to providers.
   - *Indicator*: Two types of evaluation need to be in place. Short-term evaluations focus on the appropriateness and quality of the content and the format of PD courses. Long-term evaluations focus on the contributions of PD to improved student learning.

Concluding remarks

There is a clear need for more inventive models for promoting administrators' professional growth. Sustaining the development of school leaders is crucial to the

quality of school life and to the best interests of all educators and to their development as a community of learners. School leaders, no less than teachers, need replenishment and invigoration and an expanded repertoire of ideas and practices with which to respond to the pressures of change and restructuring.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Challenging Times … Opportunities or threats?

The importance behind groups cannot be underestimated especially in a context which believes in the following five values of learning, participation, collaboration, cooperation and activism.

These are times when educational reform is in the making. Such situation brings about excitement, but it also implies that this time is extraordinarily vulnerable. In fact, reforms bring about enormous demands on school leaders and policy makers in terms of having perspective; of being able to understand and appreciate diversity in a different way than before. It is a time when we need charismatic and transformational leaders, who emphasise creative, collaborative, co-leadership, who appreciate the need for relationships and changing working patterns.

There are so many fascinating issues that are coming up – it is a time of great opportunity. But also, we have to appreciate the fact that at a time of change people are more vulnerable, more prone to bar the door to change. Many tacitly consent not to learn, not to challenge their current mindset.

Two issues require specific attention, namely 'Increasing Participation in Curriculum Development', and 'Decentralisation and Identity'.

Both issues can be focussed around the need of fostering and nurturing a culture of participation based on empowerment at the school site. As we have stated elsewhere what is required is a "conscious, untiring effort and commitment to the change process", one based on a work ethic based on the following three "Cs" - care, commitment and courage. What is required is both a restructuring and reculturing. As Fullan (1998) states both should go hand in hand. We cannot talk of one and ignore the other. Restructuring refers to changes in the formal structure of schooling in terms of organisation, timetables, roles and so on. Restructuring bears no direct relationship to improvements in teaching and learning. On the other hand, reculturing involves changing the norms, values, incentives, skills and relationships in the organisation to foster a different way of working together. Reculturing makes a difference to teaching and learning.

However, developing a culture of collaboration calls for a drive away from the spirit of isolation that surrounds our practices to one based on teamwork. This chapter presents what can be considered as ground rules for effective teamwork to start taking place. A number of activities will then allow participants to develop their understanding of school culture and to find ways of engaging with the school as an organisation.

Let us start off by exploring the reasons behind the need for groups.

The why about groups …

The study of groups has shown that a group will achieve more collectively than its members can working individually. In fact, working in a group can be a more powerful experience than that of the individual involved in isolated learning situations. When individuals pool their efforts and ideas an added dimension is created. Each member within the group is both a resource providing expertise and ability, and a recipient. People working in groups are able to extend each other's potential. Sharing ideas, values, feelings, knowledge, attitudes and thoughts is extremely productive in dealing with tasks and handling innovation and change.

Working in a group is also powerful in supporting the acquisition of self-knowledge. Each group member continually receives feedback about the contributions they make. Individuals are thus able to reappraise themselves through the interactions of the group. They may come to understand how they block their own or other people's learning potential. Working in a safe group allows feedback to happen without individuals feeling rejected or criticised.

Ownership

Naturally, for a group to succeed, members need to believe in what they are doing. Such ownership can only genuinely take place in situations which allow members to identify issues they believe need to be addressed. Development is more likely to work effectively if it has been designed by the people that are going to be affected by them, rather than imposed or imported from elsewhere.

Honesty

No group will succeed unless it is based on a series of values that help set the way forward. Honesty is a basic value without which other values will not be upheld. Successful groupwork relies on honesty. If people are not honest with self and others, dishonesty will rule interrelationships. We need to develop honesty as an essential ground rule through a focus on creating collaborative learning situations. Thus, members are placed in situations which help to nurture truthfulness and honesty.

Trust

The principles espoused in various educational documents in various countries talk about forging close relationships with people in terms of generating trust, motivating, making members feel more involved. In terms of leadership there are at least four major things that leaders need to do. In the first place, they need to provide direction and meaning.

The second is to generate trust in one and all. The third is to create a sense of hope and optimism and a sense of investment in the future. The fourth is to act and get results – to actually execute – not just to make a decision but to take the decision. The trust factor is crucial. It is the social glue that will keep the education community intact and effective.

Authenticity

Authenticity is fundamental in a group – a willingness to speak one's mind clearly and to support others in doing the same. Authenticity can take on a number of meanings: shared understanding of learning goals across the school; learning goals

grounded in students' needs and evident in teachers' practice; an integration of teaching, learning and assessment; actions justified by educational theory.

Professional ethic
Since we do not have a group culture we often tend to lose sight of the goals we have to achieve and focus on issues that hold individuals from working together. We have to learn to appreciate the fact that we do not have to like people to work with them (although it would help!) As in professional life, people need to work with the group they are in. Matters of personal conflict need to be managed so they do not get in the way of the progress of the group as a whole. The adage "you can choose your friends, but you can't choose your relations" also applies to colleagues.

Collective Responsibility
The challenge is for all group members, even those who disagree with particular decisions, to live with the group decisions and refrain from articulating their own personal reservations outside the group.

Listening
Listening is a demanding skill that needs time to practice and nurture. It is important to create opportunities for collaborative learning situations so that participants learn to appreciate and value the varied opinions, ideas and values that other members uphold. We are often only interested in hearing ourselves speak and thus not very willing to listen let alone be influenced by others.

Sharing
"True professionals engage in disciplined inquiry: they test their theories, share their results, and, consequently, learn from one another" (Sagor, 1995, p.25) Group work relies on people coming together and being prepared and willing to share.

Growing
Groups need to work together in order to identify their strengths based on their expertise and experiences. Naturally, activities in groups need to be formative and developmental in purpose. Thus, this will allow members to build both their strengths and address their weaknesses.

Creativity
Creativity is a value that needs to be nurtured. Whilst tasks need to be addressed and deadlines honoured, it is important to create opportunities for groups to organise think tanks that allow for the creative spark of members to emerge.

Philanthropy
Another virtue which many of us may not be prepared to express, let alone cultivate, is that of philanthropy. Group work sometimes requires people to make personal needs and wishes subordinate to the goal of the group. Ownership of this philanthropy should rest firmly with the individuals who choose to make sacrifices, and where their philanthropy is recognised and even celebrated by people around them.

Responsibility
Record keeping is essential. In any collaboration, there needs to be an output to look back upon. This can take the forms of note taking which helps to reflect the development/progress of the work of the group. It also helps members to be able to go back on points raised, on decisions taken.

Deadlines
Working in groups, whilst depending on people, needs to be task based. Therefore, deadlines need to be set and respected by one and all. The principle "you can let yourself down, but it is not OK to let the group down" underpins successful group work. Do we respect deadlines? Do we work towards deadlines? How does this affect our working styles?

Dysfunctional groups often unwittingly bar the door to change, whether pursued in the guise of strategic planning, reengineering or cultural transformation. They handle the inevitable conflicts badly (or not at all), conduct themselves according to unwritten rules that limit their effectiveness, and waste time in "violent agreement". Members bludgeon one another over differences in mindset and style. They tacitly consent not to learn from their collective experience for the sake of keeping the peace. Alternately, everyone speaks his/her mind but no one ever changes anything.

The choice is ours. We either work towards developing groups that are affective, humane and based on values, or ones that are artificially contrived but will not withstand the test of time.

References

Barth, R. (1999) *The teacher leader*. Providence, RI: The Rhode Island Foundation.

Heller, R. (1998) *Managing Teams*. London, Dorling Kindersley.

Sagor, R. (1995) Overcoming the one-solution syndrome, *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 52, No.7, pp.24-27.

Sherrill, J. (1999) Preparing teachers for leadership roles in the 21st century, *Theory Into Practice*, Vol. 38, No.1, pp. 56-61.

