

CHANGE MANAGEMENT: BEST PRACTICE IN WHOLE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

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Change Management: Best Practice in Whole School Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Research Objective

Formulate a competency profile for change management based on a role analysis of School Management Teams.

Method

In order to learn from best practice, nine exemplary schools were identified. Officials of the Northern Cape Education Department assisted in the formulation of appropriate selection criteria and research methodology. Prior to this, Change Management Workshops with 79 District Officials of the Gauteng Education Department served to establish research priorities. A workshop at Keimoes for School Management Teams was used to test the first draft of a questionnaire. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in the Northern Cape with 14 principals and deputy principals, 72 educators, two parents, four school governors and 220 learners. Questionnaire responses were obtained from 8 school principals, 147 educators, 126 learners and 60 parents. A further 68 responses were obtained from principals in a postal survey of schools in the Northern Cape.

The Human Resources methodologies of role analysis and competency formulation are utilised to interpret the information obtained.

Findings

1. Characteristic of the schools where change is well-managed is the presence of constructive leadership attitudes. Imaginative ways of implementing externally generated change are found. Furthermore, these schools have a relatively high incidence of internally generated change, such as fund-raising.
2. Principals are more positive about the future than educators who feel pessimistic about most of the recent changes that have taken place. The continuing prospect of rationalisation is by far the most mentioned cause of anxiety, which is understandable in a province such as the Northern Cape where educator: learner ratios are relatively low. Educators in schools of the former Cape Education Department are the most pessimistic.
3. Policy changes, particularly the abolishment of corporal punishment and greater learner diversity, are experienced by educators as increased workload, contributing to low morale. Under these circumstances school managers not only need to initiate alternative organisational systems, curriculum development and in-service training, they have to formulate strategies for improving staff performance.
4. All stakeholders, principals, educators, parents and learners, are convinced that the moral integrity of managers is their most important contribution. It is the public expression of values that provides a measure of stability during times of social and organisational change.
5. Interpersonal skills are always mentioned as a necessity. It is evident that there has been a significant shift towards a more democratic approach to school management. The principal is now part of a School Management Team, and needs to consult all stakeholders. The selected schools all had in place well-established structures and systems to facilitate decision making, that is both participatory and efficient. Participatory management competence is therefore essential.

6. The introduction of Governing Bodies is a significant innovation. Principals in the exemplary schools all co-operate closely with their Governing Body and view its contribution as crucial to the smooth functioning of the school. In certain situations School Governing Bodies have an extended role in attaining 'unpopular' objectives: for example, under-performing educators or parents not paying school-fees are reported to it. In one of the schools the Governing Body led a successful protest action against the Education Department.

7. Socio-economic inequalities continue to be a distinguishing factor between schools. A principal of a former model-C school, charging fees of R3-4,000 per annum, is in a very different position to the principal of a former House of Representatives or DET school where it is a struggle to obtain R15 in annual fees from the parents. The range of managerial competencies appropriate in one setting could be very different to those in another.

8. The current context of change requires of managers competencies in these roles:

- Beacon of moral integrity
- Driving force
- Manager of crises
- Multicultural manager
- Facilitator of participatory structures
- Pioneer of alternative organisational systems
- Negotiator
- Manager of multiple roles

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Part 1: Rationale and Framework

Clarification of Task

In order to generate a competency profile for change management in education the point of departure needs to be school communities where change is being managed successfully. The central question is: "Is it possible to identify common managerial characteristics in these schools?" The methodology utilised in addressing the question can draw on the practice of competency profiling as a Human Resources procedure, but it will need to have a scope broader than applied research.

Competency profiling has the potential to improve procedures for recruitment and selection, management development and training, and performance appraisal which is both accurate and perceived to be fair. However, for all its great promise, the exercise remains contested.

A Problem of Reductionism

The principal performs a range of tasks in any one day. Attempts to define them all would be futile. It is therefore frequently argued that competency derivation exercises, for all their applicability to 'lower levels' of work, are not able to capture the complexities of management.

The debate between advocates of the 'occupational skills' approach to competency derivation and advocates of a 'personal attributes' approach is often enlisted to solve the problem. It is argued that in the case of management we should seek to identify those personal attributes which are drawn on repeatedly as tools for successful performance (Jirasinghe & Lyons 1996: 28).

Nevertheless, attempting to reduce a complex profession with a multiplicity of roles and tasks to a list of activities or even attributes remains a problem. Longer lists may be more comprehensive but they can become unwieldy, often resulting in a trade-off of precision for usability. Most research processes involve some form of *ranking* in order to identify those competencies which are the most important.

The challenge is to establish a methodology which delivers the required information within a research framework of reasonable scientific validity. There are degrees of reductionism in all social scientific research, which necessitates a modesty about results and rigorous justification of methodology.

Clarification of Terminology

For the past three decades Human Resources practitioners have been engaged in various processes designed to produce sets of requirements for particular jobs. In a field which is unavoidably interdisciplinary, there is an uneasy alliance of Testing (Industrial Psychology), Performance Assessment (Business Management) and more recently, OBE (Education). From task analysis research with its trappings of empiricism, to negotiated agreements between stakeholders in the current round of occupational standard setting exercises, the observer is confronted by a bewildering array of method and language. Not only are there different terms such as 'competency', 'standard', 'outcome', 'output', but the words themselves are often defined in very different ways. The researcher is therefore compelled to clarify the meanings of words at the outset. The definition of competence formulated by Professor Ian Bellis (Bellis 1997:2) is clear and comprehensive:

A skill or integrated cluster of skills executed within an indicated range or context to specific standards of performance, of integrated understanding of the performance and its knowledge base, of understanding of the system in which the performance is carried out, of the ability to transfer to other related contexts, of the ability to innovate when appropriate.

This definition of competence as capacity makes it clear that 'knowledge' is not just knowledge displayed in performance, but is knowledge underpinning performance.

A working definition of occupational standards is from the document, *Norms and Standards for Teacher Education, Training and Development* (Department of Education 1997:3):

Identification of relevant tasks, knowledge and/or skills, and performance levels associated with a particular occupation. Benchmarks for skills and knowledge against which practice of a particular occupation is measured, which are generally established by the regulatory body governing the occupation.

The stakeholder group method of standards setting will be very useful in the final stage of the current project when the findings are verified/validated. The research methods of competency derivation also have relevance to the design of the research process itself, and will therefore inform the current research project.

Approaches to Competency Derivation

1. Job Analysis

This can include workplace observation, analyses of diaries and time logs, and interviews to establish roles and tasks in relation to work processes in the organisation (Barrett 1996, Bellis 1997). The use of questionnaires which require some form of ranking of generic competencies is widespread.

It is usually emphasised that instruments appropriate to the context be sought and that greater precision can be obtained by a triangulation of two or more. The job-holder is not the sole source of information: supervisors, subordinates and peers are often included in what is called 360 degree research.

The process of competency derivation usually includes the following steps:

1. Analysing the job
2. Inferring competencies from analysis of tasks
3. Clustering under headings (different configurations are possible)
4. Profiling by means of listing the most important competencies for a particular professional role, and establishing required levels/ range statements
5. Validating by stakeholder consultation in a standards writing exercise

2. Strategic Analysis

"We must begin to use the future as a reference point and source of information about work definition and requirements"

(McClagan 1995: 11).

Human Resources researchers are increasingly moving away from the older forms of task analysis to techniques which seek to use future strategies to determine job content. Changes within work environments mean that some activities are more important, while others become obsolete. All activities are therefore to be seen in relation to strategic objectives. In the jargon of business, there is a 'value stream' of activities that are in the direct flow of the products and services out to the customer, the core and focus of the business. Whichever competency contributes to that value stream is prioritised. Or put more bluntly, "that worthy performance ... for which someone is willing to pay" (W.E. Blank cited in Bellis 1997:3).

With this change in emphasis comes new ways in which work itself is described. The older task language, 'he sweeps floors' becomes, 'he provides a safe and clean working environment'. The focus is on the impact of the activity (outputs) rather than the process (New Zealand Qualification Authority 1996: 9).

Organisational strategy therefore becomes a vital source of information for competency derivation. Considerably more precision has been brought to bear on this exercise by recent developments in company reporting which emphasise the need to measure the intangible assets of an organisation.

The idea behind the *Balanced Scorecard* is that the intangible assets are often better indicators of future performance than financial indicators of the Balance Sheet which concentrate on past performance (Kaplan & Norton 1996). Taxonomies have emerged for identifying and measuring **organisational capacity** (sometimes called Intellectual Capital) in areas such as knowledge, organisational systems and customer loyalty (Edvinsson & Malone 1997).

A structured way of measuring organisational capacity offers a means of establishing human competency requirements which relate to strategic objectives. We shall return to this question in the design of research instruments.

Research Orientation

Combination of Occupational and Strategic Analysis

In times of fundamental change, job holders may be one pace behind the requirements of the new systems. In educational research concerned with change it is therefore essential to:

- * Survey innovators in education
- * Obtain examples of national and provincial mission statements for education
- * Compare with international best practice

The decision to conduct job analysis within schools where change is well managed serves to combine the occupational with the strategic approach.

Multiperspectival

'Setting standards involves defining key outcomes in collaboration and consultation with the stakeholders, providers and members of the professional community of educators, and writing a rigorous core of priority standards that speak directly to their concerns.' (Department of Education 1997:148).

The emphasis on stakeholder participation, which underpins Standards Writing initiatives, is not only relevant to the final stages of research validation, but will be applied to the exploratory empirical procedures in the current project. Information, using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, is obtained from school managers, educators, pupils, parents, district officials and possibly union officials. This 360 degree research offers the prospect of greater accuracy through triangulation.

Further triangulation by utilising more than one research method can also improve the quality of the findings. This will include individual interviews, focus groups and a questionnaire survey in the nine selected schools as well as a postal survey of School Management Teams in the 174 Secondary/Combined Northern Cape Schools.

Management Team Identity

It is sometimes argued that that the emphasis on individual managerial competency reflects the 'heroic leader ideal', an extension of the influence of the hierarchical 'headmaster tradition' (Grace 1996). In line with international trends (Fullan 1991, Jenkins 1991), Educational Management Theory in South Africa has shifted its emphasis from individual to team leadership (Department of Education 1996, cf. Mataboge 1993, Mataboge 1994). Instead of only identifying individual competencies, attention will also need to be on the competencies of the School Management Team as a corporate entity.

