THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ON COMMITMENT, MOTIVATION, TRUST AND INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT AMONG TEACHERS AT SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE PHOENIX CENTRAL REGION

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Reference declaration in respect of a Master's Dissertation.

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do hereby declare that in respect of the following dissertation:

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(1) as far as we know and can ascertain :

- (a) no other similar dissertation exists ;
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Signature of student

17/04/2002
Date

Signature of Supervisor

17.4.2002
Date

DEDICATION

To my parents who inspired me to further my studies.

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ABSTRACT

The writer's observation of staff at selected secondary schools in the Phoenix Central Region has indicated that serious problems exist at these schools. The problems identified relate to teachers' lack of commitment, motivation, trust and the presence of interpersonal conflict among them. These observations have been found to be similar to the findings of other researchers and numerous articles that have appeared in the media also confirm the existence of similar problems in other schools in South Africa. The problems mentioned above have had a negative impact on the effectiveness of these schools in achieving their goals. The writer believes that these problems can be connected to a lack of effective leadership on the part of principals in these schools.

In this study the writer reviewed the relevant literature in order to identify strategies that principals could use to overcome the problems outlined above. To isolate and address the root causes of the problems, the writer found it necessary to clarify and distinguish between the key concepts of "leadership" and "management". Thereafter, the writer discussed some important skills and qualities he believes are necessary for effective leadership.

A review of the literature revealed many strategies that principals could use to build commitment, foster motivation, engender trust and manage interpersonal conflict in schools. Although many of these strategies are useful in addressing the problems encountered by principals, the writer, however, cautions that these strategies cannot be used indiscriminately. The context in which problems occur must be carefully considered before an appropriate strategy can be used. Schools, as complex and dynamic social institutions, present many unique problems that principals must be able to handle "on the spot". In short, the writer proposes that principals should become reflective practitioners in order to deal effectively with unfamiliar problems.

The writer also believes that it is important to create an environment in which leadership can flourish. Traditional ways of leading, such as directing and controlling, must give way to guiding, facilitating and supporting. Collaboration with and involvement of teachers in decisions and programmes will be important considerations for school leaders.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations were used in this dissertation.

APEK : Association of Professional Educators of KwaZulu-Natal

COLTS : Culture of Learning and Teaching Services

EPU : Education Policy Unit

GICD : Gauteng Institute for Curriculum Development

NCE : National Commission on Education

OBE : Outcomes Based Education

SADTU : South African Democratic Teachers' Union

SGB's : School governing bodies

WITS : Witwatersrand

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

The writer believes that many of the problems in secondary schools are the result of principals whose leadership is ineffective. As a result of these problems, the effectiveness of schools in achieving their goals is diminished. In order to correct this situation, the writer proposes that the capacity of principals to provide effective leadership should be enhanced.

1.2 The Situation in Schools

The problems in South African schools have been well documented. A study of sixteen township schools co-ordinated by the University of Witwatersrand Education Policy Unit (EPU) between 1995 and 1996 confirms the existence of these problems. Vally (1997: 19) quoting from the Witwatersrand (Wits) EPU report states that "attendance was sporadic, the principal had given up attending to problems, teachers had lost their desire to teach and there were tensions between rival organizations and between all elements of the school community. Vandalism, gangsterism, rape and drug abuse were rampant. The morale of all parties in the school community was low." According to Vally the report also highlights the lack of social authority and skills of principals. The poor matriculation pass rate, high drop-out rate and the large number of pupils repeating classes bear testimony to a general failure of learning and teaching.

Mona (1997: 3) quotes the Deputy Minister of Education as saying that "Currently, there isn't much disciplined learning and teaching taking place in our

schools. There are pockets of commitment here and there but these aren't many." From a statement like this it is evident that there is a crisis in education. The failure of learning and teaching is prevalent throughout the Nine Provinces. In response to this, in February 1997, the National Education Ministry unveiled a Five Year Plan called the "Culture of Learning and Teaching and Services" (COLTS) to address the problems outlined above. The campaign was welcomed by all stakeholders including teacher unions, parents, student organizations, the media and policy analysts. While supporting the campaign, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) warned the government that, "learning and teaching will remain an unprocurable ambition if certain critical issues were not addressed". These include:

- poor management and leadership in schools;
- confusion and uncertainty surrounding teacher redeployment;
- preparing teachers for curriculum 2005;
- improving the conditions of schooling;
- improving teachers' conditions of service.

The Union stated that if these issues were not addressed they could adversely affect teacher morale and motivation and impact negatively on the learning and teaching campaign (Mona, 1997: 3).

In spite of the COLTS campaign many of the problems highlighted in the Wits EPU study of 1995-1996 have not been resolved: this is evident from the poor matriculation pass rates from 1997 to 2001. In response to the poor 1998

matriculation pass rate in KwaZulu-Natal, the Association of Professional Educators (APEK) spokesperson, Mickey Pierce, attributed the poor pass rate to "de-motivated teachers, principals without management skills, a poor work ethic and a lack of dedication, commitment and discipline among teachers, pupils and parents." (Moloney, 1999: 1).

Sterling and Davidoff (2000: 5) identify a number of problems that exist at South African schools. According to these authors some of the concerns raised by teachers regarding appointed leaders are a lack of vision, ineffective management, a lack of competency and assertiveness, a lack of discipline among staff, principals who do not involve staff in discussion processes, a shortage of human and material resources, destructive staff room politics (cliques, back-biting), staff fearing victimisation from the principal for being open and honest, leadership without accountability, autocratic principals, unfair sharing of resources and skills and staff frustrated by bureaucratic procedures. All of these are problems of "management" and so we may connect them to an absence of effective leadership. This means that those persons appointed to "management positions", should be able to manage and lead, in order to be effective in schools. The writer's interpretation of what management and leadership entails will be clarified in Chapter Two.

In a statement of educational priorities given by Minister Kader Asmal on 27th July 1999, the Minister outlined the most troubling features of our education and training system as, "massive inequalities in access and facilities, the poor state of morale of the teaching force, failures in governance and management, and

the poor quality of learning in much of the system." (Motala *et al.*, 1999: 1). In informal discussions with teachers from several schools in the Phoenix Central Region and in observing staff at his own school, the writer has become aware of problems existing at schools. Most of his observations have been found to be similar to a report by Khupiso and Pretorius (1998: 4) in the Sunday Times, 6th September 1998 and findings of the Sunday Times Top Schools Survey as reported in the Sunday Times Top Schools Supplements of 13th September 1998 and 12th September 1999 (Garson, 1998; Garson, 1999). These problems are linked to:

- the high absentee rate of teachers;
- teachers unwilling to participate in extra-curricular activities at school;
- teachers neglecting to teach and discipline learners;
- the general apathy of teachers;
- poor interpersonal relations and conflict among members of staff;
- parents moving their children from former Black schools to former Model C schools;
- the poor matriculation pass rates.

The problems outlined above are exacerbated by changes that are taking place in the education system, which have a direct impact on them. The first of these changes concerns the rationalisation and redeployment process. In an effort to bring about equity in the education system the Minister of Education began the redeployment of educators from so called "advantaged" schools to " previously disadvantaged" schools. "Advantaged" schools refer to those schools that had

better resources and a lower pupil-teacher ratio in 1994 (when all education departments were united). "Previously disadvantaged" schools refer mainly to former Black schools, that were poorly resourced and had high pupil-teacher ratios. Redeployment was a well-intentioned policy that has, unfortunately, caused confusion and uncertainty among teachers because they were not consulted about teaching posts that were suitable for them. Teachers felt threatened that they risked losing their jobs if they did not accept teaching posts offered to them. This situation has contributed to the uncertainty and fear experienced by teachers and has adversely affected the morale and motivation of many teachers, even those not directly affected by the policy.

Also contributing to the problems being experienced by teachers, is the implementation of the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) curriculum, which was first introduced in January 1998. Most teachers say they have not been adequately trained and prepared to implement the requirements of the new curriculum in their classrooms. This lack of training and support has left teachers feeling intimidated and disempowered. This has had a negative impact on teachers' commitment and dedication to their work. The situation at present is still problematic, because many teachers have either still not received any training or have been inadequately trained. In fact many teachers are still using the old curricula and methodologies.

1.3 The Imperative for Effective Leadership

Many of the symptoms outlined above are visible manifestations of underlying problems, which should to be identified and addressed. The symptoms

highlighted have a negative impact on the school climate, which ultimately impedes student achievement.

The concept of school climate includes the instructional climate and instructional organization. The instructional climate refers to factors such as staff commitment and discipline and the instructional organization refers to factors such as the academic curriculum and pedagogy.

Bossert *et al.* (1982) introduce a theoretical model linking principals' actions to instructional climate and instructional organization. In testing this model Heck and his associates, Larsen and Marcoulides, (Heck *et al.*, 1990) find that leadership behaviours, such as communicating instructional goals, working to keep faculty morale high and establishing an orderly environment, are instrumental in enhancing the school climate. Behaviours, such as developing school goals, providing resources for programmes and evaluating curricular programmes, help to promote instructional organization. Together, instructional climate and instructional organization have a positive impact on student achievement in the schools they studied.

The imperative for authentic leadership is borne out by Beare *et al.* (1989: 99) in their statement that "outstanding leadership has invariably emerged as a key characteristic of outstanding schools." This idea is also practically endorsed by the findings of a survey of successful schools carried out by the National Commission on Education (NCE) 1995. The (NCE, 1995: 335) report says "The right sort of leadership is at the heart of effective schooling, and no evidence of

effectiveness in a school with weak leadership has emerged from any of the reviews of research." Evans (1999: 17) states categorically that her research findings reveal that "the greatest influences on teacher morale, job satisfaction and motivation are school leadership and management." The writer's definition of leadership and his interpretation of what constitutes authentic and effective leadership will be explained in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

A principal, who has the necessary personal attributes and leadership skills, as will be pointed out in Chapter Two, has the ability to influence teachers, in ways that will have a positive impact on their commitment and motivation. Such a principal can also build trust and effectively manage interpersonal conflict among his staff. In a study of 32 schools to identify some of the dynamics of successful schools, members of the Faculty of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, found that strong leadership and a commitment to learning and teaching are the most important foci of these schools. These factors enabled them to survive and thrive even under trying circumstances. The principals of these schools also saw that motivating staff and students and having a vision for the future, were important factors that contributed to the success of their schools (Garson, 1997: 3).