West, N. (1995) *Middle Management in the Primary School*. London, David Fulton Publishers.

Further reading

Lambert, L. (2005) Leadership for Lasting Reform, *Educational Leadership,* Vol. 62, No.5, pp.62-65.

Berry, B., Johnson, D. & Montgomery, D. (2005) The Power of Teacher Leadership, *Educational Leadership,* Vol. 62, No.5, pp.56-60.

Bezzina, C. (1994) *The Effective Management of Groups*. Malta, Agius & Agius Ltd.

Civil, J. (1997) *Managing People Effectively*, London, Ward Lock.

Gabriel, J.G. (2005) *How To Thrive as a Teacher Leader*. Alexandira, VI, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Patterson, J. & Patterson, J. (2004) Sharing the Lead, Educational Leadership, Vol.61, No.7, pp.74-78.

CHAPTER NINE

The Social Side of Schooling: *nurturing human relationships*

Schools are communities of learning, where learning goes beyond academic work, and includes a clear focus on communication, collaboration and caring.

As every educator and student knows, schools are more than mere institutions of academic learning. They are social systems, and now, more than ever before, very complex ones. The human relations dimension among students and educators plays a crucial role in school life as much as the curriculum does, and indeed has a powerful effect on the learning and teaching that takes place. It is comforting to find that in educational documents and policies in many countries speak of schools as learning communities which brings all stakeholders together in developing and enhancing the learning programme. The key question is how this can be nurtured at the school site.

At schools that are socially "healthy" both educators and students feel a sense of belonging. They work hard to forge friendships with their peers and colleagues and maintain respectful relationships. A sense of community reigns. At schools where the social dynamics are unhealthy, however, students fight and harass one another, show disrespect for teachers and feel isolated or alienated from the school community. In such schools teachers find it hard to work in a collaborative style, tend to prefer working in isolation and do not work towards creating a warm climate which is conducive to establish clear goals and a sense of mission. Absenteeism is also high in such institutions – effecting teachers and students alike. Most schools, of course, are a mixture of both.

Few would disagree that the social side of schooling has a profound effect on the academic side. A student who feels angry or ostracized is unlikely to give undivided attention to schoolwork. Teachers who do not relate well to young people are unlikely to motivate students to give of their best. Schools that are threatening places inhibit both teachers and students from living up to their potential. But when the social dynamics in a school are positive, teaching and learning can, and has been seen to thrive.

Certainly, the social side of schooling can bring students and teachers alike the greatest joys – lifelong friendships, cherished experiences, happy memories – or the greatest angst. For educators, paying attention to the social side of schooling can mean the difference between a fulfilling job and a psychologically battering one. This chapter explores what educators can do to make the social climate at their schools healthy and supportive of all. It also attempts to highlight areas that need specific attention in the years ahead of us.

Communication, collaboration and caring

In a school with a strong sense of community, students are more likely to feel valued and less likely to fall through the cracks. Students know that their opinions, values, cultures and backgrounds are respected and that they contribute to the school as a

whole. In this kind of environment, students recognise not only their own importance but also that of everyone else in the school.

So how can educators create a sense of community? This is an extremely important question in a context where teaching has been very much practised in isolation, where schools are not really centres of professional inquiry and reflective practice. Sergiovanni explains what the true meaning of community is. Communities are "collections of individuals who are bundled together by natural will and who are together bound to a set of shared ideas and ideals. This bounding and binding is tight enough to transform them from a collection of 'I's' to a collective 'we'" (Sergiovanni, 1996, p.48). When we apply the concept of community to schools the focus shifts from school structure to school culture, from ways of organising the school to ways of being, from stone and mortar to ideals and relationships.

Fullan (1998) argues that school reform fails because the focus tends to remain on restructuring schools, that is, changing the ways schools are organised to improve teaching and learning. Hoping to find the right answer, schools tend to concentrate their energies on adopting new texts, the latest schemes, leaving staff exhausted by change and often still facing the original problems. Fullan advises us to look instead to the reculturing process, changing the norms, values, and relationships in our schools, as a more expedient way to improve teaching and learning. He, like other authors and researchers, believe that nurturing a more collaborative, collegial work ethic among teachers will positively affect student outcomes.

Schools can start by identifying and involving all those who have a stake in the school's success. The next step is to study the issue of culture and what it means for a school community. Regardless of what heritage or culture one brings to the school this should be respected. This attitude is an important factor in generating the outside community's support for the school. Because community members know that their diverse cultures are respected and supported, they are likely to respond in kind. It is important for the students, above all, to see how diversity within the community can come together and form a positive school environment. And, for students and community members to see and understand the benefits of their diversity, they need to establish and maintain open lines of communication.

Once communication is established, strong relationships can be built that benefit everyone involved. It is important that schools communicate with their communities about their needs and their needs as educators, and engage in some dialogue in order to better serve the students. Good communication fosters mutual understanding. All stakeholders need to start using the same language and to talk about the same issues. This will help to bring people together and to create that sense of togetherness.

Another key factor in community building is equity. The critical definition of partnership is that of equal relationship – an equal of giving and taking. This equality needs to extend to all members of the school community. To establish a community within a school requires taking all the assets of the students, the parents, and the staff, and blending them together, so that in partnership, we are working together for a common vision, for a common goal.

References

Fullan, M. (1998) Breaking the bonds of dependency, *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 55, No.7, pp.4-9.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1996) *Leadership for the Schoolhouse*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

CHAPTER TEN

Working *with* People and *for* People

We all know our strengths and weaknesses and how good we are at our job. However, how good are we at getting on with everyone in the office, whether as employers or employees? This chapter presents some points for reflection … and action at the personal and collective level.

All organisations are dependant on their people – their skills, knowledge, aptitude, experience, motivation and morale. To manage a school or even a year group or department successfully you must be as efficient as possible, whilst also getting your staff to realise their full potential.

This underlines the importance of people in that there is both a personal and organisational obligation to create the appropriate climate for personal and professional growth to take place. Such an obligation is indeed a moral one. At the same time we have to appreciate the fact that the growing demands that such working relationships call for can increase the levels of stress that we experience at work.

This chapter presents some points that can help the individual to address his/her personal development. The focus is on creating a better orientation and attitude toward work and more so relationships. Three dimensions will be explored: the teacher per se, teachers as colleagues, and school leader – teacher relationships.

The Teacher

1. Cope with criticism

Learning to cope with criticism is extremely important. Given the fact that we have established traditions based on egocentrism, individualism and isolation, we tend to be extremely critical towards those who have different opinions/views than ours. We tend to take such comments personally and thus objectivity is marred.

Moving towards systems which aim to encourage collaboration amongst all employees means that we need to work at overcoming such an attitude. First and foremost we need to learn to distinguish between constructive comments and negative remarks. Criticism from someone who has taken time to assess our work can be valuable, whereas an ill-tempered tirade is best ignored. As individuals we need to develop a filter to reject irrational criticism. We also need to create opportunities for people to share ideas within a constructive setting. Thus people learn to appreciate differences, different opinions, and address concerns which they usually find too risky to tackle.

2. Develop new skills

One important way to stimulate staff to perform well is to offer a programme of continuing professional development (CPD). Such opportunities would help to stimulate and challenge members to achieve more in and through their work.

There are three requirements for a successful implementation of CPD. The working set-up (e.g. a Year group or a department in a school) must expose new improvement opportunities, every teacher should be inspired to want overall improvement, and teachers should be trained in practical problem solving techniques enabling them to make the necessary improvement(s).

3. Be a change agent

Many people resist change, whether it is a new procedure being introduced to order office stationery, be it to understand new curriculum demands, or new assessment procedures. It is important not to fight change. Being able to go with it is the key to personal fulfilment. Change does not only come from outside pressures. What is important is to create an environment where staff can forward ideas which challenge existing practices. This is one way of keeping teachers' passion for teaching alive. Create opportunities which will help to cultivate their curiosity. In this way you make people feel that their own roles are strategically important for change or the change process to succeed.