Part II. Available Research on Competency Profiling for Educational Managers

Mike Wallace

Valuable material was gathered by Mike Wallace (1991, 1992) in his survey of nine British schools where change is managed effectively. Relying on qualitative interviews he established common leadership patterns in these schools. The broader context is described (Wallace 1991:188):

From 1989 onwards, the headteachers' attitudes to innovations shifted away from initiating change to protecting staff and pupils, where possible, from what they perceived to be the negative effects of the rapidly increasing number of external innovations.

Effective leadership involved:

- * anticipating the educational and political trends likely to impact on schools
- * being able to integrate external innovation into the mission of the school
- * being able to negotiate assertively with officialdom

Pat Sullivan

Management Competencies of Secondary School Principals (Sullivan 1995) is an important study because of its precise focus on managerial competency requirements for secondary school principals in South Africa. A questionnaire was formulated based on the twelve competencies of the effective school manager, as formulated by Derek Esp (Esp 1993). After interviews with educationalists and fifteen principals, it was concluded that the particular challenges of South Africa suggested the addition of two additional competencies: Servant Leadership and Moral Authority.

Ranked responses were received from 149 educators and school managers. The overall analysis produced the following order:

Leadership
Sensitivity
Judgement
Organisational Ability
Creative Problem Solving
Moral Authority
Problem Analysis
Developmental Awareness
Pedagogic Leadership
Educational Values
Personal Motivation
Servant Leadership
Oral Communication
Stress Tolerance
Decisiveness
Boundary Management
Range of Interests
Risk Taking
Written Communication

The findings demonstrate some variation in responses with regard to gender and race difference.

Jirasinghe and Lyons

Compared to the corporate, relatively little systematic work has been done within an educational environment to establish general managerial competencies. An important departure is the work of Jirasinghe and Lyons, *The Competent Head. A Job Analysis of Heads' Tasks and Personality Factors (1996)* . Their work is overtly patterned on practices of Human Resources. Particular use is made of two instruments which have been widely used in other occupational fields:

1. Work Profiling (WPS)

The process seeks to collect task and behaviour oriented information, and then applies statistical processes to infer the required human attributes.

Questionnaires require

- a) Ranking of tasks
- b) Ranking amount of time spent on each

2. Occupational Personality

Personality questionnaires, widely used in recruitment, serve to establish appropriate personality requirements for the particular occupational setting.

It is noticeable that these instruments give attention to what the literature calls process indicators instead of outcomes. In the eyes of some this would be a significant limitation to the value of the study. The information of the questionnaire responses from 255 headteachers was supplemented by validation interviews with headteachers and officials. The results were quantified and analysed. An important benefit of using generic questionnaires was the possibility of comparing results with a norm group of managers , standardised on 728 respondents. The comparison indicates that educational managers score themselves higher on interpersonal skills. When compared to managers in general, principals place far greater emphasis on competencies such as 'values', 'political ability', 'persuading and negotiating' (1996: 101).

The tantalisingly brief explanation offered by Jirasinghe and Lyons is that changes in society and educational policy result in these new configurations of priorities (1996: 71). If contextual issues have such an influence on the derivation of competencies, any exercise which does not establish contextual variables remains deficient.

Howard Summers

The instruments used by Jirasinghe and Lyons form the basis for the survey conducted by Howard Summers at the end of 1997, *A Survey of the Leadership Training Needs in the Catholic Education Network*. Unlike the British survey, which made no attempt at including Strategic Analysis, this survey included indicators, which expressed the specific priorities of Catholic Education.

Responses were received from 86 school leaders within the Catholic network. The ranking method was also used, and a comparative outline appears on the next page.

Conclusions

In all these attempts at competency derivation, based on ranking long lists of items, there comes a moment of disillusionment at the end. When required to rate the importance of a competency many respondents feel that all are important. The result is that the scoring procedure delivers only very small differences between items, and the critic is left questioning the relevance of the exercise. It cannot be assumed that a ranking process will on its own provide all the information necessary to establish competency priorities for a particular role (Barrett 1996). The method must be supplemented by appropriate role and contextual analyses.

The lesson here is that the process leading to the creation of a check list is the more important part of the exercise. The current project therefore devotes considerable effort to the preparatory research.

Part III. Preparatory Field Research

Keimoes Kits Survey

Questionnaires were distributed to 16 school leaders at a conference in Keimoes organised by the Catholic Institute of Education in April 1998 (Cf. Appendix A). The group consisted of 5 principals, 6 deputy principals/HODs and 5 senior teachers with experience averaging 10,6 years.

In order to facilitate comparison the questionnaire was designed to overlap as far as possible with the instruments used by Jirasinghe & Lyons (1996) and Summers (1997). The method of asking participants to rank indicators in order of importance is used in all three projects. The results are tabulated below:

Jirasinghe & Lyons	Catholic Network	Keimoes Conference
Planning	Leading/ Motivating	Counselling
Motivating	Financial	Being a good organiser
Assisting/ Caring	Planning	Motivating
Appraising/ Evaluating/	Appraising/ Evaluating	Evaluating progress
Developing people		
Implementing/ Co-ordinating	Pastoral care	Persuading and Negotiating
Deciding	Meeting procedures	Planning
Controlling/ Directing	Personal development	Directional leadership
PR/ Developing	Catholic ethos	Political ability

These results do not lend themselves to any significant analysis. A way needed to be found to focus more sharply on the issue of change. Furthermore, observations by the Fieldworker indicated the need for greater detail as many participants had difficulty in comprehending the indicators because of their brevity.

Even though the Keimoes Survey was entitled a *Change Management Survey* and was prefaced by a section requiring participants to indicate the most significant changes experienced by their schools over the previous three years, there is no striking difference between the results of the three surveys tabulated above.

Gauteng Change Management Workshops

The School Management Team Training Programme, an initiative of the Gauteng Department of Education and DANIDA, offered a means of identifying those competencies specifically associated with change. Four workshops were conducted in March/April 1998 involving a total of 83 participants made up largely of district officials, but included 4 secondary school principals.

On the third and final day participants were asked to draw up a list of change management competencies. The results are tabulated in *Appendix B*. Differences in formulation and emphasis are evident. A striking similarity however is the way in which values and interpersonal skills predominate, almost to the complete exclusion of 'task' competencies such as planning. Even though some 40% of the workshop time is devoted to exercises of planning, organising, monitoring, these were generally underemphasised.

When asked for an explanation participants argued, like Jirasinghe and Lyons, that during periods of social change it is the softer skills which are the more important. This tendency is also evident in a survey of schools performing well under difficult circumstances (Christie & Potterton 1996). Leadership values were the favoured explanation:

adaptability

flexibility of approach

commitment

concern for the well-being of the school

sense of purpose

courage

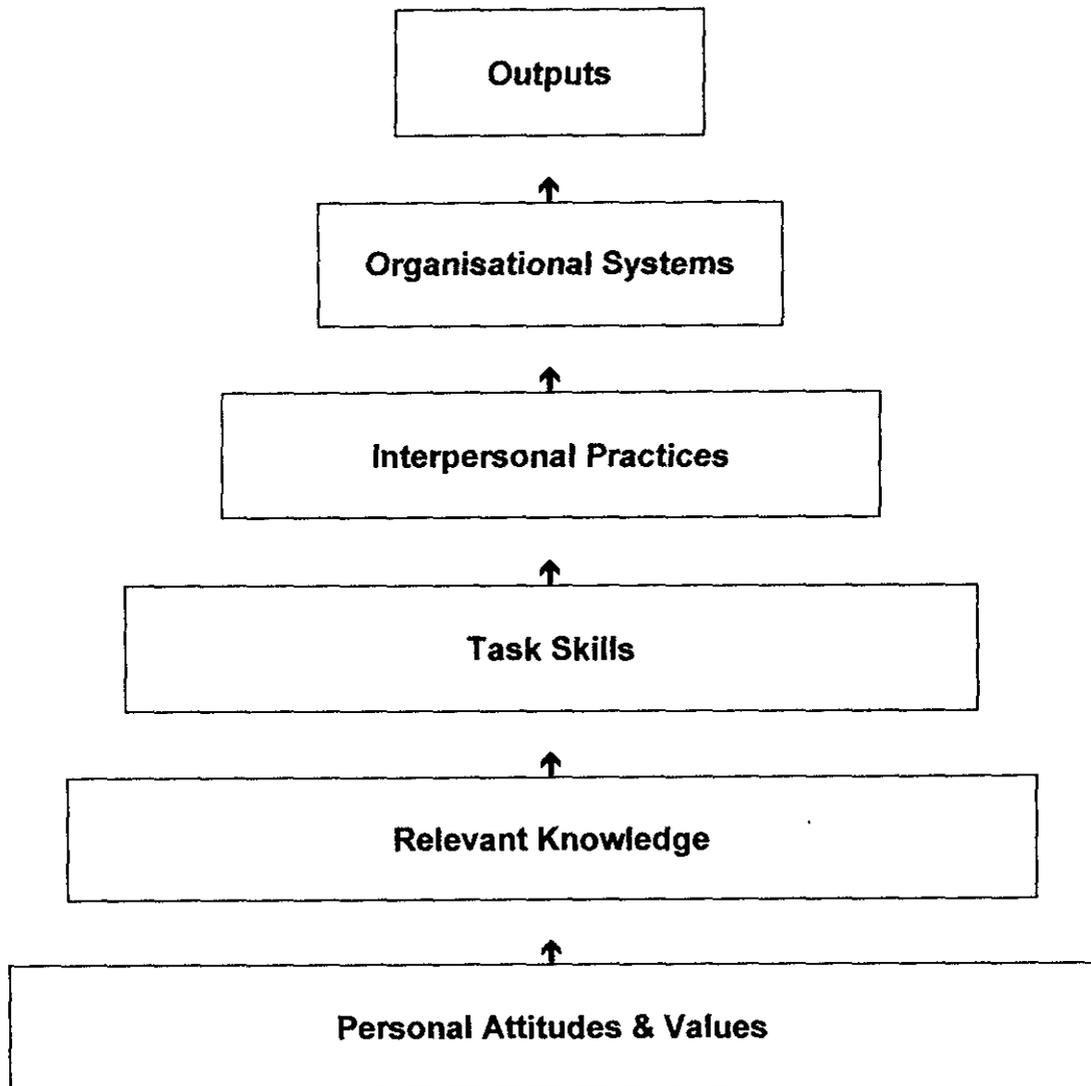
Another factor is the 'official' rhetoric within the Education Department which favours the Transformational over the Transactional. For example, the book *Changing Management to Manage Change in Education* (Department of Education 1996) repeatedly contrasts the new with the old. 'Management by objectives' approaches are frequently discredited by association with the old apartheid order (cf. Sebakwane 1997).