1.4 Conclusion

The observed behaviour of teachers in the education system, is an important indicator of the "health" of the education system. From the description of the behaviour of teachers given in this Chapter, it was clear that the system is in crisis. The underlying problems that gave rise to this behaviour must be

addressed. Research findings suggest that certain leadership behaviours can enhance the school climate and address the problems described in this Chapter.

1.5 Summary

In Chapter One, the writer described the situation in schools in the Phoenix Central Region. The problems encountered in these schools have been found to be similar to problems encountered by schools in other parts of the country. The existence of these problems have been confirmed by research findings and reports that have appeared in the media. The writer argued that effective leadership from principals could make an impact in addressing the problems in these schools. In Chapter Two, the writer will clarify the concept of leadership and discuss some of the important qualities of an effective leader.

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CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Introduction

The terms "leadership" and "management" are often used interchangeably. The writer believes that the confusion arising from the misuse of these terms has contributed to the problem of principals paying less attention to leadership roles as opposed to management roles. In order to clarify the concept of leadership the writer contrasts it with management. Leading is associated with influencing. The nature of this influence is complex because it is dependent on the context. Certain qualities and skills are indispensable to providing effective leadership. Some of these qualities and skills will be discussed.

2.2 Leadership and Management

Most writers agree that there is a significant difference between managing and leading. Bennis and Nanus (1997) view managers as people in charge of things, who solve problems, use procedures for finding solutions and make sure that tasks are properly completed. Leaders, on the other hand, are concerned with the vision and mission of an organization and how they can build commitment to achieve this vision.

Bennis and Nanus (1997) view managers as people who do things right and leaders as people who do the right things. Covey (1992) associates leadership with having a vision and with effectiveness, whereas management deals with establishing structures and focuses on efficiency in achieving results. Kotter (1990:6) distinguishes between management and leadership and the outcomes they produce as follows: management involves planning and budgeting,

organizing and staffing, controlling and problem solving, which produces a degree of predictability and order, whereas leadership involves establishing direction, aligning people, motivating and inspiring, which may produce meaningful change.

Management is associated with efficiency whereas leadership is associated with effectiveness. Management in schools involve tasks such as planning, gathering and disseminating information, budgeting, hiring, scheduling classes, grouping students, completing reports and maintaining the buildings (Cuban, 1988). While it is crucial to understand the difference between managing and leading, most writers agree that it is important to be competent at both managing and leading in order to develop and maintain world class organizations.

The problem in most schools today is that management and, in some cases good management, is confused with leadership. Williams (1998: 11) concurs in stating that "many schools are over-managed and under-led." The evidence of this can be seen in the emphasis placed on completing routine tasks, meeting time frames, achieving performance indicators and the hierarchical channels of communication. These aspects are given prominence at the expense of fostering and maintaining good relationships among members of staff at schools and between staff and management. Prominence is also given to the bureaucratically rigid channels of achieving long-term objectives and not to the impact of the objectives themselves. Long-term goals are secondary to achieving immediate benchmarks. In concentrating on day-to-day activities, the

bigger picture, that is the direction in which the school is headed, often becomes blurred. In emphasizing the importance of leadership Sergiovanni (1990: 18) states that "no matter how competently managed a school may be, it is the extra quality of leadership that makes the difference between ordinary and extraordinary performance". An inordinate emphasis on management has meant that many schools are stagnating with little or no possibility of renewal and growth.

Feelings of inadequacy or incompetency often arise in leaders who, mistakenly, believe that they are effective leaders only if they are able to solve all the problems in their schools. This "perfect school scenario" is an illusion, since schools, as social organizations, are always in a state of flux. This state of flux, which is characterized by ongoing problems, is brought about by frequent changes in legislation, student demographics, technology and various other situational factors that impact on the school. The task of the leader is to build capacity and to empower students and staff to respond to these ongoing challenges in a creative way (Vail, 1991). Attending to problems will be an ongoing challenge, and the principal will not be able to solve all the problems by himself/herself. He/she will, therefore, have to encourage and empower other members of the school community to overcome obstacles.

Schools today are increasingly managed by the community, teachers and learners in the form of school governing bodies (SGB's). This emerging culture of self-managing schools and the turbulent environment, in which most schools are operating, may mean that one person, in the form of the appointed leader

(the principal) will not be able to handle all challenges. Consequently, the appointed leader must use his/her influence and empower others to handle challenges that may arise. In doing so, he/she will provide opportunities for other members of staff to exercise leadership.

Schools in the Phoenix Central Region, as in many parts of South Africa, are still being run along bureaucratic lines with hierarchies, designated positions and vertical lines of communication. The failure to institute participative management and a lack of consultation, can lead to many of the problems as outlined in Chapter One, because teachers are professionals by virtue of their training and expertise and when principals take autocratic decisions in matters that affect teachers, then problems can arise, because their professional status is undermined. The inappropriate use of positional authority in professionally staffed organizations, such as schools, stems from a lack of understanding of the differences between managing and leading and an inability to understand the type of relationships required for effective leadership (Williams, 1998).

According to Williams (1998: 8) "teachers in schools share largely homogeneous backgrounds by virtue of academic achievement, espoused educational values, and professional commitment to the development of pupils." The expertise and skills required to address specific problems in a school should reside with teachers and it is the duty of the principal to consult and encourage teachers to contribute their knowledge and skills, so that the goals of the school can be achieved. For this reason the application of leadership principles becomes even more compelling.

In the pursuit of achieving organizational goals leaders engage with followers in building commitment, motivation and trust and in dealing with interpersonal conflict. The term commitment, motivation, trust and interpersonal conflict are closely aligned with crucial leadership functions. The subject of this dissertation is to elucidate ways in which leaders, especially principals, can influence staff in building commitment, motivation, trust and manage interpersonal conflict in schools in the Phoenix Central Region.

2.3 Leadership Defined

The variety of definitions of leadership illustrate the complex and elusive nature of the concept. Bennis and Nanus (1997: 19) state that leadership is "the most studied and least understood topic." Some of the definitions of leadership found in the literature are given below.

- Stogdill defines leadership as "the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal setting and goal accomplishment". (Beare *et al.*, 1989: 101);
- creating a vision that gives an organization an identity and putting that vision into action through interaction with members, as they seek to do the right things (Bennis and Nanus, 1997);
- process whereby one person influences others to attain group or organizational goals (Yukl, 1994).

Definitions of leadership have changed and modified as new knowledge and insights into the concept of leadership became available. The earlier definitions

associated leadership with the exercise of formal authority. Recent definitions of leadership are wider in scope. These definitions acknowledge that people without formal authority may exercise leadership. The writer agrees that leadership may be exercised by virtually anybody in the school, however, the writer also holds the view that the principal is in the best position to exercise leadership. This view is advanced by Smith (1995: 47) when he states, that the principal by virtue of his/her position in the school, is presented with the most opportunities for providing leadership. Therefore, when referring to school leadership, the writer is in fact referring to the leadership of the principal.

A common thread that runs through all the above definitions is that leadership implies influence. The source of this influence may be the leader's expertise, his/her personal qualities or the ability to bring rewards or sanctions, or a combination of these. These definitions also appear to be written from the leader's perspective, since they elaborate on what the leader has to do. The role of the follower is often overlooked in definitions on leadership.

Kanungo and Mendonca (1996: 14) state that leadership occurs when followers "perceive the leader's behaviour in a certain way, accept the leader's influence attempts, and then attribute leadership status to the individual." This definition looks at leadership as a process that occurs between the leader and followers. The wording of the definition also conveys the idea that there is no compulsion on the part of the follower to submit to the influence of the potential leader. Williams (1998: 7) rightly points out that "earned leadership is an accorded status not an appointed one." One does not become a leader by being

appointed to a position, rather, one can be regarded as a true leader when people voluntarily follow your lead. Max de Pree (1989: 10) argues that "the signs of outstanding leadership appear primarily among the followers. Are the followers achieving their potential? Are they learning? Serving? Do they achieve the desired results?"

In the light of the above discussion, leadership for the writer is a process whereby the leader influences followers and the followers consent to being led in order to achieve the goals of the organization. This definition has two components, one focuses on how to influence people (the process of leadership) and the other focuses on determining the desired goals (the intended outcome of leadership). The leader depends on followers to achieve the goals of an organization: the way that followers experience and perceive leadership behaviour is of vital importance because this will ultimately determine how they act and whether the goals of an organization will in fact be realized. The goals that are to be achieved must be mutually desirable to the leader and the follower. The main point of contention in leader-follower relationships is the nature of the influence as perceived by the followers, as this will ultimately determine the success or failure of that influence. A "leader", who uses coercion and threats to influence "followers", is unlikely to be respected or regarded as a leader by his/her "followers".

Halpin (1966) refers to the nature of these influences in terms of the constructs of initiating structure and consideration. Initiating structure refers to leader behaviour that establishes set patterns of organization, channels of

communication and procedures to be followed. Consideration refers to leader behaviour that establishes friendship, trust, warmth, interest and respect between the leader and the follower. Leaders that have a bias toward initiating structure are said to be task-oriented, and those that have a bias toward consideration are regarded as people-oriented. The problem in schools could be that leaders are overly task conscious in their behaviour and as a result teachers feel alienated. For example, principals who constantly draw up duty rosters for tasks and set deadlines for task completion, with no regard for genuine problems that teachers may encounter, will be viewed as inconsiderate and inflexible. This will ultimately frustrate teachers and result in dysfunctional behaviours.