4. Be prepared

It is always important to have a second strategy in mind should your original plan of action be thwarted. An educator who offers solutions rather than problems will be viewed as enthusiastic and committed. It goes to show that you are not avoiding responsibility when the going gets tough. Many just like to keep their 'action' focused on moaning and groaning. This is indeed far from a healthy habit!

5. Be loyal

Loyalty is very important. It is essential to express loyalty to your superiors, your colleagues. You can express your support by giving feedback – positive and negative, but do word criticism carefully. Also, recognise that your superiors are human and not above being asked about their weekend!

6. Admit overload

If you find yourself regularly working through lunch and late into the evening, yet still not keeping up, than something may be wrong. You may have taken on far too many responsibilities than you can possibly handle. Do not be afraid to ask for help. Go to your superior as soon as you realise that there is a problem. What is important is that you do not just whinge. Make sure that you spell out your situation. Often we tend to wish to oblige, or else we just do not know how to say no. Do not forget that work and more work is often given to those, albeit few members, who deliver. You may be one of them!

Teacher – Teacher Relationships

1. Have a positive outlook

Positivity is catching, while being negative will isolate. People do not mind the odd moan, but after a while, it gets depressing. A positive approach can be learned. So, when you are stressed recall a positive experience and remember how you felt.

2. Honour deadlines

If you are running late with an assignment, it is likely that others will be affected. Do let your colleagues know. Give them a chance to work around you or help. It is important that you do not generate resentment by letting others down.

3. Be slow to criticise

Personnel experts point out that those who gripe constantly are often the ones who cannot do their jobs properly. Serial criticism robs the victim of initiative and makes them fearful.

4. Admit when you are wrong

Blaming others for your blunders will not go down well with your colleagues. You need not rush to accept blame every time something goes wrong. However, honesty will be appreciated. On the whole, people will be more impressed with your candour than upset about your mistake.

5. Accept that you will never be perfect

Perfectionists can be difficult to work with. They never finish what they are doing. It is usually about control. Perfectionists tend to have trouble letting go of anything. They need to learn to prioritise their workload.

6. Do not be self-centred

The work culture promoted today is very much a team-based affair. You will be more respected if you show interest in your colleagues rather than just focusing on 'your' work and what 'you' do for the school community. Schools want team players, people who interact well and are mutually supportive, both at the professional and personal level.

The Good School Leader

1. Promote values

Underlying a school's goals is a choice of a specific set of prioritised values. The school leader of the 21st century will be one who creates a culture or a value system centred round principles (Covey, 1992).

The principles that school leaders will need to uphold are based on personal integrity, credibility and trusting relationships (Kouzez and Posner, 1991), and a commitment to ethical and moral values such as compassion, humility and service (Manz, 1998). It is through the authentic witness of such qualities that school structures, processes and practices will be built, nurtured and sustained. According to research, there are ten personal qualities that are the most admired characteristics of respected organisational leaders. These qualities are less to do with making the right or wrong decisions and more to do with integrity and straightforward behaviour (Heller, 1999, p.30). These qualities are:

- Competence
- Supportiveness
- Fair-mindedness
- Vision
- Directness
- Broad-mindedness
- Courage
- Intelligence
- Charisma
- Honesty

2. Developing people

Helping individuals to achieve their potential is in the interests of the person and the organisation. As a school leader guide others in the achievement of goals. Be there to give advice, to support, to mentor and also to tell them what they are doing right or wrong, assess them, counsel them. Linked to this is the importance of teaching by example. Teach by showing not by giving people orders.

3. Motivating people

Moving from individualism, isolation and privatism of teaching to professional community means that we need to work with and alongside teachers functioning in different and diverse roles. The fundamental principle is that teachers have a central role to play in school improvement. For this to take place motivation is vital. Involve teachers in issues that are central to their role; encourage them to take part in planning and different forms of decision making. Use your own commitment to change as an example for others.

Motivating Factors

Factor	Action
Self-Fulfilment	Enable teachers to take on challenges.
Recognition	Tell teachers how well they are doing.
Peer Respect	Celebrate the individual's success publicly.
Expertise	Encourage development of special knowledge.
Competence	Provide training to develop key skills.
Achievement	Agree on targets that are achievable.
Autonomy	Allow employees to plan and design own work.
Self-Confidence	Allow teachers to plan and design their own work.
Self- Respect	Increase the individual's regard for self.
Membership	Ensure teachers feel a sense of 'belonging' through involvement in social activities.

4. Encourage teamwork

It may be tempting to bark orders, and many do. It seems much easier to execute! However, research reveals that the happiest and most efficient workplaces are those where bosses and staff work together to solve problems. Managers who enable staff to take responsibility get better results. In an 'empowered' school everyone's contribution to performance improvement is encouraged and valued. Empowerment is a structuring principle and not just another buzz word.

5. Recognise success

Teachers respond better to praise than to criticism. And we all need a lot of it, praise that is. To improve a person's performance you need to praise them more than you criticise them. This does not mean that you are not critical. However, what is important is that the climate needs to be there for it to be effective.

6. Be consistent

The consummate professional never unnerves staff by being moody. It is not fair on the rest of the staff if you are constantly up and down. Try to deal with issues in a cool, balanced and rational manner.

7. Learn to listen

Listening well means going beyond what is said by asking questions. This implies active listening. Those who do not listen come across as uncaring and make staff less communicative. Listening benefits both you and your staff, argues Heller (1999, p.10). You gain a greater insight into people and potentially receive useful ideas about how your school can be improved, when staff feel their views are being heard and will in the end respond more openly to your ideas.

8. Step out of the spotlight

Who does not like being in the spotlight – especially the leader!! You may be tempted to take the credit for your teachers' work, but that is bad practice. A manager's duty is to motivate staff in order to improve their performance. Giving credit when it is due and to whom it is due is a very important part of this.
Let us not forget the words of Lao-Tse,

> "As for the best leaders, the people barely notice their existence. The next best, the people honour and praise. The next, the people fear; and the next, the people hate and despise … When the work of the best leaders is done, the people say 'We did it ourselves' "

9. Planning for change

Another word for change is learning, and the key to success is to ensure, as far as possible, that learning is equal to, or greater than, the requirements of change. Figure 5 indicates the broad stages which constitute the change cycle. In planning change the first steps are those of thinking through the rationale for change:

- Identifying unmet needs
- Identifying the need for change
- Deciding on what form the change might take
- Developing a clear image of what the change will look like when it has been implemented
- Identifying what will be the benefits of the change and the main beneficiaries
- Gathering information on the proposed change
- Establishing a rationale which underpins the proposed change
- Identifying the resources which will be required to bring about the planned change
- Identifying individuals who are likely to resist change and those who are ready to support it. Try to minimize the resistance and maximize the forces for change

- Identifying membership of the group which will manage the change process and identifying key roles
- Identifying what will count as evidence of successful implementation
- Set up a team to monitor developments as implementation is taking plan
- Conduct formative evaluation at periodical intervals and report progress

(adapted from West, 1995, pp.87-88)