Part IV. Instrument Formulation

Criteria for selection of schools

The project needed to identify nine schools in the Northern Cape where change is being managed well. An initial meeting with Ms Dolly Khumalo (Regional Director) and the District Officials from the Kimberley Region (4 May 1998) emphasised that the criteria for identification be structured in such a way that would not automatically exclude schools disadvantaged under the former House of Representatives and DET.

The formulation of criteria using a Balanced Scorecard approach offered a way of supplementing indicators such as matriculation results with others which explore issues of communication structures, management skill, organisational systems and values. The focus was on establishing **the capacity for change in a school community**. The following chart was developed as a guideline in formulating selection criteria:



Change Management in Education Research Project

The headings are a means of clustering information drawn from several sources:

1) The change management competencies formulated in the Change Management Workshops of the Gauteng Education Department, together with those prioritised in the Keimoes Survey.

2) A survey of research literature in the field of Change Management in Education (Binkley 1997, Bolam 1997, Fullhan 1988-1992, Hallinger & Heck 1996, Hellawell 1985, Henning 1996, McLennan 1995, O'Donoghue & Dimmock 1997, Posch 1996, Smith 1996, The Open University 1993, Wallace 1991/2, Whitaker 1996). Change Management is a discrete field of study in the Educational Management literature. Publications reflect broad consensus on what

constitutes best practice, much of which is adapted from the general field of management.

3) A survey of educational policy documents, particularly the White Paper on *Education and Training 1995* (Department of Education 1995) and *Changing Management to Manage Change in Education* (Department of Education 1996).

4) Literature on the use of ethos indicators for research in schools offered a way of formulating indicators for studying a social entity, particularly the approach in, *Using Ethos Indicators in Primary School Self-Evaluation: Taking Account of the Views of Pupils, Parents and Teachers* (Scottish Office Education Department 1992).

The instrument was finalised as *School Ethos Indicators: Evidence of Well Managed Change (Appendix C)*. It was then introduced at a meeting with Northern Cape District Officials on 21 May 1998. After discussion and refinement of selection criteria, the following schools were identified:

Kimberley Girls' High School
Kimberley Boys' High School
Tlhomelang Secondary School
Schmidtsdrift San Gekombineerde Skool
Hoerskool Adamantia
Warrenvale Sekondere Skool
Homevale Secondary School Nr.1
Molehabangwe Primary School
Concordia Primere Skool

Pilot Research

Specialist Interviews

The next task was to formulate appropriate research instruments and processes. Information gained at the meetings with district officials was supplemented in interviews with three local principals: Ms Bernice du Toit of William Pescod High School, Ms Helen Hugo of Kimberley Girls' High, and Mr Stewart Hayward of Kimberley Boys' High. Mr Kevin Nkoane (Director of Education) and Mr Tex Moraladi (Deputy Director) also provided valuable insight into the challenges of educational innovation in the province.

It became apparent that the structured inequalities of the previous educational dispensation continue to play a decisive role in the management capacity of the schools. For example, the interviews with principals in Kimberley were conducted a week after notices were received that principals were required to retrench staff. For the former Cape Education Department school this meant obtaining permission from the Governing Body to fund the private employment of these educators. For the principal of the former House of Representatives school it meant organising a protest meeting attended by over 400 educators.

It would not be possible to include within the scope of the present study an analysis of the social context of each school or of the province. What is feasible however is to introduce a social variable in the final analysis of data: the school's former department of education. The policies of the previous dispensation ensured differing access to physical and managerial resources, which makes the categorisation relatively simple. If analysis reveals differing patterns in the formation of competencies this would be understandable.

Apart from the identification of the former department, contextual information will be limited to the anecdotal in illustrating a trend.

Questionnaire Formulation

The experience gained from developing the Ethos Indicator instrument served as basis for a survey questionnaire. The indicators were reformulated as competency requirements.

The instrument was then introduced at Kimberley Girls' High (22 May 1998). Responses were obtained from 22 Grade 11 pupils and the entire staff of 14 teachers. They drew attention to indicators which were unclear or ambiguous by means of question marks in the margins. Any indicator with two or more queries was thoroughly reformulated.

The second draft of the questionnaire appears as *Appendix D*. The document was reviewed by colleagues, and then translated into Afrikaans.

Interview/ Focus Group Schedule

A schedule for use in the interviews and focus groups was formulated, and appears as *Appendix E*. The outline was used in the meeting with District Officials in Kimberley (21 May 1998), in a 25 minute meeting with the staff at Kimberley Girls' High and a 35 minute discussion with the Grade 11 class. Individual interviews with the three principals, mentioned above, also provided an opportunity to test the instrument.

The opening question is intended to clarify what is understood by 'change' through discussing important changes experienced in that particular school community. It generates discussion and reflection on the issues.

The next question, on the role of the School Management Team in times of change, is intended to generate material for role analysis. There was clearly hesitation about expressing an opinion which could be construed as public criticism of management. The same applies to the request for examples of well or badly managed change, which is intended to generate 'critical incidents'. These questions, however, proved to be particularly effective in stimulating discussion during the private interviews.

The core question on the required managerial competencies is intended to be addressed in the most detail by respondents. It however proved difficult to obtain much more than series of one-word responses. What did become clear is that the priorities are linked to the way they experience change. For example the group of educators, who indicated the stress associated with uncertainty about the future, placed great emphasis on the value of immediate and open sharing of information with staff.

Material obtained from this qualitative research is used in the analysis of the role of school managers in times of change. This in turn can assist to interpret the data obtained in postal surveys.

Part V: Competency in Context: A Survey of Nine School Communities

Within each school community an effort was made to obtain the views of all stakeholders.

Departmental Officials: Two Focus Groups with seven Circuit Managers from the Northern Cape Education Department. Ethos Indicator Questionnaires (*Appendix C*) responses for each of nine schools identified.

School Management Teams: Interviews with 14 principals and deputy principals.

Educators: Focus groups with teaching staff at all nine schools. Questionnaire responses from 147 educators.

Learners: Classroom discussion in all nine schools, usually with Grade 11 class. Questionnaire responses from 126 learners.

Parents/ Governing Bodies: Individual interviews with 6 parents and members of governing bodies. Questionnaire responses from 60 parents.

Data gathered from the questionnaire responses is quantified and included as *Appendix F: The Context of Change*, and *Appendix G: Competencies for Change*. The interviews and focus groups were also scored in order to confirm the written responses. In the identification of change issues there is no noticeable variance between the written and oral opinions. However, in determining the required competencies there is a difference between ticking off a checklist of thirty options and a verbal response to the question, which usually elicits no more than four or five adjectives. However, we shall note in the final chapter of this study that these spontaneous comments correlate very closely with the analysed results of the competency survey, which places great emphasis on personal integrity and social ability.

The purpose of the survey of exemplary schools was:

- * To explore the proposed managerial competencies in relation to concrete situations.
- * To establish whether there are significant differences in attitude between the stakeholder groupings.

This part of the study will then form the basis from which to interpret the postal surveys received from the School Management Teams of 68 Northern Cape Schools. The survey of each school provides an overview of what are perceived by the various stakeholders to be the most significant changes and the most necessary managerial competencies. Where necessary, direct quotations are used to illustrate a body of opinion.

Tlhomelang Secondary School

Situated in Galeshewe, a dusty township adjoining Kimberley, Tlhomelang Secondary School has 1,012 learners and 32 educators. The first impression is of the fortress-like appearance of the school premises. The buildings are encircled by a high concrete fence buttressed by sand ramps to prevent tunnelling underneath. Access to the school is through a single gate controlled by two members of the Governing Body. A tuck shop run by parents ensures that students have no reason to leave the property during school hours.

In the report of the Regional Manager justifying its selection as an exemplary school, the most significant change listed is the appointment of a new principal in 1997. This event is seen as highly significant by all stakeholders interviewed. The teaching staff and parents forced the previous principal to resign. He was replaced by an internal appointment of the school community itself. The action had been precipitated by the abductions of female pupils from the school and the fatal stabbing of a pupil on the school grounds.

The establishment of a safe environment is seen as a priority by the new principal, parents and educators alike. A significant institution is the 'male teachers' who operate together like a rapid response unit to deal with security problems. For example, during the visit by the researchers, there was a complaint from learners that a group of out of school youth had taken their books on the way to school. The 'male teachers' identified the culprits and paid them a visit that afternoon to recover the books.

The establishment of discipline is mentioned by all stakeholders as an important achievement of the school community. Educators mention with pride the fact that poor professional practice would result in their being reported to the School's Governing Body. The rhetoric of 'discipline', 'reporting' and 'involvement' is reminiscent of the values of political activism of the previous decade, and it was hardly surprising to learn that for most of the educators experience in the United Democratic Front had been formative.

The Governing Body has an influence on most aspects of the school's operation. It serves as an important institutional bridge to the parents. Parents are expected to involve themselves in the education of their children. They are kept informed about the activities of the school and are encouraged to be involved in maintaining the attendance, behaviour and success of their children.

Active association is maintained with local police, municipality and Education Department officials. The principal is kept informed, but is definitely not the only initiator of these contacts. Educators

themselves frequently represent the interests of the school to outside bodies.

The general impression after interviewing a range of stakeholders is that the school has a strong and innovative principal. The characteristics most often mentioned are strength and fairness. What is very noteworthy is the degree of consensus between various stakeholder groups, illustrated by these quotations:

Parents:

The changing of the uniform has shown us a progress with the school, and it encourages the pupil because it is something new to them after such a long time. It shows that the school as a whole has started afresh.

The first principal was bullied by the school children. The school was corrupt and it was as if we are in hell.

When the year 2002 arrives we'll see the pupils of Tlhomelang in parliament.

I feel very happy about the changes because now our children are gaining experience about how to respect the teachers and to be responsible for their school and even on the street they are behaving like pupils.

Learners:

I am glad about these changes because nobody could think that Tlhomelang could be changed but we have changed a lot. I also thank the strong principal. Our enemies try to destroy us. I feel very proud of my school.

There have been drastic changes within my school. Most importantly is the attendance of the teachers to their classes and school attendance of the pupils. Law, order, punctuality and discipline have made a point of reference. Mostly of all is the role of the pupils to the governance of the school, there has been no pessimism in the students, local source is optimism.

I feel happy, proud and pompous about all these changes that took place. For the past years my school has been the black sheep in front of our community, but its just that. Our people must take note of it, and stop ignoring the fact that there has been a great deal of change.