Another leadership style, which has been gaining considerable attention in leadership studies, is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership, as envisaged by James MacGregor Burns, is contrasted with transactional leadership. Transactional leaders use incentives such as job security, tenure, material rewards and promotions to secure compliance from followers to attain organizational goals. Transformational leaders, on the other hand, seek to satisfy the higher level needs of followers and tap their inner motivations in order to evoke their personal commitment as they embrace goals to be achieved (Owens, 1998: 211).

2.4 Qualities of Leadership and Management

Since we have established the importance of leadership in addressing the problems in Chapter One, we now need to reflect on the qualities that will foster

effective leadership. While it is possible to list qualities that may contribute to effective leadership, it must be recognized that the qualities and abilities displayed by a leader are dependent on the situation in which he/she finds himself/herself. For example assertiveness may be regarded as an important quality to display in a particular situation, but the same quality can be construed as being overbearing in another situation and thus have a negative impact on those being led.

The repertoire of qualities that a leader has can be likened to a box of tools he/she possesses. In order to transform these innate characteristics into effective leadership behaviour the leader still has to make a decision about which tools to use and how to use these tools, that is, he/she has to display his skills or artistry in situations. This is the reason why leadership is often referred to as an art.

The challenge for prospective leaders is to decide on the qualities that they find most inspirational and to try and develop these qualities within themselves. It should be noted that the more tools a leader has at his/her disposal and the more finely honed his/her skill in using these tools the more prepared he/she will be in coping with the demands of a situation. A leader with greater self-knowledge and a bigger repertoire of qualities is in a better position to respond to the challenges of leadership. Sterling and Davidoff (2000: 23) echo the views of David Harding when they say "leadership requires us to use different abilities, qualities and ways of leading in different situations". To illustrate this point consider the use of praise by a principal, in some cases the use of praise may

be perceived by teachers as being sincere and motivating, while in other cases it may be perceived as condescending. The leader has to analyse a situation by taking into account all the factors and then choose a response from several alternatives. It is evident from the above discussion that the task of providing leadership is indeed complex.

What qualities should those who aspire to become leaders develop? In deciding which qualities are worthy of emulation, the profile of leaders whom we admire, may assist us in our choice. Sterling and Davidoff (2000: 22) identify the qualities and enabling behaviours most often associated with leadership. These include fairness, transparency, dedication, empathy, honesty, enthusiasm, decisiveness, consistency, perseverance, sensitivity, assertiveness, tolerance, integrity, humility, courage, flexibility, discipline and accountability.

In one study by Kouzes and Posner (1993b), 15 000 managers were asked to describe leaders, whom they admired, to determine the qualities that people look for in leaders. A large majority named honesty (87%) as the attribute admired. Other traits named by respondents were forward-looking (71%), inspiring (68%) and competent (58%). A smaller percentage nominated being fair-minded (49%) and supportive (46%) as qualities that were admired in leaders.

2.4.1 Credibility

Many of the admired qualities named in the study by Kouzes and Posner (1993b) refer collectively to the credibility of the leader. "Having credibility"

implies that the leader can be trusted, that he/she is personally committed to the direction in which he/she is steering the organization and that he/she has the necessary knowledge, skill and self-conviction to fulfil his commitment. At the centre of one's credibility is one's beliefs. This means that the leader is clear about his/her personal values and has the courage of his/her convictions (Kouzes and Posner, 1993a.). People who possess credibility are dependable, trustworthy and reliable. According to Charlton (1993: 79) credibility can be earned only through direct interaction with people. The leader has to demonstrate his/her understanding of the concerns, needs and aspirations of his/her followers by engaging in appropriate action. He/she has to cast himself/herself in the role of his/her followers, so that he/she is able to see things from their perspective.

2.4.2 Trust

In virtually every survey about the qualities desired in leaders, honesty and integrity have been placed on top of the list. Leaders have to display honesty and integrity in order to be trusted. Trust stems from trustworthiness, which is an attribute of ones' personality. According to Charlton (1993: 77) "Trust is about consistency, reliability and predictability. It is about being congruent in word and deed and about fairness in dealing with people." Trust is a two-way process that has to be demonstrated and earned by both leaders and followers. Great leaders from the past displayed their honesty and vulnerability and also admitted their shortcomings, thus engendering trust in others. The leader should, therefore, take the lead in engendering trust in others.

Trust can be seen as a lubricant that ensures the smooth running of parts of a machine. A relationship that is characterized by a high level of trust leads to open communication and effective solution to problems. In the same way that a lubricant has to be continually replenished, the trust in a relationship has to be nurtured and sustained in order for the relationship to flourish so that the benefits, that accrue from such a relationship, may be won.

Distrust is created through a lack of transparency on issues that affect people directly. In the absence of trust there is fear. Fear creates obedience, not commitment. In such a climate the potential to harness the creative abilities of people is lost. Trust is fragile and once broken it is difficult to rebuild.

2.4.3 Vision

Creating a vision has been described as being one of the most fundamental roles of being a leader. A vision is a mental picture of the desirable future state of the organization (Bennis and Nanus, 1997). In creating a shared vision leaders seek to attain consensus from all stakeholders in the organization on questions of values, beliefs, purposes, and goals. A vision serves to focus attention in order to shape the action and behaviour of teachers in a school (Conley, 1996). The goals of a school are based on the vision of the school. In the absence of a vision, leaders will not be able to guide teachers in working towards a common goal because these goals may be unclear. In arriving at a shared vision, leaders seek to rally staff to work towards a common cause, that is, to attain the goals of the organization.

Sergiovanni (1994) says that a vision creates a community of purpose and establishes the norms for action. A vision can be seen as an imaginary bridge that can possibly connect the current reality (what is) to a desirable future state (what ought to be).

A vision should satisfy certain conditions in order for it to be useful and to enjoy broad support. A vision should be arrived at through a shared process articulating the desires of all stakeholders. If a vision is formulated through such a process it is more likely to secure the commitment of people since they will be able to identify with it. It should be inspiring in order to motivate people to realize the vision. At the same time a vision should be realistic and achievable otherwise it will eventually result in the loss of motivation and be doomed to failure. The task of a leader is to communicate this vision or mission (explained below) in a meaningful way to all constituents of an organization. The leader has to inspire enthusiasm and encourage commitment in working towards achieving this vision.

The word "vision" and "mission" are often interchangeably used. A mission is more specific, a kind of action plan to make the vision a reality. The day-to-day activities that teachers engage in can be evaluated to determine if they are aligned with and contribute to achieving the mission of the school.

2.4.4 Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Good communication and interpersonal skills are common threads that run through all the activities of leaders. Hoy and Miskel (1982: 292) quoting Lewis

state that "Communication in schools is successful when the sender of a message and the receiver have a very similar comprehension of the message's content." Conflicts in schools very often occur because of misunderstandings or a breakdown in communication. When communicating, principals must be mindful of both the verbal and non-verbal aspects of the message they convey. Their body motions, facial expressions, voice intonations and speech rapidity convey meaningful information. For example, when principals use praise to motivate teachers they should be sincere or risk losing their credibility.

In order to encourage followers to use their latent potential and harness their creativity and ingenuity, leaders should display good interpersonal skills. These include listening effectively, sensitivity to group dynamics, cultural sensitivity, conflict management skills, offering praise and recognition and counselling skills. Other interpersonal skills include showing empathy, openness, support and encouragement.

2.5 Conclusion

It is crucial for principals to understand the differences between leading and managing because the writer believes that the current bias towards managing, as opposed to leading, results from the confusion regarding the meaning of these terms. The writer believes that leadership and management are separate but related and that principals should give due attention to both aspects as this will enable schools to function efficiently and effectively.

2.6 Summary

In Chapter Two, the writer clarified concepts such as leadership and management. Several definitions of leadership, found in the literature, were examined in order to clarify the concept. Using these definitions the writer synthesised his own definition of leadership in order to explain what effective and authentic leadership entailed. Finally, the writer discussed some qualities and skills that leaders should develop in order to be effective. In Chapter Three the writer will discuss strategies that principals can use to build commitment, motivation, trust and manage interpersonal conflict among teachers.

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CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Introduction

The problems identified in schools in Chapter One can be reduced to the problems concerning a lack of commitment and motivation, a lack of trust in management and interpersonal conflict among staff and between staff and management. In Chapter Three the writer will focus on practical strategies that principals can use to address the problems of commitment, motivation, trust and interpersonal conflict. The strategies discussed will be supported and applied to problems that arise in schools. The leadership qualities, discussed in Chapter Two, provide the basis for dealing effectively with the problems outlined in Chapter One.

3.2 Commitment

3.2.1 Definition of Commitment

Mowday *et al.* (1982) suggest that commitment includes a belief in and acceptance of the goals and values of the organization/profession, a willingness to work hard on behalf of the organization/profession, and a desire to remain with the organization/profession. In behavioural terms, Singh and Billingsley (1998), referring to Reichers, see commitment as a function of the costs and rewards associated with remaining in a profession or organization. For the purposes of this dissertation the writer will accept the definition provided by Mowday *et al.* as commitment is given an all encompassing definition in that all aspects of the teachers' job, that contribute to achieving the goals of the school, are considered.

3.2.2 Building Commitment

3.2.2.1 Autonomy, Recognition, Expectation and Support

According to research by Rosenholtz (1989) teachers' commitment is clearly linked to variables over which the principal has influence. Rosenholtz showed that teachers' commitment is enhanced when principals allow teachers task autonomy, opportunities to meet ongoing challenges and continuous growth and psychic rewards. Psychic rewards are derived from estimates of how teachers believe they are doing, as well as from external recognition for accomplishments. The study by Singh and Billingsley (1998), to determine the effects of professional support (both principal and peer support) on teachers' commitment to the teaching profession, indicates that teachers experience greater professional commitment when principals communicate clear expectations, provide fair evaluations and provide assistance and support to teachers. This support includes discussion about and assistance with instructional practices, as well as help with managing discipline and acquiring resources. Recognition by a principal and colleagues also enhance teachers' professional commitment.