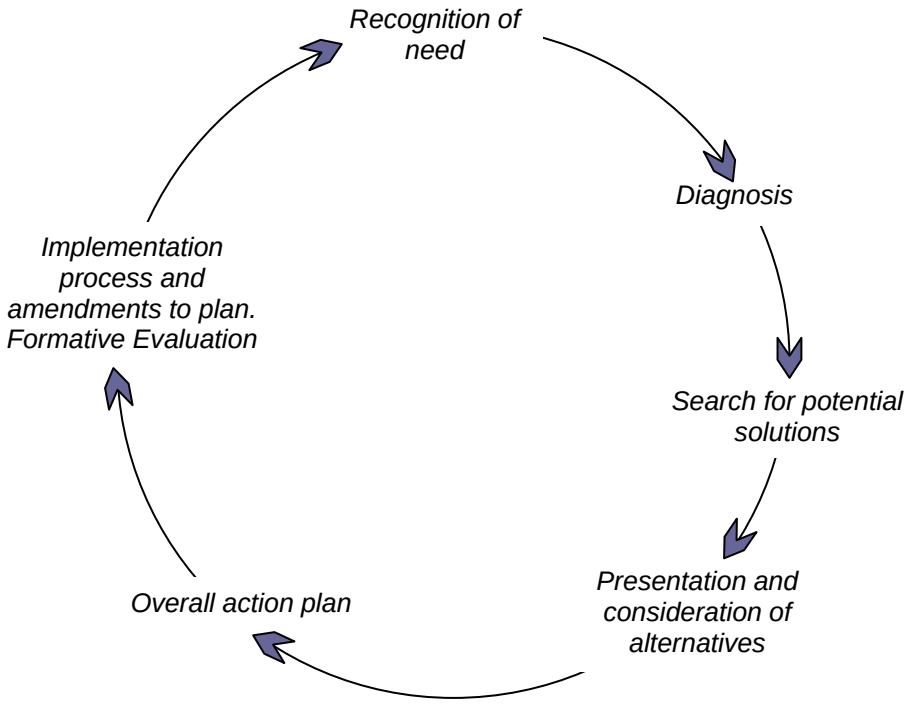

Figure 5: Stages in the change process

As you think through such points, and others you may raise, it is important to involve others in the exercise. The challenge lies in the implementation process. Fullan (1991) argues about the importance of generating shared meaning in relation to the *what* of change and the *how* of change. As Heller (1998) points out "change … can be only as good as its execution" (p.42).Change requires not only strong leadership but requires inspired, dedicated and inspiring followers. This is where key 'change agents' become imperative to the implementation as they help to pass on the right vibes to others even when difficulties or further changes are required.

References

Bartol, K.M. & Martin, D.C. (1994) *Management.* 2nd ed., New York, McGraw-Hill.

Covey, S. (1992) *Principle-Centred Leadership.* New York, Simon & Schuster.

Fullan, M. (1991) *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. London, Cassell.

Heller, R. (1998) *Managing Change*. London, Dorling Kindersley.

Heller, R. (1999) *Managing People*. London, Dorling Kindersley.

Kouzez, J.M. & Posner, B.Z. (1991) *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It.* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Manz, C.C. (1998) *The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus: Practical Lessons for Today.* San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler Publisher.

West, N. (1995) *Middle Management in the Primary School*. London, David Fulton Publishers.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Becoming a Successful School Leader

There are various knowledge and skills domains that have, over the years, been identified for successful school management. This chapter explores ten of these.

AS we work towards developing schools into vital places of learning, into sites of professional inquiry and reflective practice, it is becoming obvious that heads of school need to learn many an art including those of leadership, communication, caring and collaboration. It is becoming quite obvious to heads that there is a lot of truth in the old saying, *"It is not what you say as much as how you say it."* Practical and persuasive presentation skills are essential to us if we are to effectively communicate our school's vision and mission. The best idea in the world will never get anywhere if it is not properly "sold" to the right people. Some of our school heads are learning this the hard way.

Let us explore some of the domains that heads as leaders need to address and master.

Leadership
A lot is said and written about this area. Thus, a couple of questions will suffice. Are you a risk taker? Are you willing to take up the challenge, which such a style calls for? Do you set a benchmark of electricity and excitement which others are prepared to emulate?

Oral and non-verbal Communication
Leaders must learn to "work the crowd" both verbally and non-verbally to gain ground for our issues. Facts, proper documentation, and fluent communication skills make a formidable combination.

Planning and Implementation
Every football team that ever stepped on a field has had a game plan. Everyone sets out to win. Yet, by the end of the game there is usually one winner. Coaches will tell you the difference in winning is in how well the game plan is implemented. As educators, our programmes and ideas will be accepted more readily if we not only plan well but also remain focused on implementation.

Interpersonal Sensitivity
Do you come across as warm and caring, affable, approachable and professional? Are you genuinely concerned about students, teachers, and parents alike? Does the school project real human values in its day to day living? Relating to the deep personal values of community members is a powerful tool when used tastefully, and not in a maudlin manner by educators. Remember, *"No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care."*

Motivation of Others
Heads need to motivate and persuade others to believe in their ideas and them. We will never do this by being dull and boring, harping on low test results, bemoaning the

poor state of society, and continuously whining for this, that and the other. We must concentrate on what we can do to merge the educationally sound with the not so sound, and come up with solutions our communities will buy into.

We are never going to get anywhere until we get excited about our vision of the way things can be, then share that excitement with our communities. We must persuade others of our vision before we implement it.

Excitement is contagious. We need to truly believe in what we are doing and express this in exciting and humane ways.

Problem Analysis
Problem analysis is an important component behind strategic planning. This involves hard work, which cannot be accomplished alone but must involve others. As a head you need not only be aware of things around you but also be receptive to how others feel and see things. As you work to address current and future needs determine the central issues, involve others, and plan strategies to address them and then work on implementation.

Organisational Oversight
Organisational oversight is very much tied to problem analysis. Analysts and strategists always look at the big picture of the issues they are called to address, they determine their strengths and weaknesses and how best to tackle them.

As school leaders it is important that we do the same kind of "big picture" thinking. Instead of chasing programme after programme, trend after trend, it is important to keep focused on the overall, collaboratively developed goals of the school community. That is not to say that you still will not have to make tough and unpopular decisions. The important thing is to study, analyze, collaborate, and reflect before making the decisions. These together constitute organisational oversight.

Information Collection
Computer programmers wisecrack, "Garbage in, garbage out", signifying the importance of having the right data to get the right output. Too often in education we jump on the newest bandwagon or follow the latest trend without being careful to make sure it is based on sound research and pedagogical principles. Having the right information to make logical decisions is essential to programme and personnel planning and evaluation. Without it, "Garbage in, garbage out."

Resource Allocation
Just as having the right information is essential, so is its proper use. As educators we are constantly lamenting the lack of resources without determining how we can maximize the use of what we have. Educators should conduct evaluative studies in schools, districts and communities to find out exactly what services are needed and where they are provided, address any duplication, and target special needs. Often more than one entity is competing for limited external and internal funding. We should develop collaborative processes to cultivate, share, maintain, and grow additional resources. Since huge amounts of additional tax money are highly unlikely in these budget-shrinking days, creative use of limited resources is essential.

Public Relations

Public relations savvy is vital to the success of school heads. Sooner or later everyone is confronted with unforeseeable problems or unfriendly audiences. How you handle the situation is as important as what you say. How we carry ourselves at all times affects the public perception of our schools. We must set the stage, and invite others to the dance. If they do not come, we must work collaboratively with others to figure out ways to entice them. Our public is our success! Our students are what this is all about!

Concluding remarks

Today's heads, as leaders, need to utilise these domains and more. On the one hand, heads have to utilise the functional domains through leadership, information collection, problem analysis, organisational oversight and implementation. Heads need to be particularly strong in interpersonal areas such as motivating others, interpersonal sensitivity, and oral and nonverbal expression. Heads will also need to score high in public relations. They will need to integrate philosophical and cultural values, legal and regulatory applications, and policy and political influences, which in the end, are important in the running of institutions.

These 'ten tips' encourage heads of school to come down from the podium both literally and figuratively. Get involved in the grassroots happenings in your school and community, and then tie them to school goals and objectives. Then stand and deliver in more ways than one! As futurist John Hoyle is fond of saying, *"You can't light a fire with a wet match."*

CHAPTER TWELVE

Promoting Professional Development

The professional development of teachers needs to be radically reviewed to embrace the role of induction. It is argued that this stage in a teacher's development can lead to marked improvements at the personal level and also at the professional level for all teachers.