Other expressions of pride: "We are the best school in the Northern Cape", "We are the best school in the country" "We feel good, we feel proud".

Educators:

We had to force the Principal to resign as he was very inefficient in many respects, e.g. afraid to reprimand teachers who did not attend their periods and those who were absent from the school very often.

I feel proud of our school because we are the ones who made it possible.

The new management is consistent, exemplary and hardworking.

Educators applaud the school management for consistency, fairness, and the impartial allocation of duties. These expressions of moral integrity are viewed as crucial. The management style is firm but also consultative. Responsibility is frequently delegated.

Molehabangwe Primary School

Located nearby in the Galeshwe township is Molehabangwe Primary with 642 learners. Here too there is a definite stamp of a principal with a strong hold on the change processes. Central is the facilitation of parent involvement in the school. In the words of the principal:

We started inviting parents to attend parents' meetings and we started to involve them in fund-raising projects, and we send them a monthly, sometimes quarterly newsletter, which keeps the parents informed about the activities within the school.

The principal recognises that the new structures could be experienced by educators as intrusive:

The relationship between parents and teachers needs a lot of management and control. Our parents are now becoming inquisitive, they want to know what is happening, and that is now causing a threat to the teachers.

The need for ongoing leadership in this arena is evident from these comments by educators:

The parents outside are now better educated, they know better. If you try to discipline his or her child, it doesn't work. We are not protected.

Our parents don't work hand in hand with the teachers. For example, at the primary level you give the child homework but the parent doesn't care. The withdrawal of corporal punishment as a means of classroom discipline and greater parental influence are experienced by many teachers as a reduction in their own authority. In contrast, the introduction of OBE is not seen as disempowering. Chairs and desks in all the classrooms are now clustered to facilitate group discussion. Effort is going into developing appropriate skills through attendance at workshops and practical experimentation.

Parents and the School Governing body play an important part in the life of the school. The roles of the various stakeholder groups and their interrelationships are being clarified. There is a definite sense that the change process is being directed and controlled by the management.

Kimberley Boys' High School

It is ironical that educators of the best township schools send their own children to schools 'on the other side'. These formerly all-white schools have considerably better facilities and continue to be perceived as places of prestige.

The change in the cultural and linguistic composition of the learners is mentioned by school managers and educators as the single most significant change undergone. The school now has over 70% black pupils. There is a definite ideological commitment to multiculturalism on the predominantly white staff, and over the past decade the school has actively involved itself in initiatives of the Open Schools' Movement in the field of multicultural education. Educators are very aware of the issues:

It's taken us a couple of years to say and emphasise that everybody in the school now is a second-language teacher.

There is no doubt that for a lot of the kids who are struggling: that it is a language-based-thing, the understanding just isn't there, the vocabulary just isn't there.

The problem is somewhat exacerbated by the fact that there is only one black educator on the staff. The management is in favour of changing this but has difficulty in doing so in a period of downsizing. The school management has also actively sought to establish democratic structures for the management of its relationships with parents, learners and educators. When our researchers met with Grade 11 pupils in July 1998 it was this aspect of change, which encountered their strongest opposition.

Almost all the changes mentioned by learners are described in negative terms. The strongest reaction (100%) is to the loss of respect for seniors, which is ascribed to the replacement of the prefect system with a Representative Student Council. To some degree these opinions reflect the fact that the class was Grade 11.

I feel bad because, I was initiated and my time has come to initiate but initiation is abolished.

This is seen to 'take away spirit and respect'. Perceived serious erosion of discipline is ascribed to the withdrawal of corporal punishment and the replacement of *Rules* with *Rights and Responsibilities*. Under the heading in the questionnaire, 'How do you feel about these changes?', learners respond:

Pathetic, firstly there is nothing the teachers can do to discipline us.

Racial diversity is usually introduced obliquely. Over 50% of the respondents (12) mention the significant change as 'new sports' or 'more sports', referring to soccer and basketball. Three of the probably black learners lament, "Soccer and basketball are not taken seriously". From the other side comes the lament that the new sports result in poor attendance at big matches. "Pride isn't the same anymore".

The sample of parent opinion is small, but is sufficient to indicate a concern in some circles about lowering of standards and school discipline.

What is noteworthy is the difference in attitude between learners and educators. For their part, educators welcome changes which promote democracy, non-racialism and human rights, and are often nonplussed by learner conservatism. Instead of sport, their discourse about learner difference concerns itself with overcoming educational disadvantage and issues of second-language learning. The School Management team is committed to the ideals of multiculturalism and participatory management.

Kimberley Girls' High School

Kimberley Girls' High, with a current enrolment of 480 learners has changed from being all-white to a 70% black school. The staff complement is predominantly white. Demographic change is viewed by managers and educators as the significant one.

During the week when the school was visited, the issue of teacher rationalisation reached a climax with the receipt of a departmental circular requiring principals to rationalise staff in line with set targets. Although almost all the educators address this question, it is in terms of the increased workload and stress of larger classes. Only one directly mentions job insecurity. The school has the capacity to withstand some of these shocks, and has three posts paid for by its governing body.

Most educators refer to increased learner diversity in terms of the educational challenge:

We have to accommodate weaker pupils - change ways of teaching, extra lessons.

There is an increased number of traditionally township learners in the school.

Even sport changed - i.e. swimming out, basketball in.

Learners view the diversity as nothing particularly extraordinary. Like their brothers down the road, they were however concerned about the increasing number of disrespectful junior learners. The strongest opinion of the learners has to do with the loss of tradition.

Educators welcome the participatory management style which characterises the relationship of managers and educators

Hoerskool Adamantia

Since 1994 this White Afrikaans-medium school has been open to learners of other races, and 'brown' enrolment is now at 30%. The principal reports that the decision was based on the conviction: 'Dit is die regte ding vir die toekoms': or expressed in other terms, 'Ons hele agterlyn is bruin seuns'.

The principal indicates that socialisation problems are usually confined to the earlier classes: 'Daardie outjies is 'n bietjie rof.' He says that there was a maximum of five 'incidents' over the years, and that on the whole: 'Inskakeling van die leerlinge het baie maklik geskiet'.

The other major achievement of the school is the expansion of the curricular options to include Hotel Management. This has involved fund raising for extensive refurbishing of school premises as well as innovative curriculum development. Information Technology is the other attempt to offer relevant vocational options at the school. Educator perceptions of change are comparatively very negative. Fewer teachers and larger classes, increased learner diversity, no more corporal punishment, are all perceived as increased workload and plummeting standards. The internally generated innovations introduced by the principal hardly receive mention.

In contrast, learners from various classes in a focus group were far more relaxed in attitude to cultural diversity. They talked about it as a change, and mentioned the advantages in terms of learning from each other.

Ons leer baie van mekaar.

They talked openly in response to a coloured learner's comment that there still is discrimination in the school. Most agreed that there are still some white learners who continue to think in the old ways.

There were expressions of pride in the school, and they supported its emphasis on vocational options:

Gee vir ons goed wat ons kan gebruik.

There was widespread agreement that corporal punishment should be reintroduced in order to improve discipline. The clarity of opinion about educational policy, both supportive and critical, was impressive. The emphasis of the learners' suggestions about Management Competency was on interpersonal skills.

Homevale Secondary School Nr. 1

With over 1,300 learners, this is one of the best known schools in the coloured township on the outskirts of Kimberley. Here too the experience of racial integration is the most mentioned change issue. Soon after the national abolition of segregated education large numbers of black pupils began to arrive from the adjacent informal settlement. Characteristic of learners were ideals of democracy, student leadership, solidarity, and a tradition of mass resistance. The school was alive with politics.

We had the chairman of AZASCO here; he was one of our matric pupils. We had a political atmosphere here, that transition had to take place. We had to be flexible, we had AZASCO, PASO, COSAS and ANC Youth League. We went through the transitional period that other schools are experiencing now. (Principal)

The process did not always proceed smoothly, as is evident in the following headlines from the *Diamond Fields Advertiser*.

'School suspended in face of crisis' (9 Feb 1996), 'Armed pupils run amok at city school' (22 March 1996), 'Homevale teachers dig in against DEC' (23 March 1996), 'DEC launches scathing attack on city teachers' (29 March 1996). The initial incident was sparked by a learner demand for the readmission of a learner, a paroled convict, to the school. The resulting confrontation led to the closure of the school, its subsequent invasion by armed pupils, and finally the refusal of the teaching staff to obey a Departmental directive to return to teaching in the face of threatened pupil assault.

The valiant principal found himself in the midst of ongoing confrontation with varying student groupings, parents, educators and the Education Department. He survived with humour and diplomacy. It is little wonder that in their evaluation of the school, Kimberley Region Circuit Managers rate Homevale higher on the transformation indicator than any other school.

The daily realities of classroom practice present particular challenges, as are illustrated below in educator comment:

You pick up a lot of problems with language. You teach pupils in their third or fourth language.

Our children cannot think abstractly.

We don't get support from parents, for example parents see their children staying at home and they are not questioning it. They don't take an interest in the school, in 'what did you learn today?'

Most parents are illiterate so they can't help their children anyway. Most children don't stay with their parents anyway.

Parents already refuse to pay R20 a year for school fees, how can you expect them to pay for books?

We divide the pupils into the poor, the poorest, the best of the poor and we channel books to the poorest.

The classes are so big, half the period you spend getting control over the classroom.

And discipline, we get to do nothing. The child has so much power, they don't even listen to you.

Otherwise we must face retrenchments if we don't take in those children, whether they have failed the standard three times at the previous school or not we have to take them in.

The learners are generally very positive about the integration of the school. Their frustration is with the limited curricular choice and its unrelatedness to career opportunities.

In order to reach the point where they are now, the School Management Team had to negotiate a path through student politics, departmental pressure and irate parents. The establishment of legitimate representative structures, undergirded by high levels of social competence and personal integrity, are viewed as essential for the change manager.

Schmidtsdrift San Gekombineerde Skool

Prior to the research visit, the Circuit Manager's assessment of significant change in this school community read as follows:

- * Appointments of teachers from other communities.
- * Learners recently started to make use of the toilets.
- * Lack of funding - poor facilities.

Indeed, the arrival of a new principal to this 1,544 learner comprehensive school in March 1997 was a very significant event. Prior to that the principal and the entire staff were white. The composition is currently 24 white and 16 black (coloured and African). The fact that the principal is black is seen as an important symbolic shift by principal, educators and learners alike.