Singh and Billingsley (1998) also show that the principal influences commitment indirectly through peer support. When principals foster shared goals, values and professional growth, a collegial environment is created in which teachers are likely to work cooperatively and share a common sense of purpose. Colleague support can take many forms, including assistance with professional matters, providing feedback in formal and informal ways and providing emotional support. A collegial environment and peer support enhance teachers'

commitment. On the other hand a lack of principal support can create an atmosphere of apathy and lead to teachers feeling helpless and frustrated (Blasé, 1987; Rosenholtz, 1989).

Principals, who themselves present appropriate attitudes and behaviours, are likely to influence teachers to behave in ways that are consistent with principals' expectations (Blasé and Kirby, 2000: 112). Studies by Sheppard (1996) on instructional leadership behaviours, especially those linked to student achievement outcomes, report a strong positive relationship between principals maintaining a high visibility and teacher commitment and professional involvement.

3.2.2.2 Bureaucracy

The hierarchical structure in schools with the principal at the top, teachers at the bottom and with vertical lines of communication (most of the important decisions being taken at the top) indicate that most schools are run as bureaucracies. Decisions taken by principals are often passed down to be implemented by teachers. These traditional bureaucracies and the accompanying management "mindsets", which tend to concentrate on technical aspects such as planning, organizing, controlling and assessing, become problematic in fostering genuine commitment. Senge (1996: 43) points out that hierarchical authority stifles commitment and tends to evoke compliance. Yet genuine commitment is an important ingredient for doing one's job well and bringing about meaningful change.

3.2.2.3 Transformational Leadership

Sergiovanni (1992: 4) states that in schools we often see that "cooperation becomes a substitute for commitment". The use of rewards and sanctions, as is the case with transactional leaders, is often used to obtain the cooperation of teachers. The transformational leadership style mentioned earlier is more likely to secure the commitment of followers. Bennis and Nanus (1985) view transformational leadership as a process that achieves significant improvements by pursuing common interests through collective action. Owens (1998: 211) elaborates by saying that "this kind of leadership does not merely obtain the compliance of followers, it evokes their personal commitment as they embrace the goals to be achieved as their very own, seeing them as an opportunity for a willing investment of their effort."

Commitment is much more than cooperation, it stems from within a person. It is through this "inward-looking" that he will come to a sense of self-realization to act in a particular way. Cooperation implies a sense of indebtedness, for example, to please another person. If a principal wants to build genuine commitment in his/her staff, as opposed to merely obtaining cooperation from his/her staff, then greater emphasis should be given to transforming rather than transactional leadership. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000: 186) state that studies by Blasé (1990) "support transformational leadership as an effective approach for the school principalship."

3.2.2.4 Participation

Schools in South Africa are becoming increasingly autonomous in that management at school level and parents have been given greater powers to make decisions concerning matters that affect the school. School-based management, as this is now referred to, requires participation, involvement and ownership from all constituents in the school as this creates a sense of belonging to a team, that is working towards common interests. This promotes "cohesiveness" and commitment among staff. Campbell-Evans (1993: 103) states that characteristics of traditional organizations, such as "authority, one-way communication, limited access to information and hierarchical decision-making, have given way in effective schools to processes of involvement, participation and collaboration." Thus principals should be aware of these changes and be prepared to implement measures that will encourage and ensure broad participation in their schools. Teachers are more likely to implement and show commitment to decisions if they were involved in formulating these decisions.

3.2.2.5 Values, Vision, Mission and Goals

In order to foster shared goals and unite the staff around a common sense of purpose, the principal, as the head of the school, has to engage in the process of building a vision. Vision-building is an ongoing process, since the dynamics of the situation in which schools function are always changing. In this regard Holmes (1993: 33) points out that leaders "must be prepared to restate, defend and refine a school's vision, mission and purposes constantly." The process of

vision-building affords both the principal and the staff opportunities for empowerment, self-development and professional growth.

Studies of leadership in effective schools provide support for the importance of vision and other qualitative aspects of leadership. The works of Edmonds (1979) and Brookover and Lezotte (1979) reveal that effective schools have a compelling vision and a clear sense of mission with which all members of staff identify. The importance of a vision in fostering commitment is hightlighted by many authors. Seyfarth (1999: 82) states that "A vision can have a powerful effect on those who are influenced by it. Visions transform by clarifying purpose and direction, inspiring enthusiasm, and encouraging commitment." Sergiovanni *et al.* (1999: 75) state that "Vision refers to the capacity to create and communicate a view of the desired state of affairs that induces commitment among those working in the organization." Senge (1994: 9) also expresses the same view when he states that "The practice of shared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared ' pictures of the future' that foster genuine commitment and enrollment rather than compliance." In the following paragraphs the writer will discuss how a principal develops a shared vision.

In the process of building a vision, while it is important for the principal to take the lead in articulating his/her own vision and values, it is equally important that he/she seeks to orchestrate and achieve consensus around the values that are important to all the constituents of the school. It is important to start with the question of values and to develop a shared set of values since a vision is underpinned by values and therefore it articulates values. For example, if the

constituents of a school value democracy then it is likely that its vision will incorporate participatory structures and processes. Other examples of values that schools may consider important are liberty, justice and equality. Kouzes and Posner (1996: 105) observe that this consensus around values "creates commitment to where the organization is going and how it's going to get there."

The vision is a broad statement of intent. In order for the vision to be useful in guiding everyday practice it needs to be crystallized to a more specific statement of intent, called a mission. Very often the mission statement is also not specific enough in guiding everyday practice, then strategic plans and goals are formulated in order to guide the day-to-day activities in school. In the process outlined above, that is in making the vision a reality, the role of the leader is crucial. He/she has to encourage and ensure broad participation in arriving at a shared vision.

In addition to this he/she will have to communicate this vision to his/her staff using meaningful language, symbols and actions. For example, if the principal of a school seeks commitment among teachers for a vision which includes improving the self-esteem of pupils, then he/she will have to be mindful about the words, actions and rewards that are used in school. In such a school verbal interactions with pupils, for example, will be characterized by praise and encouragement. The entire process of building a vision, therefore, requires the principal to use his/her leadership qualities and skills flexibly and appropriately in order to ensure its success, as this will result in greater commitment from staff.

3.2.2.6 Personal Commitment

Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King and Mother Theresa are constant reminders of leaders who have demonstrated their unwavering commitment to the causes in which they believed. All their thoughts, words and deeds were focused on achieving their goals. Their actions were genuine and selfless. By demonstrating their personal commitment they were able to secure the commitment of others. Charlton (1993: 80) makes this point succinctly when he states that "the leader has to be overtly committed before he/she can expect the commitment of the troops." Pollard (1996: 245) refers to such leaders as servant leaders, leaders who listen to people at all levels of the organization and are willing to experience what other people in the organization are experiencing. The lesson from all this is that commitment starts with the principal. If principals in schools can emulate the leaders mentioned above, in demonstrating their personal commitment to the goals of the school, then they are likely to secure the commitment of teachers.

3.2.2.7 Modelling

Schein (1985) reminds us that if we want to know what's important and valued in a school, then we should observe what the principal pays attention to and does, rather than what he/she says is important. A principal, who leaves a planned professional development programme early, sends a negative message to teachers regarding the use of time and learning. The principal's behaviour sends a clear message to teachers and this will have a ripple effect on the rest of the school as teachers and pupils will imitate this behaviour.

3.3 Motivation

3.3.1 Definition of Motivation

There are many definitions of motivation each emphasizing a different facet. Johannson and Page (1990: 196) define motivation as "Processes or factors that cause people to act or behave in certain ways. To motivate is to induce someone to take action. The process of motivation consists of:

- Identification or appreciation of an unsatisfied need.
- The establishment of a goal which will satisfy the need.
- Determination of the action required to satisfy the need."

The implication of this definition for the principal is that, if he/she is able to identify an unsatisfied need in a teacher, he/she will be able to have an impact on the behaviour of that teacher by virtue of his/her own choice of behaviour. This impact or intervention, whether tangible or intangible, is part of the process of motivation. If the behaviour of the principal results in the satisfaction of the need then he/she will maintain this behaviour in order to sustain the satisfaction felt. A principal, who has the necessary knowledge and skills, can take appropriate steps and make timely interventions in order to motivate his/her staff. He/she needs to understand the factors that can affect motivation and also have some knowledge of the theories of motivation.

3.3.2 Factors that Affect Motivation

There are many factors that affect motivation. The main factors that affect motivation according to Betts (1993: 145), are: the job, capacity to do the job,

the work environment, internal human pressures such as basic needs, mental needs, attitude and drive, external pressures (for example, the family, state and community) and overriding factors, which include mental capacity (emotional problems), physical capacity (sickness and exhaustion), the intermediate situation (unfairness and injustice). The number of factors, that can have an impact on motivation, demonstrate its complexity.

3.3.3 Theories of Motivation

3.3.3.1 Content Theories

The two theories of motivation are the content and process theories. The content theories include Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, McGregor's Theory 'X' and Theory 'Y', and Hertzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs range from the physiological and security needs at the bottom end to the self-esteem and self- actualization needs at the top end. The physiological and security needs in Maslow's Hierarchy correspond to the so called "hygiene factors" in Hertzberg's Theory (Owens, 1998: 153). The "hygiene factors" relate to conditions that are associated with the work environment: they include such things as salary, working conditions and interpersonal relations. The absence of conditions, that relate to the "hygiene factors", result in dissatisfaction, but at the same time their presence does not result in satisfaction. The second factor that Hertzberg calls "motivators" results in satisfaction if the conditions that relate to it are fulfilled. The "motivating factors" include conditions such as, a sense of achievement, of having recognition, of having responsibility and professional growth. Principals need to ensure that both sets of factors are fulfilled in order to have a positive effect on the performance of teachers.