Change has become part and parcel of school life. However, people face such changes with different feelings. Some are excited, and are putting in a lot of effort to create systems which will help them improve their understanding of teaching and learning and hence improve the quality of education being provided. Others, however, are not so willing to embark on initiatives that call them to challenge the status quo, the inertia that has consumed the profession. Others prefer sitting on the fence waiting to see how things unfold ~ mostly adopting a non-commital approach.

Crudely, these three scenarios represent three types of educators that characterize our systems - types that can be described as **initiators**, **conformists** and **procrastinators** respectively. Maybe the readers could identify other existing types - types that can promote quality improvement, types that could not care less as to what happens around them, and others who are deeply concerned that the powers that be are 'stirring trouble' in their search to improve the education system.

The intention of this chapter is to present a possible scenario which shows how schools could aim to improve their understanding of teaching and learning by creating an innovative system that combine **collaborative accountability** and **ongoing professional development**. Most education authorities are encouraging a system that promotes school development planning, which is a fundamental component of school based development, we can see this as an initiative which promotes accountability for and reflective inquiry about teaching and learning.

A school based development culture encourages school members to commit themselves to enhance pupils' learning. In order to do this, teachers need to increase their understanding of teaching and learning and one of the best ways of doing this is through collaborative inquiry with other professionals.

Such a climate needs time to be nurtured. A collaborative climate, based on a clear vision and identified goals, requires a lot of hard work, commitment, perseverance, and patience. The following four characteristics should provide a lot of food for thought as schools embark on school based initiatives:

- collective goals (whole school, grade/departmental and individual) driven by the needs of learners and the school
- collegial dialogue about teaching and learning
- self- and team-directed appraisal, and
- high, mutually determined performance expectations for all staff members - management and teachers.

For such characteristics to be introduced, nurtured and sustained, structures and systems need to be in place to help members go through varied interactions which encourage professional growth. The proposal that is put forward is one that encourages the creation of an interdependent system for supervision, evaluation and professional development, one which is **compatible** with the interconnected nature of learning itself.

Various national reports (e.g. Ross & Hutchings, 2003) around the world encourage teacher training institutions and education authorities to seriously address and institutionalise the **induction phase of beginning teachers**. Upon graduation student-teachers are absorbed by schools, and how they settle in as classroom/subject teachers very much depends on the way the schools are managed. Whilst some beginning teachers are supported, others are left very much on their own. There may be an alternative route (see Bezzina, Bezzina & Stanyer, 2004).

New teachers need all the support they can get in order to settle down not only as classroom/subject teachers but also as members of a school. This entails establishing a good rapport with teaching staff and management personnel. The following are proposals which help put into perspective the type of developments that need to be nurtured in our schools.

Beginning teachers

During the initial years new teachers should receive support from an experienced teacher(s) and a member of the School Management Team through intensive instructional supervision and mentoring. Responsibility for supervision rests primarily with a senior member of staff who is released part-time to fulfil this role. This role can be best described as that of instructional facilitator and 'critical friend'. Such a person could also be functioning as a mentor to student-teachers who are attached to schools during their field placement. Mentors need to possess not only the appropriate knowledge, but the skills and attitudes required for such a delicate role. This experienced teacher (whatever title he/she is given), together with the new teacher and the member of the School Management Team have to design a plan for improving the new teacher's practice and help him/her settle in the school environment. This helps create a climate based on open and sincere dialogue which helps the new teacher fulfil the stated goals/expectations. A teacher’s profile can be developed which will help the individual teacher and management keep track of needs, developments, etc., as the teacher’s career unfolds.

This approach can last between one to two scholastic years. Once this phase is over the 'new' teacher enters a second phase. Here the individual teacher starts working within a collegial support team which could easily be a subject department within a secondary school or grade teams at primary level. Here the individual still receives continuing collaborative supervision and feedback on teaching but is also in a position to have an influence on others through his/her own direct contributions during the discussion sessions. During this phase each member of the group can prepare what has been described as an individual Plan of Authentic Inquiry. Here each teacher work round a similar set of questions (see Figure 6) which aim to improve the personal and collective development of the group.

Professional development days (PDd)

Key questions	Focal points
How can PDd be made to link both individual and institutional needs and aspirations?	Plan professional development
How can schools gain the most effective professional development on these days?	Rationale and driving force behind professional development
What is the rationale behind these days?	School-based structures
Are we happy with the way these sessions are tackled? How can they be improved?	Identify the 'right' INSET; Evaluate courses
Are they linked with the school's development plan?	Financial skills to budget
How can schools be sure that PDd are producing gains for pupils and staff?	Link training to individual and group needs; Increased accountability for PD policy; Explore the effects of PD on teaching and learning.

Figure 6: Plan for Authentic Inquiry

1. What are the areas of the teaching and learning process that I need to develop?
2. How will I go about doing this?
3. How will students benefit from my learning experiences?
4. How will I show evidence of my work?
5. When will I share it with my colleagues?
6. How will I share it?
7. How will I obtain feedback from my colleagues, and how will I use the feedback?
8. How will my ideas, experiences and the work I'm doing influence the practice and teaching and learning of others?
9. What evidence will I gather from students to show the impact of my inquiry?

Through such an engagement one can focus on three important areas of development. First, teachers are supported and held accountable for high performance. Second, the focus is not only at the individual level – that is the teacher working in isolation - but working with others. Hence, the concept of the extended professional takes on added significance as the focus is on teams. Third, academic freedom is coupled with explicit expectations for increasing student learning and improving instructional practice.

”The school is not now a learning organization. Irregular waves of change, episodic projects, fragmentation of effort, and grinding overload is the lot of most schools. The vast majority of change efforts are misconceived because they fail to understand and harness the combined forces of moral purpose and skilled change agentry”. **Michael Fullan**

Indeed a challenge, but some of this is certainly happening already in many schools. Or, at least, some of the ingredients to make this happen are there.

Now, it all depends whether we want to make up a recipe which is acceptable at a 5-star or a 2-star hotel. That choice will always remain our own. No one can take away that commitment which every educator is being called to take. In order for such development to take place we need to turn our schools into learning organizations. No easy task.

Yes, we are definitely calling for some major developments which challenge one and all, but the major changes need to take place at the personal level. The Pandora's Box we have just opened challenges the individual to see himself/herself as a learner. But then the question beckons? Are we willing to see ourselves as learners, hence as people who are committed to self-development? The learner is one who takes an active, constructive, and directive stance to life rather than being a passive recipient. This is the essence of learning to learn, hence a focus on: knowing self to know others, empowering self to empower others, and developing self to support others development.

Teachers need to come together and adopt a collegial and collaborative role rather than an advocacy role, to be open to one another, to create professional dialogue (as opposed to monologues) which cultivates mutual respect, tolerance, honesty and trust. Through a personal and collective commitment a culture where such standards and conditions are fostered can be created.

As a result, the question of accountability for success and failure becomes a central concern. An authentic inquiry approach will definitely help when developing such plans. Depending on the scope and complexity of the area of study, teachers may need from one to three-year cycles of collaborative inquiry. The suggestion, for those who wish to embark on such an initiative, is to focus on year plans, with a possible rolling-over to a second year. The reason for such argument is the *need that individuals have to feel and experience success and see the fruition of their endeavours*.

Through periodic review - individually and collectively done - teachers will have opportunities to revise their initial plans. Such work involves at least three important mechanisms ~ dialogue, action research, and authentic assessment of practice.

Some teachers may view this as another add-on to the numerous tasks that are expected of them. But, as soon as we start experiencing the benefits of authentic inquiry we come to realise and appreciate in the process that it is not an event we are dealing with but a habit of mind. Good, effective teachers are constantly doing this, more often than not at a personal level. Here, authentic inquiry challenges the individual to first adopt a more structured approach to reviewing their own ways of teaching. Second, it encourages collective inquiry with colleagues who through their

conversations influence each other's practice. As a result, real professional growth takes place.