The new educational diversity is the most significant change experienced by learners. It is viewed positively by all sectors, with the exception of several white educators whose support is modified by remarks that some of the newcomers are underqualified. In the written survey, five educators mention the importance of the principal being black, and three link the educator diversity to improved learner discipline and motivation.

Learners describe the change in terms of exposing them to the New South Africa. During the course of an hour's discussion with the Grade 11 class, they repeatedly emphasised the need to be brought into the mainstream of a modern democratic country. The first sporting contact with other schools, arranged by the new principal, was viewed by learners as an event of particular significance. The focal point of the discussion about change was the pupils' desire for a subject range which would better equip them for careers, other than farm labour or the shrinking prospects of the army.

The Schmidtsdrift San School, 53 kilometres North East of Douglas, is located within the parameters of a military base. Shortly before the independence of Namibia in 1990, the 'Bushman Regiment' and dependants had been moved by the SADF from the Omega base to protect them from possible recriminations (for a history of the community, cf. Sharp & Douglas 1996). They remain in military tents, their right to be there disputed by a Tswana land claim, awaiting removal to the Barkly West region. In the words of one educator, 'Elke jaar kom die storie, die Boesmans gaan nou trek'.

All the educators commute daily from Kimberley and Douglas. The geographical isolation of the community had been reinforced by a political isolation which sought to protect it from undesirable ideological influence. The new history teacher, who introduced themes covering the democratic struggle against Apartheid, soon found himself at the centre of a controversy involving accusations and counter-accusations of racism with some white colleagues, and also with traditional leaders within the San community.

The debate about the cultural identity of the community is ongoing, and is constantly influenced by outsider perceptions about San or Bushman identity. From the time when the men were recruited from two scattered clans in Angola, the !Xu and the Khwe, the creation of a romanticised Bushman identity served the SADF's propaganda agenda of a crack ethnic regiment.

In their study of the Schmidtdrift Community, Sharp and Douglas (1996) argue that the clans have differing strategies for survival. Whereas for the smaller group, the Khwe, modernity is the route, for the !Xu, who physically look more like the stereotypical image of the San, there is the desire to preserve a traditional identity. Sharp and Douglas argue, somewhat cynically, that this too is a means of survival under the patronage of well-meaning outsiders. They point out that well before their departure from Angola the !Xu were no longer following a 'Stone Age' lifestyle.

An interview with two of the senior community leaders exposed some of the ambiguities: the poignancy of loss of the old ways at the same time as a realisation that modernity is inevitable. The discussion with the Grade 11 class produced very articulate arguments for the need to equip themselves to enter a competitive job-market. Their main concern was the narrowness of the curricular options and their unrelatedness to vocations. Although it was only a few of the male learners who spoke, the written responses indicate this to be a majority perception.

There are learners who also serve on the Community Council. Discussion in the class focussed on their frustration with the older generation for their apparent inability to engage with regional politics in defending the interests of the community. According to the school managers, there is a real division between the older and the younger, which is sharpened by the access of the youth to literacy. The differing 'tribal' strategies, according to senior educators at the school, are less significant than questions of generation and literacy. The classrooms are wood and iron sheds: very hot in summer and cold in winter. The water supply is intermittent and there are no shade trees. The material facilities are amongst the worst, nevertheless changes are viewed very much more positively by all sectors of this school than in most of the other schools visited.

In spite of considerable uncertainty about the future of the school, the management demonstrates a clear sense of direction in what they wish to achieve educationally. An even-handed approach to staff, a public commitment to social values and conflict management skills have enabled the principal to lead the way.

Concordia Primere Skool

Concordia Primary School lies in the mountains 18 kilometres north-east of Springbok. This former House of Representatives School with 826 pupils is one of the larger rural schools.

One of the striking characteristics of the school is its organisational practice. In spite of their relative isolation they ensure that they remain abreast with national educational developments in order to prepare adequately for change. They were one of the first to establish an effective Governing Body. With changes such as the abolition of corporal punishment and Outcomes Based Education the principal took the initiative in ensuring that when the time came for implementation the school would be well prepared.

Departmental officials were invited to address meetings at the school, in-service training opportunities were provided, and appropriate organisational structures were created. The guiding philosophy of the principal is the importance of shared responsibility. Authority is delegated to Heads of Department and committees.

An annual 54-page booklet, *Primere Skool Concordia: Jaarbeplanning 1998*, begins with vision and mission statements. The committees are then listed with the names of members and the convenor, along with a clear outline of responsibilities. The committees are:

Fondsinsamelingskomitee

Roosterkomitee

Kurrikulumkomitee

Sportkomitee

Dissiplinekomitee

Terreinkomitee

Sosialekomitee

According to the principal they have spent ten years establishing structures within the school. The result is a very high level of role clarity. The planning booklet is a well-used resource.

The parent community is not wealthy as most have to rely on seasonal agricultural employment. Fund raising exercises are therefore an integral activity of the school.

The school was visited in August 1998 after a settlement had been reached between the Department of Education and Educator unions placing a moratorium on rationalisation. This has done little to allay fears. In the words of one educator:

Rasionalisasie het die skool ontwrig.

The prospect of unemployment is undoubtedly the most strongly experienced change at Concordia. Under the heading 'Hoe voel jy?' the most common response is a single word 'Onseker' (nine times). This is the case even though only one teacher falls into the vulnerable category of 'unqualified'.

Rationalisation is in all cases explained as the cause of declining standards. The loss of experienced teachers and increased workload of larger classes are usually mentioned.

The principal is clearly very frustrated about the negative impact of this change on the school. Unlike wealthier communities who are able to support additional educators, or urban communities where it is possible to stave off rationalisation by attracting increased learner numbers, these options are not open to Concordia.

At this school there is pride in their internally generated change and in their ability to manage externally generated change, but the policy of rationalisation remains beyond their control.

Warrenvale Sekondere Skool

Warrenvale is the coloured township of Warrenton, 74 kilometres north of Kimberley. The school burst into the news headlines of the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* for its resistance to a plan to amalgamate with the local white school, 'Warrenvale parents up in arms' (18 May 1998).

The white school had taken the initiative and approached the Department with a plan to combine with the coloured school into a single Afrikaans language school. They even offered the use of their school bus to transport pupils from the coloured township. The principal, the pupils, the teachers, and the parents rejected the offer out of hand.

Our interviews with the various role players in the coloured school community uncovered a great deal of anger. It is partly directed against a Government which is perceived to have forgotten the coloureds, and partly an unwillingness to be manipulated by whites yet again. A fact never mentioned in the interviews is that the academic qualifications of whites are generally higher, and when it comes to retrenchments the first to go are the so-called 'unqualified teachers'. Years of privilege have made it possible for white schools to establish the kind of infrastructure which inevitably makes them the stronger partner in a relationship.

'Chaos' in the Department is seen as the cause of declining standards. Learners and their parents have a very negative attitude to the Government and feel that the allocation of resources is biased against them.

In the course of discussion with the Grade 11 class, diversity is mentioned as a change that has taken place in education, but expressed in terms of now it is *possible* to enrol at a white school, or now we can play sport with each other. Some Afrikaans-speaking pupils who had formerly been classified as 'Bantu' travel to Warrenvale, but otherwise it remains a 'coloured' school.

There remains a strong perception that nothing has really changed, as is illustrated in the following comments from learners:

Ons swart, bruin leerlinge kan ook by die skole aansluit. Pak slae is afgeskakel en DEV het bygekome. Maar verder het niks verander nie. Ons skool is nog in dieselfde toestand.

Daar het geen veranderinge in ons kleurling skool plaasgevind. Ons as kleurling kry nie die regte wat swartes en wittes het nie. In die verlede was dit die wittes, nou is dit die swartes, wanneer is dit ons beurt? Ons is wel toegelaat om by blanke skole to studeer.

Ek voel veranderinge wat plaasgevind het is slegs in die guns van die swartes. Hulle kry alles wat hulle vra, maar nie ons nie.

Die President kyk net eenkant en nie na almal se kant nie. Ons wil almal gelyk behandel word.

Ek voel dat daar nog apartheid in ons regering is omdat die swart skole al die voordele kry en ons moet bly sit en wag.

The abolition of corporal punishment is classified as another example of Government mismanagement. The one area where they are positive is with regard to the practice of continuous evaluation in Outcomes Based Education.

In the memorandum presented to the Department during the protest action against proposed amalgamation, there is also a request for a more vocationally relevant curriculum.

What is impressive about this school is the way in which every sector has a sense of responsibility for the future of the school and is able to articulate a clear opinion. A decentralised management style has enabled groups like the Schools Governing Body to exercise considerable leadership. When asked about necessary management competencies the overwhelming and universal concern is moral integrity.

Conclusions on the Exemplary Schools' Survey

- * In relation to opinions of other stakeholders, school managers are generally more conciliatory in the opinions expressed. The language is more guarded and the opinions expressed usually more carefully conceived.
- * There is no noticeable correlation between gender and patterns of opinion. Race and socio-economic status provide more striking variables. Nevertheless there would be benefit in a study of the relationship of gender to concrete issues such as temporary posts, retrenchment of the 'unqualified', and access to senior positions.
- * The interviewing schedule sought not only to clarify what the significant changes were perceived to be, but the attitudes to these changes where possible. The scoring was recorded either as positive or negative. What this established, by simple addition, is that the expressed opinions of principals are significantly more positive than those of educators. Of the principals' comments about change, 83% are positive, compared to 52% for educators.¹
- * A contributory factor to the previous statistic is that it is the principals who usually draw attention to the internally generated changes at the school. For their part, educators generally fail to mention these changes at all. After the principal, it is the parents who are most likely to mention such changes.
- * There are significant differences between the contexts of the various schools. Categorising them in terms of their former Department is a legitimate marker of their continuing socio-economic status. Furthermore, comparison between the tables contained in *Appendix F* illustrates considerable differences between the school communities. For example, whereas learners at Schmidtsdrift are concerned about the narrowness of the curriculum, at Kimberley Boys High it is with the low attendance at Saturday's big rugby game.

¹ The breakdown for individual schools is very diverse. Tlhomelang: principal 89% positive, educators 90% positive; Kimberley Boys High: principal 83% positive, educators 54% positive; Kimberley Girls High: principal 88% positive, educators 58% positive; Admantia Hoerskool: principal 83% positive, educators 14% positive; Warrenvale Secondary: principal 60% positive, educators 31% positive; Concordia Primere Skool: principal 67% positive, educators 52% positive.