3.3.3.2 Process Theories

The process theory of motivation includes expectancy, equity and goal theories. Expectancy theory holds the view that people are influenced by what they expect the impact of their actions to be. In equity theory the motivation of individuals is based on the extent to which they feel they are being treated in a fair and equitable manner. If the individual perceives any inequity, then he/she will resort to various behaviours to reduce it. Goal theory holds that the perception and evaluation of a situation results in goals being set. The implication of this theory for principals is that they should encourage participation and agreement from teachers with regard to goal-setting for it to have a positive impact on their performance.

3.3.4 Strategies to Motivate Staff

3.3.4.1 Resources and Facilities

In the remaining part of this section, the writer will discuss strategies that principals can employ, in order to motivate teachers in the context of schools in South Africa. Many schools are in poor physical condition, basic facilities such as staff rooms and toilets are neglected, being either in a state of disrepair or non-existent. The staff room, for example, should be the hub of the school. It is a place where teachers give and receive professional and emotional support. If such a facility is non-existent then it is difficult to see how a collegial and supportive environment can be created.

In many instances violence from the community has spread onto school premises, threatening the security of staff and pupils. Such working conditions

are not conducive to motivating teachers. Although the need for security appears towards the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy, this lower level need must be fulfilled before higher order needs are likely to be achieved. Principals should rally the support of the community, via the school governing bodies (SGB's), to pressurize the Department of Education to provide facilities and resources to create a supportive environment to cater for the basic needs of teachers and pupils.

Another obstacle that many teachers face is the shortage or absence of basic teaching resources, such as textbooks, stationery and equipment. These obstacles, referred to as "hygiene factors" by Hertzberg, frustrate teachers and lead to dissatisfaction, thus preventing teachers from attaining the educational goals of the school. The task of the principal, as the instructional leader, is to take the initiative in acquiring funds or getting sponsors to provide these basic resources.

3.3.4.2 Job Security and Valuing Staff

Teachers' concerns over job security, as a result of the rationalisation and redeployment process, has had a negative effect on the motivation and morale of teachers. In a review of educational priorities on 27 July 1999, Minister Kader Asmal refers to concerns over the low morale of teachers. Motala *et al.* (1999: 3) concur that "The Minister quite rightly infers a relationship between this and the rationalisation process."

The rationalisation and redeployment process, despite its good intentions, has led to many teachers, including those not directly affected by the process, feeling alienated and insecure. The perception is that the whole process was handled in an insensitive manner, with little concern for the well-being of the teachers affected. Teachers feel that their value and contribution to the profession are not being adequately recognized. Principals can considerably influence teachers' motivation and morale in this regard by re-assuring them of the importance of their contribution and providing *bona fide* professional recognition. Hertzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation has identified recognition as an important motivator. In identifying "excess" teachers principals should display greater sensitivity to avoid hurting teachers' sense of self-worth and to minimize conflict.

3.3.4.3 Support

3.3.4.3.1 Discipline

The South African Schools' Act 84 of 1996 has resulted in the management and governance of schools being placed in the hands of management at school level and in school governing bodies. These structures are now largely responsible for matters concerning funding, discipline and provision of facilities.

According to Nathan (1996: 82) teachers are de-motivated when they feel they do not receive adequate support in maintaining discipline and in setting a standard. In many South African schools teachers have to teach large classes and very often experience problems with pupil discipline. The Department of Education has outlawed corporal punishment, but has, unfortunately, not trained

educators in alternative ways of dealing with discipline problems (Motala *et al.*,1999: 12). In the absence of this training, the principal has to take the initiative in devising ways to support teachers in matters concerning discipline. The principal must ensure that a code of conduct for learners, with the necessary sanctions, is in place and is adhered to. In the case of serious offences the available structures, including tribunals set up by school governing bodies, must be used to provide support to teachers in matters concerning discipline. Staff development forums can also be set up to discuss ways of dealing with these problems. If this support is available then teachers will grow in confidence and be able to take on greater responsibility in devising effective ways of dealing with disciplinary problems.

3.3.4.3.2 Instructional Training

Teachers have difficulty in implementing Outcomes Based Education (OBE), the new curriculum introduced in 1998. Many teachers maintain that they have not been trained in this approach and this has led to them feeling inadequately prepared, intimidated and de-motivated. A study commissioned by the Gauteng Institute for Curriculum Development (GICD) indicates that the implementation of Curriculum 2005 in 1998 was hampered by the inadequate training of teachers, a lack of materials and poor communication between Departmental officials and teachers (Chisholm and Peterson, 1999: 9).

Although vital gains have been made in training teachers since 1999, the situation at present indicates that in this respect more needs to be done. Much of the blame for this situation rests with the Department of Education. However,

many principals, who view themselves solely as managers and not as instructional leaders, are guilty of not taking the initiative in learning about OBE and are, therefore, not in a position to support teachers. This lack of training and support has de-motivated teachers. As an instructional leader it is important for the principal to acquire as much information as possible about new approaches, so that he/she can take the lead in implementing these new approaches and be a constant source of support to teachers.

3.3.4.4 Participation in Decision-making and Teamwork

The OBE curriculum requires co-ordinated planning and tremendous preparation. It also needs sharing of resources, teamwork and flexible timetabling. When principals are accommodating and encourage teamwork and participation in decision-making, then it is possible for teachers to collaborate and be innovative in their teaching. The need for collaboration and teamwork in the implementation of the OBE curriculum may affect the traditional hierarchical structure present in many schools. It may have to be replaced by less rigid work patterns which encourage participation and teamwork.

Nathan (1996: 83) argues that "Participating in group activities can also contribute to motivation, because it creates a feeling of belonging." Blasé and Kirby (2000: 46) state that "teachers felt especially valued and important" when involvement took the form of participation in decision-making. The principal must be sincere when he/she invites teachers to participate in decision-making. Contributions made by teachers must be considered and reflected, when possible, in decisions taken. The source of expertise in a particular approach or

innovation may lie with a teacher who does not hold a "superior" leadership position in the hierarchy. Principals should value contributions from a teacher on merit and not on the status of the teacher in the hierarchy.

3.3.4.5 Achievement and Responsibility

Achievement and responsibility are also important motivators. Principals can dispense responsibility, accompanied by the concomitant authority, to make and carry through decisions, throughout their entire staff. In delegating responsibility a principal must ensure that the teacher has the necessary competence and support to accomplish the task otherwise the experience can turn out to be detrimental to the teacher's sense of achievement. For example, it is difficult to see how teachers can achieve good grades in a school where poor attendance of pupils is the norm. The principal must support teachers by first improving the attendance rate.

3.3.4.6 Praise and Recognition

Recognition refers to acknowledging a person's contribution to the organization. Recognition can be given through concrete rewards, such as awarding a bonus or shown through symbolic rewards, such as offering praise. Blasé and Kirby (2000: 11) emphasize the value of praise as an influence strategy used by principals. Praise is most often used with individual teachers to commend them for instructional and classroom management efforts. Praise, if it is sincere, has a positive influence on teachers' confidence and satisfaction and consequently their motivation. Given the importance of praise it is perhaps surprising that it is not often used by principals.

3.3.4.7 Building Self-esteem

Principals must show an interest in their staff, spend time and listen to what they have to say. This dimension of leadership behaviour, which is also referred to as consideration or concern for people, is reported to be related to employee satisfaction by many leadership theorists (Bass, 1990; Blake & Mouton, 1964; Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). The principal's show of care, concern and appreciation, and his/her flexibility, will enhance the self-esteem and improve the performance of teachers. In contact with teachers, principals will be able to acquire knowledge of the strengths, weaknesses, concerns and aspirations of teachers, so that decisions regarding them can be better informed. Teachers given temporary classrooms, denied access to resources and always given tasks that are "less important" to accomplish will make negative assumptions about their relative worth in the school. As most teachers are sensitive about their workloads, the principal must ensure that workloads are equitable. A teacher, who is given too many difficult or demanding classes to teach, will feel that he/she is being unfairly treated. A principal should display fairness and consistency in his/her interaction with teachers if he/she wants to enhance their motivation and performance.

3.3.4.8 Expectations

Principals' assumptions and expectations about teachers can influence their motivation and consequently their performance. According to McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y, a manager's assumptions about his/her workers determines how he/she responds to them (the "self-fulfilling prophecy", whereby the worker performs in accordance with these assumptions) (Adair 1998: 130).

Principals should be optimistic and believe in the abilities of their teachers and hold positive expectations of them.

In a qualitative study by Blasé and Kirby (2000: 31) to understand how teachers are influenced by strategies used by open and effective principals, it was found that there was "strong evidence linking principals' use of expectations to improved teacher behavior." In response to the principal's positive expectations, teachers showed greater initiative. The study by Blasé and Kirby (2000: 29) also shows that teachers respond positively "to principals who communicate and model clear and consistent expectations."

A study of teachers throughout the United States by Blasé and Blasé (1998) positively links the visibility of the principal to increased teacher motivation, self-esteem, sense of security and morale. The principal's visibility in hallways and classrooms communicates support and interest to his/her teachers and acknowledges, at first hand, the work they are doing. However, principals should be careful that their visibility is not interpreted as intrusion on the professional autonomy of teachers and so impact negatively on their commitment and motivation.

3.3.4.9 Professional Growth and Training

Another area, in which principals can significantly improve the motivation of teachers, is in providing opportunities for professional growth. The reality is that a large number of teachers in South African schools are unqualified or under-qualified. This situation is further aggravated by the introduction of the OBE

curriculum, in which teachers claim they have not received adequate training. These factors can have a negative impact on the motivation and performance of teachers. The need to provide ongoing professional development is vital in order to address some of the problems outlined above. Well thought-out staff development programmes, in areas of need, can assist teachers in their jobs and motivate them. Job enrichment, in the form of additional skills, can dispel boredom, provide intrinsic appeal and be highly motivating.

3.3.4.10 Communication

Communication is the common thread that runs through all leadership functions. Good communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is central in building commitment, motivation and trust in teachers. It also helps to prevent and resolve interpersonal conflict. Principals should develop effective communication skills, in order to influence teachers. In order to articulate a shared vision the principal must be able to use both words and symbols to communicate this vision to all members of the school community. Principals also need good communication skills to motivate teachers by offering praise and providing feedback to teachers concerning their performance. Direct and clear communication can prevent misunderstandings, which are often cited as sources of conflict.