Concluding remarks

Promoting professional development at the school-site is indeed a challenging experience for all those committed to their profession. This statement in itself says a lot. Each and every educator needs to see how far he/she is committed and what form such commitment takes. Having the opportunities to grow professionally allow us to challenge the isolation, the frustration, the insularity, that at times engulfs the teaching profession. Such opportunities encourage us to let down our defences and to engage in dialogue that can lead to far-reaching results. Such a commitment helps to break down barriers and promotes teamwork. It emphasizes professional support and growth. And, most important, it helps us to focus on enhancing the learning opportunities and performance of our students which is our bottom line.

Further reading

The following articles are just a sample of the literature available on the subject of teacher induction.

Bell, M. (2004) Building schools' capacity for effective CPD: what works? *Professional Development Today*, Vol.7, No.3, pp.45-47.

Bezzina, C. (2002) Rethinking Teachers' Professional Development in Malta: agenda for the twenty-first century, *Journal of In-Service Education*, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 57-75.

Bezzina, C., Bezzina, N. & Stanyer, R. (2004) Exploring beginningg teachers' perceptions of their preparation and professional development in Malta, *Mediterranean Journal of Educatiuonal Studies*, Vol. 9, No.2, pp.39-70.

Bezzina, C. & Camilleri, A. (2001) The Professional Development of Teachers in Malta, *European Journal of Education*, Vol. 14, No.2, pp. 157-170.

Coolahan, J. (2002) Teacher Education and the Teaching Career in an Era of Lifelong Learning. OECD Education Working Papers. OECD, December.

Cros, F. & Obin, JP. (2003) Attracting, Developing and retaining Effective Teachers: Country Background Report for France, OECD, April.

Earley, P. (2001a) Teachers as learners and researchers, *Professional Development Today*, Vol.4, No.2, pp.3-6.

Earley, P. (2001b) Professional Development – Time for change, *Professional Development Today*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 3-20.

Earley, P. & Handscomb, G. (2001) A strategy for professional development, *Professional Development Today*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 9-20.

Grudnoff, L. & Tuck, B., (2001) "The Effectiveness of Initial Teacher Training Programmes in New Zealand: Perspectives of Beginning teachers and their Supervisors"**.** Paper presented at the ECER conference, Lille, France, 5-8 September.

Handscomb, G. (2000) Professional Development in the Spotlight. *Professional Development Today*, Vol. 3, No.3, pp. 3-7.

Handscomb, G. & MacBeath, J. (2004) Professional development through teacher enquiry. *Professional Development Today*, Vol. 7, No.2, pp.12.

Holmesland, I. & Hostmark Tarrou, A. (2001) Institutionalising Research in Teacher Education: the creation of a research centre as a means of lifelong learning for teacher educators. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 24, No.1, pp. 67-76.

Lieberman, A. (1995) Practices that Support Teacher Development: Transforming Conceptions of Teacher Learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol.76, No.8, pp.591-596.

Lieberman, A. & Grolnick, M. (1997) Networks, Reform, and the Professional Development of Teachers, in A. Hargreaves (ed.) *Rethinking Educational Change with Heart and Mind*, Chapter 10, pp.192-215, Alexandria, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

McMahon, A. (1998) What teachers think of professional development. *Professional Development Today*, Vol. 2, No.1, pp. 69-79.

Moreira, J. M. (1996) Approaches to Teacher Professional Development: a critical appraisal. *European Journal of Teacher Education*. Vol. 19, pp. 47-63.

Ross, A. & Hutchings, M. (2003) Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. OECD Country Background Report, OECD, March.

Salitra, K. (2003) Education of Teachers for Polish Schools at the Beginning of the Twenty-first Century, *European Journal of Teacher Education,* Vol. 26, No.1, pp. 101-108.

San, M. M. (1999) Japanese Beginning Teachers' Perceptions of Their Preparation and Professional Development**.** *Journal of Education for Teaching,* Vol. 25, No. 1, pp.17 –29.

Totterdell, M. Heilbronn, R. Bubb, S. & Jones, C. (2002) Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Statutory Arrangements for the Induction of Newly Qualified Teachers (DfES Research Report 338), The Stationery Office, London.

Waters, M. (1998) Personal Development for teachers – part 1. *Professional Development Today,* Vol. 1, No.3, pp. 29-37.

Waters, M. (1998) Personal Development for teachers – part 2. *Professional Development Today,* Vol.1, No.3, pp. 29-36.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Professional Development in Schools: The Case Study Approach

This chapter presents an approach which supports in-house professional development. It is argued that when teachers write their own stories and share them with colleagues it can lead to a better understanding of practical concerns.

EDUCATIONAL systems that are devolving responsibilities to the school site, which encourage school development planning and the creation of school-based policies, are finally acknowledging the central role of the school and its members to improve student achievement and attainment. Schools need to be restructured so that administrators and teachers act as facilitators of their own renewal and growth (Ackerman *et al.*, 1996). Schools can thus develop into sites where professional enquiry and critical thinking can take place (Bezzina, 1997).

This chapter presents one method which has been found extremely useful in encouraging educators to take responsibility for their own professional development in a collaborative environment. This method is the **case story** approach. It is an approach that blends aspects of the conventional case study method with the tradition, artistry and imagination of story telling.

The premise underlying this proposal is that the story form is a sense-making tool for educators. Writing their own stories and sharing them with others in a collegial environment can help teachers better understand and share their concerns of every day life. It is within this swampy environment, as Donald Schon (1987) coined it, that teachers need to learn not only how to practice their profession – for indeed teaching is first and foremost a practical profession - but also how to reflect on their profession, for teaching is also a reflective activity.

Learning how to link practice with reflection not only helps to generate what is known as craft-knowledge theories but also overcomes the theory practice divide that divides those who 'do it' (i.e. teachers as practitioners) and those who 'think, write and teach it' (i.e. all those who are remote from the school/class environment). This split has been aptly described by Berrill as "a tragedy for education" (1997, p.57) which needs to be seriously addressed.

Sharing case stories, it is here argued, can help to overcome the contempt that exists between theory and practice. As members of staff start discussing case stories they begin to think more critically and objectively rather than staff-centredly and defensively. Within a safe environment - and it is here being assumed that this climate is being generated by all those interested in professional development - all staff members are challenged and inspired to think more deeply about their practice and to investigate various way to solve their problems.

Let us now look briefly at how the case story approach can be used.

***W*riting, *L*istening and *R*eflecting**

The case story approach involves the following six steps:

Step 1: Warming up.

In the initial stages some members may be reluctant or find it difficult to put pen to paper. Within such a scenario it may be a good idea to divide members of staff into manageable groups. Give each group a case story as an example and ask them to read through it, spend around five minutes reflecting and jotting down points about issues that they felt important during the reading phase and the reflection phase. Then they can share their points/concerns with the other members of the group. Decide on a time limit and keep to it. In this way group members start to develop time management skills, and at the same time put forward ideas as clearly and in as crisp and concise a manner as is possible within a designated period of time. Within such an environment educators develop other extremely important skills so essential for the teaching profession - skills such as listening, sharing, trust, tolerance, and respect. Indeed no easy task given the environment most of us have been used to, one where teaching has been practiced in isolation breeding a self-centred approach to development.

Step 2: Focus on a school concern/personal concern.

In the initial stages encourage participants to focus on whole school concerns rather than on areas that concern them directly as classroom/subject teachers. In this context there is less risk involved and participants may find it easier to involve themselves.

Give participants around 30 minutes to write a one-page narrative about a real-life school concern - a critical event or incident which led to a decision which effected part or all of the school. Ask them to write about the experience in story fashion, using characters and dialogue if and where they deem fit. They can even give their piece of work a title.

The story should be sufficiently intriguing and thought provoking as to encourage participants to share and discuss their stories. In an environment where people are writing their 'individual' stories the reluctant writer can be inspired to contribute!

Step 3: Telling, listening and discussing.