Part VI: Attitudes of School Managers

A postal survey was distributed to 174 school, 68 replies were received (a response rate of 39%). The results are tabulated on the format of change issues developed during the course of the survey of the nine school communities, and categorised into former Departments (*Appendix F*). Specific differences of emphasis emerge in relation to:

- * increased learner diversity which does not feature at all in the 'black' schools.
- * increased parental involvement which does not seem to be a particularly significant factor in the 'white' schools.

The most noticeable difference is in the attitude to changes. Where clearly evident, comments are tabulated as positive or negative. The quantified responses appear in the following table:

Category of School	Positive	Negative
Department of Education & Training	25	17
House of Representatives	60	65
Cape Education Department	26	60

When it is considered that principals are (as demonstrated in the previous chapter) more likely to be positive about changes than their educators are, then one could anticipate widespread pessimism within schools of the former Cape Education Department.

The following table shows the combined opinions of all 68 principals, across the three departments:

THE CONTEXT OF CHANGE: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM

Change experienced		SMT/ Principal		
		68		
		+	-	?
1	Rationalisation of staff		52	
2	Curriculum 2005 and OBE	6	1	
3	Increased learner diversity	15	2	30
4	Reduced budget and resources	1	11	
5	Policy to withdraw corporal punishment	6	12	1
6	Participatory/ representative management	12		2
7	Negotiated Codes of Conduct	12	4	9
8	Increased parental involvement	23	3	4
9	Relationship with educator unions		1	
10	Educator morale	9	13	
11	Discipline	4	9	
12	Standards	1	7	
13	Tradition/ spirit/ pride	1		
14	Lawless/ violent social environment		1	
15	Internally generated change	10		
16	Subject choice	5	17	
17	Attitude to Department	1	8	
18	Appointment of HODs	4		

These change issues are arranged below in the order of priority, beginning with the most noted to the least noted.

Rationalisation of staff

The overwhelming concern is the rationalisation of teaching posts. Its impact is associated with low educator morale due to employment uncertainty, increased workload, and declining standards.

At 76.5%, this concern is definitely the most significant change with which school managers have to deal, and with no exceptions their attitude is negative.

Increased learner diversity

The second highest score is at 69.1% which is not surprising given a long history of segregated education. The issue is however not mentioned at all in responses from schools of the former Department of Education and Training.

Of the House of Representative schools responding, seventeen reported no change in their racial composition. Others report small changes, for example, a principal reports an intake of 7 Xhosa speakers and its first white pupil in August 1998. A few former DET schools have received white or coloured teachers. One principal writes: 'I am the only 'coloured' at the school.'

Three white, former Cape Education Department, schools report no or minimal change. For most of the former white or coloured schools however, an increasing amount of integration is taking place either through pupil intake or through the amalgamation of schools. This has sometimes resulted in a pattern of exodus, although not nearly on the scale which is possible in urban areas.

Die Blanke-leerlinge het verskuif na 'n naburige blanke-dorp om daar hul matriek eksamens af te lê. (Principal of a former House of Representatives School)

Where it is possible to establish the attitude of the author of a questionnaire response, there is widespread acceptance of this change (over 85%). The complexities of changing demographics and values is illustrated by two examples of change in former Cape Education Department schools:

School A:

Between 1996 and 1998 pupil numbers grew from 480 to 532. During this period teaching staff was reduced from 18 to 14. A process of amalgamation has resulted in the inclusion of coloured and black

pupils. Cultural change is described in a single sentence: 'Die getal blanke leerlinge het baie afgeneem'.

The following are also innovations described by the principal:

- * Code of conduct
- * A range of alternative disciplinary procedures
- * In-service training for teachers
- * Representative management structures
- * Implementation of new curriculum

In conclusion: 'Baie positief - Ons skool dra nou 'n deel by tot die opvoeding van die breet gemeenskap.'

School B:

Also a former white school, learner registration has rocketed from 192 in 1996 to 411 in 1998. During this period the number of educators dropped from 15 to 14. The school has been part of an amalgamation process which resulted in a school with Xhosa, Afrikaans and English speakers. This principal is also active in establishing structures. The attitude is: 'Positief - Dit kan oplossings vir probleme in die toekoms bied'.

The way in which racial integration in schools provides greater job security for white and sometimes coloured teachers, could be making an important contribution to changing attitudes.

Increased parental involvement

One of the major contributions of the Education Act is the way in which it has encouraged the participation of the parent community. With a response rate of 44.1 %, this is the third most mentioned change issue, and attitudes to it are mainly positive. It is noteworthy that schools of the former Cape Education Department have relatively less emphasis on this aspect.

The institutionalised parental involvement through the School Governing Body has become an important asset to schools. That the system is having its teething problems is evident in some of the negative responses, which we shall examine in our final chapter.

Negotiated Codes of Conduct

Although 36.8% note this particular change, a third of them do so negatively. It clearly has not worked that well in some settings, and is clearly an area requiring particularly careful management.

Educator morale

For over 68% of principals of former coloured and white schools there is the opinion that teacher morale is at a low ebb. In the case of the former black schools the attitude is considerably more positive.

Subject choice

The rationalisation of teaching posts has sometimes lead to the school being forced to reduce the range of subjects being offered. The change is therefore mentioned negatively by seventeen respondents. Four others have been able to increase the range and therefore experience it positively.

Ironically, the narrowing of subject choice occurs at a time when parents and learners are calling for an expanded and more vocationally oriented curriculum.

Policy to withdraw corporal punishment

The abolition of the 'Slangwet' has a response rate of 27.9%. The ratio of those who believe its withdrawal was ill considered to those who support the decision of the Government is exactly two to one. The survey of nine schools would indicate that the ratio is even higher in the case of educators, learners and their parents.

What cannot be overlooked is the extent to which questions of Children's Rights have entered the life of school communities. There are probably communities where the new policy is consciously ignored, but at least in the nine schools visited there is no evidence of this. The postal questionnaire to SMTs included a question on the establishment of 'alternative disciplinary structures'. Most respondents described elaborate processes, usually involving the parents being required to meet the principal. Such procedures could

be so daunting that it is little wonder that learners are calling for a return of the 'Slang'.

Participatory/ Representative management

A central element of the Education Department's policy guidelines is the establishment of representative structures in the school community (Department of Education 1995,1996). The few principals who mentioned anything in this regard were positive.

Discipline

The simplistic connection between the withdrawal of corporal punishment and discipline problems is an opinion less common amongst principals than amongst educators and learners. Principals are more likely to point to the effectiveness of alternative disciplinary structures. Nevertheless, there remains the perception, particularly in former House of Representatives schools, that discipline has deteriorated.

Reduced budget and resources

This is usually mentioned by formerly white and coloured schools, and seen in a negative light. At a few of the schools visited there was a perception that funding was being channelled off to black schools, and there was often little appreciation of the need for a policy of redress which would repair damage resulting from decades of a radically unfair allocation of resources.

It should be noted that fewer than 10% of respondents even mention the question of a reduced budget.

Internally generated change

The oral interviews with principals generated more expansive comment about internally initiated change than the postal survey where comment is much more restricted. What is also clear is that schools are barely coping with externally initiated programmes.

Attitude to Department

The Department is also a frequent target of negative opinion. Principals are less critical of the Department than educators, and Blacks less so than Whites. The site visits also showed that some parents are prone to be critical.

Parents blame everything on the Government; they say that because you people, the teachers, voted for the ANC look what is happening. (Educator, Homevale 1)

Standards

A recurring theme in schools that have experienced integration is 'standards'. Black and sometimes coloured learners are viewed as a problem. Schools believe that they are faced with the challenge of bringing them up to standard. A majority of principals believe that the 'new pupils' must adapt and be assimilated into the school. When requested for precise detail, academic standards serve as justification. The main concern seems to be that the school will not be negatively influenced by educationally disadvantaged newcomers. Difference is thus described in academic terms. Language and mathematics are skills most often mentioned in deficit terms. In addition, conceptual skills and abstract thinking are described in adjectives of deficit.

There can be no doubt that years of Bantu Education have created a situation where many black pupils are at a severe disadvantage. (Dawes & Donald 1994). Nevertheless, sometimes it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that academic standards are an expression of a mentality, which wishes to preserve intact an existing enclave.

Curriculum 2005 and OBE

The impending introduction of a significantly new approach to education appear to be of little concern. This is partly due to the fact that most survey responses are from secondary schools, which have not yet begun to phase in Curriculum 2005.

The two primary schools visited as part of the research project, Molehabangwe and Concordia, are clearly well advanced in their understanding of the challenges presented by Outcomes Based Education. There was much less concern about the subject in the secondary schools visited.

Appointment of HODS

Although one of the significant change initiatives of the Department of Education, the issue receives relatively little attention (four times). It can be assumed that some respondents expressed their opinion under the section on Participatory/ representative management.

While this change may for some schools have meant salary increase for a few of its educators, in others it contributed to the broadening of the management base.

Lawless/ violent social environment

This category was included after the survey of nine schools which revealed that, for some, a major challenge is ensuring quality education in the midst of a lawless and sometimes violent social environment. This kind of context is mentioned by only one respondent to the postal survey, and does appear to be less of an issue beyond urban township life.

Tradition/ spirit/ pride

These are themes of schools within a competitive colonial English tradition, and usually expressed in terms of loss. The reverse is true in some of the Black schools visited, where pride in the school is growing amongst learners and parents.

These themes hardly emerge at all in the postal survey.

Relationship with educator unions

The relationship of managers with unions does not appear to be a significant issue at all in the Northern Cape. Unlike other regions such as the Eastern Cape where it is unavoidable, the postal survey elicited only one response on this matter.

An illustration of the very mild industrial polarisation is from one of the schools visited. The principal is a badge-bearing member of CATU (Cape African Teachers' Union) while most of the educators are members of SADTU. It was precisely these educators who had lobbied for her appointment and who support her most actively.

Part VII: Competency for Change

The open-ended question posed in individual interviews and focus groups was:

'What is the role of the School Management Team in times of change?'