3.4 Trust

3.4.1 Definitions of Trust

Trust is cited as one of the most important and fundamental attributes that must exist in the relationship between the leader and follower. It is the "glue" that

binds the leader to the follower. Covey (1992: 31) sees trust, or the lack of trust, as "the root of success or failure in relationships and in the bottom-line results of business, industry, education, and government." According to Covey *ibid.* "trustworthiness is the foundation of trust" and trustworthiness is dependent on a person's character and on his/her competence. Charlton (1993: 77) associates trust with consistency, reliability and predictability and about "being congruent in word and deed".

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1997: 337), quoting Mishra, define trust as "one party's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the belief that the latter party is

a) competent,

b) reliable,

c) open, and

d) concerned."

This definition of trust attempts to capture the qualities of the trusted person.

In the context of this study, trust will be defined as the teachers' expectations that the principal can be relied upon to keep his/her commitments and to act in their best interest. This definition implies that the principal must use the qualities he/she possesses and behave in a way that teachers perceive to be in their interests.

Research findings on faculty trust (as expressed toward the principal and toward fellow teachers) demonstrates that teachers' trust in the principal, is

determined primarily by the behaviour of the principal. The principal's behaviour has limited influence on the trust that teachers have with each other. Collegial behaviour, on the part of the principal, combines with teacher professionalism to generate strong trust in the principal (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 1997: 348).

3.4.2 Strategies for Building Trust

3.4.2.1 Creating an Environment of Trust

Nair (2001) in his article on "Trust: A necessary foundation for Leadership" stresses that in addition to predictability, the demonstration of trust requires that the one party will not act against the interest of the other. He also points out that designated leaders have power: the greater the power imbalance in a relationship the more difficult it is to develop trust. Thus designated leaders have to take steps to minimize actions, such as taking autocratic decisions and emphasizing status and titles, as these heighten this power imbalance. An atmosphere that fosters collaboration and teamwork will ensure that all participants contribute as equals, free of fear, intimidation, coercion and criticism. In the absence of trust fear reigns, and "fear creates obedience, not commitment" (Nair, 2001). The creation of trust is an important precursor to the building of commitment and motivation in teachers.

Trust banishes fear and enables honest, open channels of communication. In such a context people are able to "be themselves" and they feel free to contribute in meetings and discussions. Their involvement in discussions is authentic and meaningful (Sterling and Davidoff, 2000: 78.). This climate ensures that problems in an organization are instantly brought into the

foreground and handled in a proactive way. Trust is indispensable for teamwork and any collaborative activity. It enables people to focus on the task at hand, without engaging in suspicion, defensiveness, politicking and self-protective actions.

3.4.2.2 Interpersonal Skills

The main tools for building trust are good interpersonal skills. On a personal level the leader must have integrity, strong defensible values and be directed by proven principles. Such leaders practise what Covey (1992) refers to as "principle-centered leadership". On an interpersonal level leaders must strive to cultivate skills and themselves reflect trustworthy behaviours such as empathy, openness, competence and consistency so that they may gain credibility and trust in the eyes of their followers.

Most people will initially trust another person in the absence of any reason to distrust him (Hughes and Hooper, 2000: 112). But future relations of trust are based on a person's reputation. The lesson from this is that principals must keep their commitments and honour any promises they make, as this will enable them to establish a good reputation and enjoy a high level of trust. To establish a favourable reputation requires a tremendous amount of integrity and honesty. Be honest with yourself and with others.

3.4.2.3 Transparency and Ground Rules

Sterling and Davidoff (2000: 78) mention two ways to encourage and build trust in schools: one is to be transparent and share information, the other is to

establish trust-building ground rules. Principals, who are transparent and willing to engage with teachers with respect to decisions and matters that concern them, are able to create an atmosphere of trust. They share information with teachers and also give teachers an opportunity to share information with them. In this way misunderstandings are avoided and situations that can lead to conflict, averted. Agendas for meetings are circulated in advance so that all constituents can make meaningful contributions at meetings. Principals can also increase transparency, by encouraging staff representatives to participate in management meetings. The principal's actions are more important than the words he/she utters.

Establishing trust-building ground rules also helps to prevent conflict. The ground rules create a framework by which staff can participate freely and responsibly in discussions. Some ground rules suggested are: respect for each other, one person talks at a time, do not interrupt someone talking, criticise ideas not people, keep an open mind, share responsibility, be supportive rather than judgemental, give feedback directly and openly, be willing to forgive, share your knowledge, be a team player, listen constructively and build self-esteem (Sterling and Davidoff, 2000: 79). The staff at the school can agree on their own set of ground rules.

Daft and Lengel (1998: 185) state that " People believe actions first, and immediately spot discrepancies between actions and words." The principal must be consistent in word and deed. The actions described above demonstrate openness and help to engender trust.

3.4.2.4 Delegation

In the context of schools the act of delegation is important in many respects. It demonstrates confidence in teachers, it builds capacity and so, most importantly, demonstrates trust. Stokes and James (1996: 71) agree that "Delegation involves trust, because a leader is prepared to take responsibility for someone else's outcomes." The act of "genuine" delegation implies that the leader has to give up control, but at the same time he has to show confidence and give the necessary support to the person now in charge. If teachers view delegation simply as principals "passing the buck" then it may well lead to teachers feeling that they are being "used" and that the principal is not really interested in their professional development. This will harm the relationship of trust.

3.4.2.5 Visibility and Interest

Another simple but effective strategy that establishes trust, is the visibility and presence of principals at school events. The presence and visibility of school leaders demonstrates interest, concern, care and approachability (Hughes and Hooper, 2000: 112.) The presence of the principal, even if symbolic, demonstrates a sense of common purpose with pupils, parents and teachers and helps in bonding, which strengthens relationships. The active participation of the principal in the day-to-day activities of the school demonstrates his/her personal commitment to achieving the goals of the school and also helps to build trust. The principal needs to seek the underlying human values in schools, some of which are culturally diverse, and synthesize a vision, which appeals to

all stakeholders. This common vision can then be reflected in the day-to-day activities of the school.

The principal should also strive for clarity, consistency and continuity in achieving the shared values and goals so that teachers have a clear sense of direction and this makes them feel secure and have confidence in the leadership of the principal. Seyfarth (1996: 194) supports the view that leaders gain teachers' trust by exhibiting consistent and predictable behaviour and by displaying a commitment to helping individuals improve in their jobs. All the actions mentioned above serve to build up, what Covey (1992) calls, the "emotional bank account". This strong bond helps to nurture and sustain the relationship through future turbulent times, when strain is brought to bear on the relationship.

3.4.2.6 Trustworthiness and Competence

Covey (1992) states that trustworthiness, that is trust in one's self, is dependent on a persons' character and competence. Block (1993: 260) emphasizes the importance of trustworthiness by saying that in searching for a leader in whom we have faith, our doubts are not about the leader's talents, but about his/her trustworthiness. The character of a leader is just as important as the other characteristics and competencies of a leader. Competence is an important ingredient to build trust. A patient will most likely trust a surgeon, who has a recognized medical qualification, to operate on him/her. Similarly teachers would expect principals who lead them to have the necessary competence.

In the absence of this competence it is difficult for the principal to both gain respect and establish trust from teachers.

3.5 Interpersonal Conflict

3.5.1 Definitions of Conflict

Interpersonal conflict in organizations is broadly seen as conflict between two or more people or groups of people. Deutsch (1973: 10) says that, "a conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur." Squelch and Lemmer (1994: 147) state that "Conflict arises when two or more people have incompatible goals and one or both believe that the behaviour of the other prevent them from achieving their own goals." Seyfarth (1996: 243), referring to Rahim, states that "Conflict occurs when people disagree regarding values, information, and goals, or when individuals compete for scarce resources." In this study the writer will focus on conflicts which can arise from disagreements between educators and between educators and management. The disagreements can be related to values, goals, policies or the allocation of resources.

3.5.2 Current View of Conflict

Conflict is no longer regarded as being necessarily destructive or something that should be avoided at all cost. The current view of organizational conflict is that it is a normal part of life in organizations (Owens, 1998: 232). Although leaders must continuously seek to resolve conflict, they can never eradicate it (Hodgkinson, 1991). Conflict can, and does, produce useful outcomes such as providing the impetus for change. It is often in the process of resolving conflict that new paradigms are created. These paradigm shifts enable organizations to

attain greater heights and to remain relevant. Resolution and control can be distinguished as different goals of managing conflict. When conflict is resolved, the original disagreements or feelings of opposition no longer exist. On the other hand, controlling conflict seeks to reduce the negative consequences of conflict, but the opposing preferences and antagonisms persist (Walton, 1997: 111). The outcome that is desired depends on the nature of conflict and implications for the organization.

3.5.3 Negative Outcomes of Conflict

Given the current understanding of conflict as something that is inevitable and often legitimate, the focus is on managing conflict in such a way that negative outcomes are minimized (Owens, 1998: 232). The "win-lose" scenario and resultant hostility can be reduced, if not avoided, if conflict is managed effectively. Conflicts that are allowed to simmer and fester can lead to dysfunctional behaviour that can adversely affect the functioning of the organization.

Conflicts that result in frequent and powerful hostility can have a negative psychological and physical impact. The psychological effects result in alienation, apathy and indifference. The physical effects reveal themselves in absence, tardiness and resignations (Owens, 1996: 232). It should be noted that many of the behaviours revealed by teachers, as outlined in Chapter One, are similar to those mentioned above. These behaviours are defence mechanisms that allow affected people to withdraw from the adverse conditions that arise from the unresolved conflict. The important point is for principals not

to simply dismiss these responses as laziness on the part of teachers, but to delve deeper, to determine the underlying causes of such behaviour. In present day organizations, leaders spend a significant amount of time in managing conflict. It is, therefore, important for leaders to have well-honed conflict management skills to deal creatively with conflict.