Once the 30 minutes are up, divide the number of participants into small groups of three. In these small groups, members will take turns playing each of three roles: the writer of the case story, the facilitator and the time-keeper. Members are to rotate roles every 15/20 minutes. The writer starts off by reading his/her case study alone, then tells the story by elaborating on the text, identifies the salient points/concerns. The other two members are there to **listen** carefully without interrupting. Once the presentation is up the listeners can now pose a series of questions to seek clarification and thus better understand the case story. After that the participants can begin to frame and interpret the issues by discussing questions such as, 'What is the central concern here?' 'How can it be addressed?'

The aim here is not to find the best solution - usually there is not - but to create possible alternative decisions. Ideally, within this *context*, the story-teller does not participate in the discussion - except for clarification purposes - but observes how others interpret and react to the issue raised.

Step 4: Small group reflection.

The groups can now pair up to form groups of six. Ask them to focus on the following questions:

- What was it like listening to and discussing your colleagues' stories?
- What was it like writing, telling and hearing discussions of your own story?
- Do you have any observations and reactions to the work that you have just completed?

This stage allows members to share the benefits and shortcomings (if any) of such a method to professional development. Here, it is important for the group members to identify what can be described as learning outcomes, which is what insights have been gained in order for them to better understand the world of teaching. It encourages them to be honest with each other and as a result grow not only through the points and discussions created through the case stories but also through the **values** that are generated and celebrated.

Step 5: Whole group reflection.

Get all the groups together and ask each group to report one of the major topics that they explored. At this stage it is important for group members to share with the rest of the staff the **learning outcomes** that have come out from the group discussions (i.e. Step 4).

Step 6: Conclusions.

In the concluding session it is important to stress that people can improve professional practice by first understanding it. And, in order for us to make sense of our practice we need to create structured time for quality reflection to take place.

The benefits of the case story are not only in what participants learn, but also in the interpersonal and critical skills that each individual gains as they learn to reflect and think together. As Ackerman *et al*. point out "what they write about, how they tell it, and how they talk about it are complementary learning processes" (1996, p.23). The combination of the three - writing, telling and talking - leads to greater understanding.

The ideas that such a process helps to generate are practically infinite. The most obvious are that participants slowly grow to appreciate that they can take risks together as they try to make sense of their behaviours and actions. Through such scenarios new ideas are generated which can help individual teachers improve practice. The interesting thing about this process is that it allows members to review past decisions and rather than holding stubbornly to their original point of view they are willing to accept new insights including their own 'new' interpretations and conclusions.

This approach draws on the work carried out by Christensen (Christensen et al., 1991) on discussion, the work by Martin Buber on dialogue (1970, 1988), the work of Edwin Bridges (1992) on problem-based learning and David Bohm (1994) on thought as a system.

Concluding remarks

Writing, telling and sharing stories is another powerful tool which can help educators understand their world better. Such an approach will also help teachers challenge and break down the isolation they face and build a more collegial working environment. The process promotes an atmosphere built on sharing, trust, mutual respect and well-being. These are the ingredients that need to be nurtured as we strive to improve the quality of education provided in our schools.

References

Ackerman, R., et. al., (1996) Case Stories: Telling Tales about School. *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 53, No. 6, pp. 21-23.

Berrill, M. (1997) Training Professional Teachers in Schools. *Professional Development Today*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 53-58.

Bezzina, C. (1997) Restructuring schools in Malta: the road to improvement. *The International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 11, No. 5, pp. 194-202.

Bohm, D. (1994) *Thought as a System*. London, Routledge.

Bridges, E.M. (1992) *Problem-Based Learning for Administrators*. Oregon, Clearinghouse on Educational Management.

Buber, M. (1970) *I am Thou*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Buber, M. (1988) *The Knowledge of Man: Selected Essays*. Atlanta Highlands, Humanities Press International, Inc.

Christensen, C.R., Garvin, D.S., and Sweet, A. [eds](1991) *Education for Judgement*: *The Artistry of Discussion Leadership*. Boston, Harvard Business School.

Schon, D. (1987) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Promoting Reflective Dialogue through Video Case Studies

Teaching as a profession requires serious thought about our daily practices. Creating reflection sessions based on video case studies can be a learning experience at any stage in a teacher's career.

Often, field practice involved leading and attending micro teaching sessions.[1] These sessions used to allow small groups of student-teachers to focus (hence the word micro) on particular aspects of teaching, discuss it with a university tutor and other student-teachers. We did consider those sessions to be extremely worthwhile as it allowed us to reflect on issues directly related to the teaching and learning situations we were involved in. In some situations we even filmed certain sessions which we then discussed. These video case studies offered us a number of opportunities which included:

- the student-teacher to **concentrate** on a **particular aspect** or component of teaching.
- the student-teacher who has the opportunity to go through the video recording at his or her leisure to **reflect on the outcomes** of that particular session.
- the student-teacher to **discuss** and **analyze** the teaching and learning component(s) of the session.
- a scenario where a group of student-teachers and a lecturer can **share experiences and reflect together on good practice**.

The benefits of such an experience have not been superseded and in fact can and should play a central role in the teacher education programme. The importance behind promoting reflective dialogue is also well evidenced in the literature as in the writings of Donald Schon (1987) and Andrew Pollard (1997).

Schon talks about professional development experiences in which participants learn by doing, by joining others with similar learning goals and being guided by a skilled practitioner. The setting, as he described it, would be a **virtual world** representative of the world of practice, a place where learners engage in a **reflective practicum**. Through such practicums, students interact with one another and a skilled practitioner (e.g. classroom teacher whom we will call co-operating teacher; a mentor or a Faculty lecturer) who engages student-teachers in **reciprocal dialogue** stimulated by their experiences, observations and practice.

The work by Schon, amongst others, highlighting the importance of the teacher as a reflective practitioner, brought back fond memories of microteaching. Whilst it is obvious that the concept of the reflective practitioner is relevant at all stages of teacher development - preservice, induction and ongoing development - and hence is of benefit to the preservice, novice and experienced teacher, it is a concept that needs to be introduced and nurtured very much in the preservice stage. As teacher educators we are being inspired by such work and we want to create or rather recreate those

[1] The report on these activities derives exclusively from Christopher's experience.

opportunities where open dialogue and continuous learning is taking place for **all** those - be it student-teachers, faculty staff and school staff - involved in the teacher training programme.

The proposal being put forward here is to create and study the world of teaching through an approach that combines video technology and the case method of teaching.

Definitely it is not a matter of purely conducting video sessions of teachers teaching particular lessons, even though this requires a lot of skill. We need to fall on **valued research** which can give us direction and hence steer our course of action. Haberman's (1994) study which has defined characteristics of those teachers who tend to be successful with children, can offer us with an interesting and useful starting point.

Seven of these ideologies and behaviours, which Haberman refers to as **functions** can be used to predict the potential success of teacher candidates. These functions are: persistence in problem solving; protecting learners and learning; applying generalizations; approaching at-risk students with high expectations; assuming a professional rather than a personal orientation toward students; avoiding discouragement brought on by working in a school bureaucracy, and admitting teacher fallibility (Haberman, 1995).

Research by Rowley & Hart (1995) validated the claims put forward by Haberman. This research has shown that such functions can be taught. Our task, if we decide to take it on, would be to develop video case studies which would be designed to promote the kind of reflective dialogue among practitioners that would (hopefully) lead to insight and action.

Such video clips can be used in pre-service, in-service and school-based staff development settings. During these sessions participants can identify and discuss various strategies that can be used to tackle points raised during various parts of the video case studies. Through the video clips the viewers-cum-participants acquire new insights, new points for sharing and discussion. The video clips offer *reflection points* during which participants have the opportunity not only to react to the action the teachers take, or do not take, but to suggest what they would have done in similar situations.

Such reflection points need to be built into the video case studies as these place participants at the centre of challenging professional dilemmas to which there is often no singularly correct, strategic response. Schon (1987) has called this the **indeterminate zone** of professional practice. It is precisely at these points that teachers find themselves engaged in a virtual world where they are free to experiment with their ideas and vicariously experience the challenges of professional discussion making (Rowley & Hart, 1996).