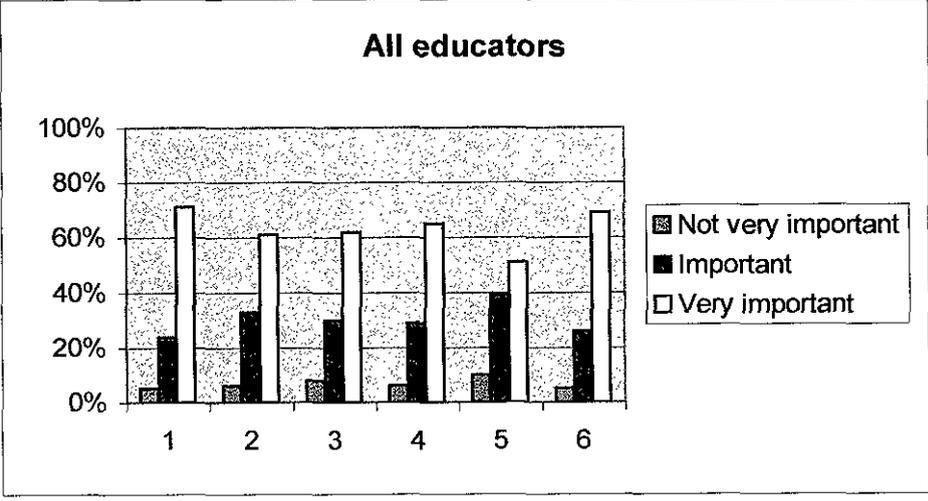
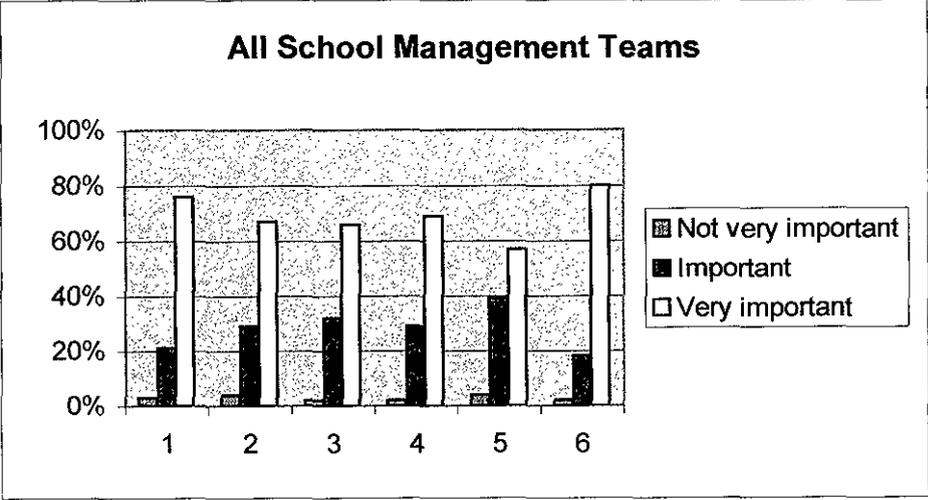
The comments obtained cluster themselves into three broad categories:

- * the importance of personal integrity
- * interpersonal and participatory management skills
- * the importance of managing organisational structures and systems.

These categories conform to the overall structure of the survey: impacts, organisational systems, interpersonal practices, task skills, process knowledge, and personal integrity.

The information from the fieldwork serves as a means of interpreting the written data from the Competencies for Change Survey. Written responses were received from 76 school managers, 147 educators, 126 learners and 60 parents. In a few instances difficulty was experienced in interpreting the survey. The ranking system with three as the most important and one the least, did cause some initial misunderstanding. Furthermore, in a few cases the difference between '*desired*' and '*actual*' was not understood, resulting in some indicators receiving a low rating. This too can provide valuable information about attitudes, and our analysis will include a study of those competencies which receive the lowest ratings.

The first table overleaf is an analysis of the response from principals in schools from all three former departments of education. (A breakdown into former department is included as Appendix G, together with a table with the combined response of principals, educators, learners and parents.) A table capturing the opinions of educators also appears on the next page, and provides a means of comparison with those of the principals.



- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Impacts | 4. Task Skills |
| 2. Organisational Systems | 5. Process Knowledge |
| 3. Interpersonal Practices | 6. Personal Integrity |

The high rating given by principals, educators, learners and parents to most of the indicators suggests that the instrument covered issues that are viewed as relevant to the role of a school manager. Personal integrity receives the highest ranking, which could have been anticipated from the importance it was accorded during the interviews.

The *Process Knowledge* competency cluster is accorded the lowest ranking. This is at least partly due to 5.2 and 5.5 receiving very low scores. There are good reasons for the somewhat negative perceptions of these two indicators, which will be discussed below. The only lesson to be drawn here is the need for greater circumspection in the wording of questionnaires, and not that these are unimportant competencies! The site visits to exemplary schools left no doubt that process knowledge is essential and should not be downplayed.

The *Task Skills* cluster is generally viewed as important. Clearly, the new Management Education orthodoxy, which radically underplays task skills, has not made inroads into thinking at schools' level. Common to all the successful change initiatives in the schools visited is careful planning, organising, monitoring and evaluating.

These are the broad similarities between the opinions of principals and educators. What is noticeably different however is that educators are far more inclined to rank competencies as either 'important' or 'not very important'. This may mean that educators are less impressed by the importance of the managers' role than the managers are themselves.

The *Competencies for Change* Survey was developed as a general instrument for establishing priorities. It has its limitations in that the respondent is confined to its structure. A contextual role analysis was a necessary supplement.

In the final section of this report we shall use a method of role analysis to determine the specific competencies required during periods of change. The established priority competencies will be related to the *context of change* discussed during the previous chapter in order to work towards a profile, which is relevant to challenges facing School Management Teams. The task is not merely to replicate the current change priorities as these managers understand them, but also to introduce those which are likely to require attention in the future. For example, Curriculum 2005 received very little notice as a change issue, but this is not to say that it will not of necessity become one.

Beacon of Moral Integrity

There is a considerable body of research, international and local (Jirasinghe & Lyons 1996, Christie & Potterton 1996, Sullivan 1995), which demonstrates that during periods of social and institutional transition it is the moral integrity of leaders that is viewed as their most important contribution. Surrounded by uncertainty people find stability in the unflinching and public commitment of leaders to certain principles (Grace 1996).

It is therefore hardly surprising that the section headed 'Personal Integrity' receives the highest ranking from learners, educators, parents and School Managers.

From schools of the Former House of Representatives indicator 5.2 receives the very lowest ranking (11% not very important, 51% important, and 38% very important). It reads: *Understanding the internal politics of the school makes it possible to anticipate likely support as well as possible obstacles.* The interpretation seems to be based on a perception of political manoeuvring or playing party politics as unethical, as is reflected in the following:

Politics does not play a role here. Maybe that's the reason why changes have gone so smoothly. (Principal, Concordia)

In the exemplary schools visited there are clearly formulated Vision and Mission statements. Concordia Primary offers particularly fine examples:

Visie:

Om elke leerling te lei om te ontwikkel tot 'n selfstandige, gebalanseerde persoon wat tot voordeel van sy skool, dorp en land sal wees.

Missie:

Om kwaliteit onderrig en nasiebou te verseker deur:

Toewyding

Kreatiwiteit

Lojaliteit

Sindelikheid

Sodat geletterdheid gesien kan word as 'n lewensnoodsaaklikheid

Driving Force

A preparedness by managers to accept responsibility for achieving results characterises all the exemplary schools, and is illustrated by the importance accorded the impact indicators in the competency survey (cf. the bar-charts above and in Appendix G). The leader is expected to ensure that objectives are achieved, even within a participatory management style:

We've got one philosophy - it is not the responsibility of the Department to see to it that the schools are in order. It is also the responsibility of the teachers, the pupils and the parents to see to it that schools are running smoothly. (Principal, Tlhomelang)

There is considerable evidence that it is easier to win support in the school community for internally initiated change (cf. O'Donoghue & Dimmock 1997). If the change is perceived to be in the interests of learners, the support of parents can be anticipated. Educators are understandably less enthusiastic because change often means more work for them.

The more difficult task is to obtain active support for externally initiated change, particularly new policy directives. Those schools most effective in implementing such change have all taken considerable effort to demonstrate to all stakeholders why the change is necessary and how it can be to their benefit. Their School Management Teams have been able to present the proposed change as a home-grown product (cf. Fullan 1989, Binkley 1997).

An example is a school where they have been successful in combining the national initiative for Outcomes Based Education with a local concern for a greater vocational emphasis in the curriculum.

The principal had a role as innovator, curriculum developer, motivator, in-service educator trainer and fund-raiser. (The last role was accepted with a degree of resentment as it was not seen to be part of 'Educational Leadership'.)

The range of competencies for all these roles is considerable. In addition to the task requirements of planning, organising, controlling and so on, the one that stands out is personal commitment.

There is no doubt that if the top management is not enthusiastic, the rest of us become sloppy. (Educator)

Manager of Crises

There is no doubt that the major crisis currently experienced in schools is the prospect of staff rationalisation. In the Northern Cape the situation is particularly acute, for reasons which are both historical and geographical.

In 1995 its educator: learner ratio for secondary schools was 1: 29,3 and for primary schools 1: 23,6 (Department of Education: 1997a). When compared to a province such as the Eastern Cape with ratios of 1: 43 and 1: 32,6, there is a very strong argument for a more equitable distribution of resources across the provinces. What is often not appreciated however is the geographical challenge in the largest province, covering 29,7% of the country but with a population so sparse that the Northern Cape has less than 2% of pupil enrolment (Northern Cape Department of Arts & Culture: 1996). This means that there are many small schools in remote locations, sometimes with fewer than 20 learners.

The historical factor is an apartheid ideology which led to the creation of parallel schools. There is a legacy of unfair distribution of resources within the province, which may be illustrated by the following table:

<u>Under- and Over-enrolment in Public Schools (%)</u>					
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total
N Cape	101%	83%	-----	63%	84%

(Edusource Data News, March 1994)

It is therefore understandable why white teachers feel particularly vulnerable. For black teachers in the category of so-called 'unqualified', the future also appears frightening. Limited job opportunities in the Northern Cape do not make the situation easier.

For many managers this is a position of powerlessness, with their only role being that of an unwanted counsellor. In some instances certain initiatives have nevertheless been possible.

Thirteen white and one coloured school report that additional financing was raised to pay for educators. There are also examples of schools which have agreed to share the services of a music or an art teacher. In poorer communities these are not usually options.

The free market system has greater possibilities in urban areas where the pool of potential learners is much greater. Schools seen to be offering quality education are able to expand numbers and retain posts. For example, learner enrolment at Tlhomelang High School has risen from 729 in 1996 to 1,012 in 1998. It is hardly surprising that this is one of the few schools where rationalisation is simply not an issue. They are in a very different position to an isolated rural school such as Concordia Primary where pupil numbers are constant.