3.5.4 Strategies for Preventing or Managing Conflict

3.5.4.1 Resources

In schools, in addition to dealing with conflict brought to their attention, principals also need to identify situations, which can lead to unnecessary conflict, so that preventative measures can be taken to avoid the negative outcomes of conflict. The sources and nature of conflict also dictate the tactics employed to manage the conflict (Hanson, 1996: 269).

Competition for scarce resources is a major source of conflict in schools. The best solution is to acquire more resources, as this will solve the problem for everyone. However, this is not always possible. Therefore guidelines, that have been fairly negotiated, have to be drawn up to determine how the resources should be allocated, in order to prevent conflict.

3.5.4.2 Reward Systems

Problematic reward systems that are the source of conflict should be modified or abolished. The energy and effort of teachers are often used in counter productive ways. For example, teachers may attempt to compete for the principal's favour, expending their effort in "political" activity and this can

heighten tensions and lead to unnecessary conflict. The principal should be mindful of this and, therefore, recognize results and not flattery or "show" (Everard and Morris, 1996: 97).

Principals often try to motivate teachers by creating a competitive environment, especially between departments. This can, however, have an undesirable effect, as competition for resources and personality clashes can result and lead to conflict. Encouraging teamwork and interdepartmental interaction are important strategies to ensure collaboration and consensus, since group interests are placed before the interests of individuals in attaining the goals of the organization.

3.5.4.3 Role Clarification

Task ambiguity is often cited as a cause of conflict in schools. The principal must refer to the appropriate guidelines, for example, the Employment of Educators' Act, 1998, which outlines the core duties and responsibilities of educators at different post levels. By clarifying the roles and responsibilities of educators, task ambiguity will be minimized, and the potential for conflict will be reduced. When educators interact with regard to a particular role, the duties and responsibilities of each educator can be negotiated through dialogue and debate.

3.5.4.4 Interaction Patterns

In some cases the pattern of interaction that the principal fosters will be dependent on the nature of conflict that exists. If the conflict entails suspicion of

motives or a lack of trust between departments or groups, then it may be advisable for the principal to encourage collaboration between them, so that teachers get to know and understand each other. The principal can appoint these teachers to the same committees. If, on the other hand, the conflict stems from differences in values or principles, then it may be advisable to reduce the degree of interaction between the departments or groups, as increasing interaction, is likely to exacerbate the situation (Hanson, 1996: 270). The success in applying the correct strategy is dependent on the principal being aware of the relationship that exists between departments and between groups of teachers in his/her school.

3.5.4.5 Bureaucracy and Positional Power

When bureaucracy is applied in an uncompromising manner, with the power and authority centralized in the principal, it becomes a major source of discord in schools. Jenkins (1991: 470) points out that hierarchy has a negative effect on teachers' satisfaction and an emphasis on bureaucracy results in conflict in schools. The principal may use his/her position in the hierarchy to impose autocratic decisions on teachers. Teachers may become rebellious and militant in response to this and so this becomes a major source of conflict. Bureaucracy tends to stifle initiative and can result in a feeling of helplessness and alienation. The inappropriate use of positional authority undermines the professionalism of teachers and can result in conflict. Principals, who respect the professional status of teachers by encouraging participation in decision-making and affording them autonomy, are likely to reduce conflict situations.

3.5.4.6 Transparency and Fairness

Certain attitudes and skills on the part of principals can help to prevent conflict situations from arising. Principals who display fairness, impartiality and consistency in dealing with teachers are likely to secure the confidence and trust of teachers. Teachers develop respect and place great value on the judgement of the principal. Similarly transparency with regards to decisions is very important, because it can prevent misunderstandings which often result in conflict. Principals must be willing to answer questions and to be able to justify how decisions are made. The guiding principle is that decisions that are taken must be in the best interests of the whole school.

3.5.4.7 Openness and Accessibility

Principals who have an "open-door" policy are able to keep the channels of communication open. In this way, teachers are given a chance to air their grievances and principals are able to identify situations which can lead to conflict. Principals can then use this opportunity to provide objectivity, clarity and perspective, to offer advice or make necessary interventions, thereby preventing conflict. Seyfarth (1996: 245) referring to Yates, expresses the view that most employees will accept decisions not favourable to them, if they were given a respectful hearing from a person they believe is transparent and fair.

3.5.4.8 Participatory Management

The autocratic management style of principals has been a major source of conflict between teachers and management. Teachers, often complain that principals take important decisions, without any consultation. These decisions

are often insensitive to the needs of teachers and difficult to implement. In response to these complaints, principals should adopt a participative management style, especially with regard to decisions that impact directly on teachers. For example, teachers should be consulted on allocation of teaching loads, allocation to classes and resources. Collaboration and consultation helps to create an atmosphere of trust. This will have a positive impact on the commitment and motivation of staff. In such an atmosphere, teachers will be less militant and conflict situations will be less likely to develop.

The strategies and actions described above are essentially aimed at preventing or avoiding unproductive conflict. In many cases conflict is unavoidable and sometimes escalates to a state where it affects people's health, their sense of self-esteem or their ability to perform their jobs. In such instances, where the conflict affects the proper functioning of the school, then it is necessary for principals to take appropriate action (Sterling and Davidoff, 2000: 75).

3.5.5 Conflict Handling Styles

Hanson (1996: 272), referring to the conflict management model of Kenneth Thomas, identifies two critical dimensions of behaviour that arise in a conflict. These two dimensions are assertiveness, which is the desire to satisfy one's own concerns and cooperativeness, which is the desire to satisfy the concerns of others. Within these two opposing behaviour dimensions, Thomas identifies five conflict-handling styles: avoiding, competing, accommodating, compromising and collaborating. The basic conflict outcomes, namely the "win-win", "win-lose" and "lose-lose" orientations, are evident in the conflict handling

styles. The writer will discuss these five conflict- handling styles and identify conflict situations, where each style can be used. In order to manage conflict effectively, principals must become skilled in selecting and applying the appropriate conflict handling style, at the appropriate time.

3.5.5.1 Avoiding Style

In this style, the person handling the conflict displays indifference, evasion and withdrawal. The intention is to ignore the conflict altogether or to delay intervention. The conflict can be ignored if the principal believes that the matter is trivial and is likely to sort itself out or that the damage of confrontation will exceed the benefits of resolving the conflict. For example, if there is conflict between two departments because of inadequate resources, but the principal is aware that more resources will be available in a day or two, then he may choose to ignore the conflict because the root of the problem will be addressed shortly. Delaying intervention in a conflict that is intense, with emotions running high, may be advisable because not much can be achieved in addressing the problems immediately. The principal has to exercise care in using this style because, if it is not used appropriately it has the potential to escalate conflict, cause a breakdown in communication and result in tremendous damage to relationships of trust.

3.5.5.2 Competing Style

When employing this style the intention is to satisfy one's own concern if necessary at the expense of others. The tactic to achieve this may include using your emotional, intellectual or positional power to intimidate subordinates,

thereby imposing your solution. This style can be used to good effect in certain circumstances. When there is an emergency, for example, when an intruder threatens damage to property or life in school, the principal has to take quick, decisive action and require that teachers carry out his/her orders. In certain cases the principal has to enforce unpopular decisions, for example, if vandalism to school property is rife during change of classes, the principal may insist that pupil-based classes be implemented as opposed to teacher-based rooms, despite this decision being unpopular with teachers. The "win-lose" orientation of this style can result in resentment and hostility, if teachers perceive it to have been inappropriately used. It is perhaps advisable for principals to pursue alternative solutions, before adopting this style of resolving conflict.

3.5.5.3 Accommodating Style

Adopting this kind of behaviour implies that, the concerns of others are favoured above one's own concerns, producing a "win-lose" solution. The one party makes concessions to avoid conflict. It is appropriate to adopt this style when the benefits of resolving the conflict speedily outweigh the damage that can result if the conflict is allowed to escalate. The benefits of this style to the principal are that he/she is able to build credit and extract commitment from teachers on other issues that may arise later. This style also provides a way for people to acknowledge their vulnerability and admit that they are wrong and to make amends by offering concessions. Principals must, however, be aware that by using this style injudiciously, they risk the possibility of teachers losing respect for them and their opinions (Everard and Morris, 1996: 101).

3.5.5.4 Compromising Style

This style involves a sharing orientation. Both parties involved in the conflict must be prepared to give up something in order to arrive at an expedient solution that will benefit both. This style can be used to good effect when both parties wield equal power and are committed to mutually exclusive goals. The urge to achieve a solution, because of time constraints, often results in sacrificing quality solutions in order to reach common ground. Compromising behaviour can result in wheeling and dealing at the expense of principles and values (Squelch and Lemmer, 1994: 151).

3.5.5.5 Collaborating Style

This approach seeks to satisfy the concerns of both parties, resulting in a "win-win" situation. It involves mutual problem solving in order to arrive at creative alternative courses of action. This style requires honesty and openness on the part of all participants in order to arrive at the best solution. It can be used by principals to achieve lasting solutions to important issues. For example, because conflicts concerning teacher workloads is common in schools, it is advisable for principals to spend time at the beginning of the year in resolving conflicts that concern teacher workloads, rather than attempting to resolve such an important issue later in the year. This will ensure that teachers are satisfied and disruptions are kept to a minimum during the course of the year. This will help in creating an atmosphere that is conducive to achieving the goals of the school. The collaborative style of handling conflict can also be used to resolve long-standing conflicts (Squelch and Lemmer, 1994: 151). Other styles such as

avoidance, competition, compromise and accommodation have been used with limited success to resolve conflicts.

There is no single best approach for dealing with conflict. Conflict is not a static event, it changes as new variables are brought to bear on the situation. There are many factors that need to be considered before selecting a strategy to handle conflict. Some important aspects to be considered include the time and resources that are available, the attitude and skills of people, the seriousness of the situation and the number of people affected. The key to handling conflict, successfully, is to make a careful analysis of the situation and to match this to an appropriate conflict handling style. Hanson (1996: 272) supports this view in that he advocates a contingency approach to handling conflict. The goal in managing conflict is to ensure the most productive outcome for the organization, while minimizing the negative consequences. It is, therefore, important to consider the long-term consequences of the aftermath of conflict (Owens, 1998: 246).