It is hoped that if the video case study approach is taken seriously it will prove to be another tool in promoting more reflective and professional practice at the various stages of teacher development.

References

Haberman, M. (1994) Predicting the Success of Urban Teachers: The Milwaukee Trials. *Action in Teacher Education*, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 1-5.

Haberman, M. (1995) *Star Teachers of Children in Poverty*. West Lefayette, Kappa Delta Pi.

Pollard, A. (1997) *Reflective Teaching in the Primary School*. London, Cassell.

Rowley, J.B. and Hart, P.M. (1995) *Becoming a Star Urban Teacher* [videocasettes]. Alexandria, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Rowley, J.B. and Hart, P.M. (1996) How Video Case Studies Can Promote Reflective Dialogue. *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 53, No. 6, pp. 28-29.

Schon, D. (1987) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Empowerment, Communication and Change

This chapter describes the benefits that are to be gained from an empowered team culture.

Empowerment strategies are viewed with both admiration and cynicism. This very much depends on our own personal experiences. As Robinson points out, "empowerment is not a 'do-good/feel-good' strategy" (1998, p.4). When implemented effectively, empowerment is a powerful **energizing tool** that moves an organization forward towards its corporate goals.

Many would agree that the only way forward for any institution which wants not only to survive in a competitive market but also enjoy a competitive advantage is through an honest investment in its people.

There is much to be gained by encouraging all individuals to contribute to the full – hence using their intelligence and initiative. In this light we do need to go back and analyse our definition and use in practice of terms such as 'authority', 'delegation' and 'responsibility'. Authority is the power to get things done; the power to commit and use resources. An administrator may share his/her **authority** with others. This sharing as we know is known as **delegation.** The key question, however, is do you share your power to get things done with colleagues, or are you possessive about it? Many are the school administrators that are happy to share responsibility (synonymous with 'accountability') with others but not genuine authority. *What are the organisations missing?*

Most organisations have to manage change that arises from socio-economic, political and technological instability. In order to do this effectively, organisations need to rely on the human potential of their members of staff. Gone are the days when it was adequate to assume that all brains were possessed by top managers and that everyone else is there to do what they are told. An organisation's philosophy needs to be articulated in a way where people are respected, have interesting work opportunities to develop their skills and abilities.

As Vroman and Luchsinger (1994) argue, world-class businesses value their people. They know that the collective know-how of the **whole** workforce is the source of competitive advantage. At the same time we have to appreciate the fact that becoming world class is a journey that maybe only a few embark on, since the journey is indeed a difficult one. People and organisations develop in uneven ways. They are not always honest. They tend to develop internal activities that look good and sound good, but they contribute more to the individuals doing them than to organisation performance. For often there is too much finger pointing, a little too much ego, and a little too much authority/punishment taking place.

In an 'empowered' organisation everyone's contribution to performance improvement is encouraged and valued. When an administrator empowers a colleague s/he is willing to takes risks. *How can we empower without undue risk?*

The first trick is to empower as fully as possible within the competence of those receiving delegated authority. The second is to train people to a level of competence that equips them to handle empowerment both effectively and safely. The third trick is to remember that empowerment without leadership is anarchy. An empowered person must have a very clear view of the organisation's mission, its priorities and its values, all of which must be communicated by leaders of the organisation.

It may be appropriate to conclude with a set of basic principles that Shell Expro identified as essential in their work to develop an empowered team culture. As educators we can benefit from their ideas. Training was identified as a vehicle to build the necessary *skills and mindset* to facilitate the required collective change in both attitude and behaviour in the workplace. The objective is to encourage staff at all levels to accept and work to the following nine basic beliefs:

- The students needs are critical
- Anything can be improved
- Quality is everyone's job
- The person doing the job knows it best
- Teamwork works
- There is value in differences
- Involvement builds commitment
- Support builds success
- You make the difference

(Brown, 1998, p.13)

The challenge for leaders is both to come to terms with a significant change in role from supervising to leading and to learn to trust their staff and delegating more. *Are we willing to take on such challenges?*

References

Brown, T. (1998) Empowerment, *Manager*, IAM, July-August 1998, pp.12-14.

Fullan, M. (1993) *Change Forces*. London, Falmer Press.

Robinson, G. (1998) Empowerment, communication and change, *Manager*, IAM, July-August 1998, p. 4.

Vroman, H.W. & Luchsinger, V.P. (1994) *Managing Organization Quality*. Burr Ridge, Illinois: Irwin.

Further readings

Fullan, M. & Hargreaves, A. (1992) *What's Worth Fighting for in Your School?*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Handy, C. & Aitken, R. (1986) *Understanding Schools as Organisations*. Harmondsworth, Penguin.

Hargreaves, A. (1992) Cultures of teaching: a focus for change, in A. Hargreaves, & M. Fullan (Eds.), *Understanding Teacher Development*, London, Cassell.

Hargreaves, A. (1994) *Changing Teachers, Changing Times: Teachers' Work and Culture in the Postmodern Age*, London, Cassell.

A Final Word

Nurturing learning communities has been about transforming education, schools, and teaching. But mostly, it has been about school leaders and teachers. The authors have chosen this focus because they believe that educators at the school site are at the centre of all efforts to improve schools, that without their full participation and leadership any move to reform education – no matter how well intentioned or ambitious – is doomed to limited success and possibly failure. Whilst this call or orientation is not unique, the approach is, as it allows educators to 'walk the talk.' It encourages the reader to become an active participant in a journey that would bring about school regeneration, teacher growth and development. Change, personal, collective and organisational, is a slow process but for it to be successful it has to be grounded in the live experiences and professional knowledge of educators.

Today's challenges, unlike those we faced or even imagined a decade ago, are ambitious and far-reaching goals. We are in the midst of standards-based reforms that promote high level achievement for all students. This vision of education, as Lieberman and Miller (1999) argue, "is a direct challenge to many of the principles and practices of education as we know it" (p. xi). If we are to ensure that all students have access to high quality schooling, then we need to rethink and redesign schools.

This book goes a long way to show that such change needs to come from the inside, from each and everyone of us. As a result we learn new practices and habits of mind; we experience the uncertainty and ambivalence that inevitably accompany new learning. We learn to appreciate that personal and organisational learning are not the same. Through the processes we engage in, we experience that collegiality is more complex than we imagined. The development of a culture of colleagueship has a change process of its own. Tensions sometimes arise over how to negotiate being together and being alone (Hargreaves, 1994).

Stephen Covey (1989) argues that the most effective people spend time on building relationships, long-range planning, exercising, writing a personal mission statement, etc. Analysing our activities can be helpful in determining how our time is spent. Once we understand how we spend our time, we can set better priorities. Our time can be used constructively to produce the results we want. Our vision and mission become the guiding principle of time management.

Nurturing learning communities highlights the point that learning is an ongoing process. It is not episodic. The more that learning opportunities are built into a larger framework for change, the more professional development becomes substantively changed. When teachers work together to transform themselves and their schools, they rediscover why they came into teaching in the first place and why they have persisted. They demonstrate that with adequate resources, both human and material, realities do change. The main ones identified here include time, opportunities to learn, dynamic and facilitative school leaders, a shared and collective vision, and a focus on student achievement and attainment.

The focus of this book is one that encourages and welcomes collective learning. It welcomes new learning, and supports educators by looking for and celebrating success. The focus is therefore on transforming the way we view adult learning,

creating leadership and leadership roles for school administrators and teachers. This can only take place in a context which fosters hope, passion, and commitment.

References

Covey, S. (1989) *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York, Simon & Schuster.

Hargreaves, A. (1994) *Changing teachers, changing times: Teacher work and culture in the postmodern age*. New York, Teachers College Press.

Lieberman, A. & Miller, L. (1999) *Teachers – Transforming Their World and Their Work*. New York, Teachers College Press.