3.5.6 Principles for Resolving Conflict

Seyfarth (1996: 246) proposes three principles for resolving conflict. The first principle is that in general the chosen solution should benefit the largest number of people and is adversarial to the smallest number of people. In schools the students are the majority and teachers are in the minority. This implies that decisions taken should firstly be in the interests of the students, while at the same time not causing undue burdens for teachers. The problem that arises, however, is that the decision may benefit the student in the short term but be

harmful in the long-term. The affected parties should look at the pros and cons of a decision and then arrive at an agreement. The second principle advocates that the chosen solution should help the organization to achieve its goal. In schools the central goal is the achievement of effective teaching and learning. If a chosen solution hinders the attainment of this goal then it is detrimental to the school and its fundamental purpose. The third principle holds that the person handling the conflict, should appeal to the affected party's sense of affiliation, that is the desire of individuals to be accepted as part of the group. In schools, the principal should minimize teachers' individual interests, by asking them to put aside their own interests and forego personal gain and instead contribute to the interest of the group. Conflicts, involving sharing of resources, can be resolved in this way.

3.6 Conclusion

In using the strategies presented in this Chapter, it is hoped that the problems identified in Chapter One may be successfully addressed. Many of the strategies that are presented throughout this Chapter would be appropriate for many different situations. For example, it will be hard to argue against the strategy that principals should model the behaviours they expect of teachers in building commitment. It should, however, be noted that these strategies are not prescriptions, as the particular contexts in schools will ultimately determine the applicability of these strategies. The application of these strategies requires reflection, if they are to be successfully implemented.

3.7 Summary

In this Chapter the writer provided definitions and discussed theories and research findings associated with concepts such as commitment, motivation, trust and interpersonal conflict. The Chapter also presented and analysed strategies that principals can use to build commitment, motivation, trust and handle interpersonal conflict in schools. In the next Chapter the writer will outline future challenges for principals and make some recommendations for preparing principals to exercise effective leadership.

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CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter Four the writer will provide some insight into the challenges that principals, in providing effective leadership, will have to accept in the future. Firstly, the writer contends that there should be an awareness of current challenges among present and future principals in providing effective leadership. Secondly, a climate that is conducive to the exercise of leadership should be created. Thirdly, the complexity, variety and multitude of roles that the principal is expected to play, will necessitate his disciplined use of time, effort and resources, in order to enhance his/her role. In helping the principal cope with these demands, he/she will have to develop the capacity of staff and empower them to lead. In the light of the unique and non-routine problems which many principals encounter, the writer proposes that principals should become more reflective practitioners (explained later).

4.2 Conditions that Facilitate Leadership

4.2.1 Accepting the Leadership Challenge

Leadership and management are often regarded as being synonymous, in that they are both concerned with establishing and implementing efficient rules and procedures. In Chapter One, the writer pointed out the differences between managing and leading. Schools in South Africa have focused on management, rather than leadership (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1999: 67). The reason for this could be the failure to recognize and acknowledge the differences between managing and leading.

Research by Torrington and Weightman (1989) and Hall *et al.* (1986) appear to support the view that, in some cases, the burden of technical, managerial and administrative tasks mitigates against the exercise of leadership. The reluctance to exercise leadership is illustrated by Ribbins (1995: 260) in the comment of one headteacher:

> "Achieving a worthwhile curriculum today is possible and very demanding. It is not surprising that some heads are more comfortable retreating into their administrative duties...They do so because they want to...If you see yourself as an administrator you can hardly hope to be a leading professional as well."

Exercising leadership in present day schools can be demanding and time consuming because the principal can no longer rely entirely on formal authority to control and direct the activities of teachers. Instead he/she has to ensure broad participation, collaboration, consultation and problem solving concerning issues that affect teachers directly. Principals must, therefore, have the courage and aptitude to accept the challenge of providing leadership.

Davidoff and Lazarus (1999: 67) point out that, for most schools in the past, good principals were efficient bureaucrats, who attended to relief rosters, invigilation timetables, and procedures for disciplinary problems. These principals completed forms on time and established efficient structures, which ensured the smooth running of their schools. The writer acknowledges that while these tasks are important, the practice of leadership must be given equal

prominence in schools, so that the problems identified in Chapter One can be addressed.

The complex nature of the leadership process is revealed by Schon (1983: 3), in the following metaphor:

> "In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high hard ground overlooking a swamp. On the high ground, manageable problems lend themselves to solutions through the application of research based theory and technique. In the swampy lowland, messy, confusing problems defy technical solutions."

Problems on the high ground are more routine and concern structures, plans and the curriculum (West-Burnham, 1997: 139). These problems can be more easily solved if the leader has access to relevant information: for example, he/she is clear about what goals, if accomplished, would solve the problem and he/she has relevant procedures for overcoming the problem (Leithwood *et al.*, 1992: 42). Problems in the swamp involve poorly-structured situations and concern mostly values. Solutions to these problems must be determined 'on the spot', as there are no rules and procedures to apply.

The degree of "swampiness", is a purely subjective matter, because the more a person knows about how to solve a problem, the less "swampy" it is. Problems on the "high ground" may be of less concern for future leaders, because of easily available technical solutions: for example, constructing timetables are no

longer difficult, because computer programmes can now be used to generate these in a relatively short time. So, will the "swamp" disappear in the future? The emphatic answer to this question is, 'No', because the predicted exponential rate of change will ensure that new problems, that defy technical solutions, will arise to sustain the "swamp" (Leithwood *et al.*, 1992: 43).

At present the training of principals focuses mainly on solving problems on the "high ground", because there are definitive rules and procedures (theory) for handling such problems. The question that needs to be answered is, how can principals become proficient in attending to problems in the "swamp"? This question will be dealt with below, as principals as reflective practitioners.

4.2.2 Restructuring Schools

Hierarchical and authoritarian structures, which are still present in many South African schools, tend to militate against the practice of effective leadership, because principals rely excessively on their positional power while ordinary teachers are given little power in, for example, decision-making.

The idea of developing the leadership component of a principal's role will be given greater impetus if schools are restructured, moving away from traditional hierarchies, that were valuable in the past, but have become ineffective because of changing circumstances. Principals must be viewed as professional colleagues of teachers who, though still central in co-ordinating activities such as decision-making, are able to collaborate with and involve teachers in a meaningful way to achieve the goals of the school.

4.2.3 Diversify Leadership

The considerable work and role of principals is characterized by complexity, variety and ambiguity. Principals should prioritize their use of time, effort and resources. Their focus should always be the achievement of the goals of the school. The goals of an organization are achieved primarily through people who work in it, so it makes sense to harness, develop and use their capacity and skills. This argument is even more compelling for schools, because teachers are professionals and have a vast amount of knowledge and skills, which a principal can use, in order to achieve the goals of the school. Moreover, to accomplish certain tasks the principal may require the special knowledge and skills of certain teachers. In such cases the principal, must willingly share his/her power and control, by involving talented teachers and delegating responsibility to them. Thus, by virtue of their knowledge and skills, these teachers are given the opportunity to exercise leadership. In this way, the principal encourages the development of leadership skills in his staff.

4.3 Principals as Reflective Practitioners

Schools are complex and dynamic social institutions. Many problems in schools cannot be solved only through the application of rules and procedures. Such problems are non-routine and so there are no past precedents to determine their solution. Under these circumstances the principal should engage in, what Schon (1983) calls, "reflective practice". Reflective practice, according to Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000: 186), "means staying abreast of the latest research in practice, researching your own practice, experimenting with new approaches, reflecting on your own approach, and sharing your own insights."

Unfortunately in most schools principals are so engrossed in solving immediate problems and focusing on current tasks, that they seldom give attention either to their own personal development or the development of the school. The principal, as a reflective practitioner, must use knowledge gained from his/her training and research in educational practice, as well as the knowledge he/she acquires from his/her experience in specific contexts.

In a school each situation requiring a response presents a unique set of circumstances for the principal. There are no prescriptions that can be applied to all situations. The principal should instead reflect on the dynamics of a particular situation in determining a course of action: for example, classroom visits by the principal will have to be sensitive to the needs of the teacher. An experienced teacher may construe them as being intrusive, calculated to arouse feelings of distrust. A newly qualified teacher, however, may view this as a form of instructional support, which aims to engender high expectations for teaching and learning. All strategies presented in Chapter Three of this dissertation, should, therefore, be regarded as useful suggestions, which could be of help to principals in formulating courses of action. However, it is necessary that each principal reflects on and evaluates these strategies to determine their applicability in a particular context. If necessary, the strategy could be modified to suit a particular circumstance.

The essence of reflective practice is that each person accepts responsibility for his/her own professional and personal growth, thereby contributing to the continuous improvement of the school. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000: 187),

referring to Johnson, aptly capture the importance of reflective practice in the following statement, "The whole of reflective practitioners' collective efforts is far greater than the sum of each person's accomplishments."

4.4 Conclusion

The principal is a key figure in determining how teachers feel about their job. By helping to create and sustain a school climate that is conducive to building commitment, motivation and trust and managing interpersonal conflict among teachers, the principal can enhance the performance of teachers. The principal's role is shifting from one of directing and controlling to one of guiding, facilitating and supporting. Involving teachers in decision-making and empowering them to become leaders will be crucial in the future.

4.5 Summary

In this Chapter the writer outlined some of the challenges that principals will have to contend with in the future. The role of the principal will be characterised by variety and complexity. To meet these challenges the writer proposed that principals should create conditions that facilitate effective leadership. In dealing with problems in the "swamp" (complex and unfamiliar problems) the writer proposed that principals become reflective practitioners. This will entail using experience reinforced with practice and research to formulate alternative solutions to complex problems. The preferred solution is selected, tried and evaluated.

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