The amalgamation of schools is another way in which positions may be retained and unnecessary duplication avoided. The impact of these initiatives on the vulnerable class of 'un(der)qualified teachers' is one aspect of the change process that would need to be monitored.²

These options are not always available and the principal has to deal with a demoralised staff. Even the agreement struck in the final months of 1998 between Government and unions for a moratorium on retrenchments did little to reduce the suspicion. Educators surveyed during this time do not believe that the policy can be checked. The survey also shows that almost all the schools have experienced a reduction in staff numbers over the past three years of at least one or two personnel.

Safety valves, available in more densely populated areas, which enable irate educators or parents to switch schools, are usually not available. It is therefore understandable that education is one of the most contested political issues in this province.

A direct impact of rationalisation on the principal is an increase in his or her own teaching responsibilities. In response to how he feels about the changes one principal reports:

Positief, maar bestuur van skole gekniehalter deurdat skoolhoof in klaskamers vasgevang word.

The competencies required to occupy this role successfully range from counselling through to time management. Furthermore, it needs to be appreciated that initiatives which, under normal circumstances, would be difficult to implement, now become impossible with an insecure and demoralised staff. In these circumstances, affective competencies of courage, perseverance and empathy have renewed importance.

² According to the 1997 statistics, 23,7% of teachers fall into this category. The group with the lowest REQV, Relative Educational Qualification Value, is the black female, followed by the black male (Northern Cape Education Department 1998).

Multicultural Manager

What happens in schools with regard to racial integration has been one of the most politically controversial issues during the period of transition. Prior to 1991 there was limited intercultural contact in schools. Separation based on racial classification was enforced through separate schools controlled by separate departments of education.

By 1997 the racial demographics were (Northern Cape Education Department 1998):

Former coloured schools included 5% black and 0,04% white.

Former black schools included 3% coloured and 0,6% white.

Former white schools included 25% coloured and 10% black.

What these figures do not spell-out is that the process of integration in the small towns has often been very decisive. In urban centres there has been a flow of black learners into formerly white, coloured and Indian schools. Formerly white, Indian and coloured schools have become multicultural, often with a majority of black pupils. An expressed disillusionment with state education has seen an exodus of white pupils to a multitude of newly established private schools. Black Township schools now cater mainly for the poor.

In metropolitan areas social class rather than race has become the determining factor. In rural areas of the former homelands, the past decade has brought little change to the black schools. The multicultural experience will continue to be only for the urban and the privileged.

The pattern of change in small towns is very different and considerably more challenging. Educators now have to manage expanding classrooms of pupils whose financial position and level of educational disadvantage would have prevented their admission to many of the urban schools. It is not as easy for white parents to remove their children to another school. The stakes are high and the multicultural school must become a properly functioning school.

One of the factors on their side is the reality that the only alternative to integrated schools is no school at all in the area, and unemployed educators. An interesting study of patterns of desegregation in Gauteng early in the decade uncovers a greater enthusiasm from schools at risk of closure due to declining student numbers (Metcalf 1991).

The establishment of a school with a multicultural ethos is a very difficult task. Consider the following comments from learners in a former model-C school:

Our academic status has dropped, I think it is because of the blacks.

The increase in black scholars has led to a decrease in school morals and attitude.

All the available research on the integration of South African Schools indicates that neither educators (Christie 1993a, Skuy & Vice 1996) nor learners (Du Toit 1995, Van Heerden 1998) possess the appropriate skills and attitudes. It is essential that all obtain the skills necessary for negotiating difference (Muller 1992).

There is clearly some continuing concern about the multicultural identity of the school, illustrated by the response to indicator 2.4, *Organisational systems and culture allow themselves to be transformed to reflect the diverse backgrounds of the entire school community*. This indicator receives a relatively very low ranking in both the former Cape Education and House of Representatives schools.

Cape Education Department:

Principals: not very important 10%, important 43%, very important 47%
Educators: not very important 12%, important 56%, very important 32%

House of Representatives:

Principals: not very important 0%, important 33%, very important 67%
Educators: not very important 8%, important 32%, very important 60%

What these figures show is that principals, particularly those of former white schools, have some difficulty with the concept of multicultural transformation, and that their educators have even more difficulty! This indicator 2.4 was strongly proposed by the team of Kimberley Region Circuit Managers who assisted in formulating the questionnaire. The results indicate that the management and staff of schools could be somewhat out of step with Departmental priorities. In other words, managers are required to implement a policy in which they do not fully believe, and for which their educators are even less enthusiastic.

The managerial skills for so complex a role are extensive. 'Managing incidents' is mentioned as an important competence by all SMTs in the culturally diverse schools visited. They argue that it is essential to enable protagonists to recognise that every conflict is not necessarily racial. Such interpersonal and communication skills must be supplemented by *educational competence* in Second Language Teaching and Multicultural Education, together with *managerial competence* in Conflict Management and Marketing. All this must be founded on an ideological commitment to multicultural transformation.

Facilitator of Participatory Structures

The establishment of representative institutions for parents, learners, and educators is an important contribution of the new Education Act (Mataboge 1993, Mataboge 1994, Mampuru 1996). In all the exemplary schools there is an increased realisation of shared responsibility for the school.

To build the school is not just cement and bricks, painting; to build is to build the kids and the parents to come together, to do the job together, to teach the child to obey the laws of the school, to obey the regulations, the teachers, the principal and the parents. (SGB chairperson)

The pupils know that this school is theirs. We are always encouraging them to look at those individuals who are destroying the place and report them; pupils are watchdogs. We are encouraging a sense of ownership and pride. (Principal, Tlhomelang)

In most communities the formal establishment of a School Governing Body (SGB) has been a public expression of the new system of school governance (cf. Department of Education 1996). There is no uniformity in the way in which the relationship between SGB and SMT operates, but there is a common thread in all the principals' accounts of successful co-operation: the Governing Body has the legitimacy to take on certain responsibilities which the principal would prefer to avoid. Consider these stories

School A:

In this formerly Model-C school the principal sought the help of black members of the SGB in putting pressure on black parents who had not paid school fees.

School B:

The Department was considering amalgamation of the coloured school with a white school. As an employee the principal was in a difficult position, but the SGB could lead the school community in an act of angry protest, which was successful.

School C:

An effective mechanism was needed to discipline teachers who are ill-prepared, absent, drunk, or anything else deemed unseemly. It was agreed that the principal report these teachers to the SGB for action. The establishment of appropriate organisational structures requires considerable planning and social skills (Dinham, Cairney, Craigie &

Wilson 1995). Ensuring that they serve as an effective umbrella for the school necessitates careful facilitation. The problems and the critics are there, as is illustrated by the following quotation:

One of the major changes is the fact that the school is now owned by committees, and the Governing Bodies at the school are not well equipped for their task. They therefore think that they are there to police teachers. (Principal, former DET school)

The other structure with the potential for making a significant difference to the way a school is managed is the School Management Team.

1. They have contributed towards alleviating the pressure and amount of work, which was on the principal.
2. More time and focus on teacher performance and pupil performance.
3. Administrative activities of the school become more efficient and effective.

(Principal, former DET school)

Role clarity, group facilitation skill and political ability are all essential to this new role for principals (Department of Education 1996).

Pioneer of alternative organisational systems

An important example of evolving organisational systems to replace authoritarianism is the establishment of alternative disciplinary procedures. The following outline, from Concordia Primary, is very impressive, but by no means unique (It is in answer to the question: 'Watte planne en strategie het u skool ontwikkel om dissipline onder leerders to handhaaf?'):

Seminare en personeelontwikkeling word gehou en bygewoon in alternatiewe metode vir dissipline. Gedragskode vir leerders is ingestel en deur ouers en leerder onderteken. Dissiplinere komitee is gestig.

The following statements by the principal of Tlhomelang illustrate the close association with parents, which is a feature of the black schools visited:

We have realised that we can do without corporal punishment, and the importance of valuing the parents.

Every offence a child commits, the parent must be called in.

We must create a positive relationship between the teacher and the parent.

New systems are required to operate in a situation where ideals of democracy can be used to undermine the authority of a principal. Consider the following, somewhat negative, comment about the changed circumstances:

Now we have a new community that says 'You are not expelling my son! Parents are more informed now, now we have new challenges of people going to the unions or to the Department. (Educator, former Model C School)

While principals may experience frustration at the way in which their authority is no longer taken for granted, they also recognise the benefits of a consultative management style. It is important that they be able to utilise participatory systems in such a way that these actually deliver the anticipated outcomes without undue cost in time and effort.

Negotiator

There is a widespread perception of the school as victim of Departmental policy. Consider the following comments:

We have learned to accept (to a certain extent) the frustrations of having to put up with an Education Department that is totally incompetent. These days we do not 'stress' too much when we get 24 hours in which to complete a return, etc. etc. (Educator, white)

Die Department moenie met skokaankondings die personeel se moraal aftakel nie. (Principal, white)

Two areas of competence ranked consistently last by white principals in the *Competency Survey* are:

2.5 'Regular contact is maintained with officials from the Department of Education.'

(not very important 17%; important 47%; very important 36%)

5.5 'The educational vision of the new South Africa is understood and actively supported.'

(not very important 13%; important 47%; very important 40%)

What this reflects is less of an opinion about the importance of the competence and more about an attitude to the Department. Geographical space is compounded by a vast social and political distance between the parties. (This appears to be substantially less marked for principals of the former House of Representatives who rate both 2.5 and 5.5 at 70% for 'very important'.)

A certain amount of political frustration is evident, particularly in formerly white schools, but this is not the only problem in the relationship between schools and the Department. Principals complain of the inefficiencies and vacillations caused by inadequate planning. This demands extraordinarily high levels of negotiation skills from the person in the middle. At the same time principals recognise that the new flexibility and willingness to listen by the Department creates opportunities for the determined negotiator. In the words of a senior educator:

It is still too easy, because of our history, to always do what the Department says, which was the thinking in South Africa; we were horribly dictated to. I think we still fall back on that far too easily, a lot of our management structure falls back on that too easily saying that 'we can't do that because ...'

Even the most negative principals, who view the officials as political appointees, recognise the merits of the new consultative management style in the Department. The researchers for the current project were impressed by the fact that two of the schools proposed by Circuit Managers as exemplars of change management are Homevale I and Warrenvale, both of which have a recent history of active resistance to the Department!

Instead of the relationship between SMT and Department being unimportant for the development of competence (as suggested by a simplistic reading of the research data), it does seem that this is precisely one area that merits attention and skill!

The Northern Cape Education Department, responsible for schools covering the largest geographical area of all the provinces, is a new institution. Its predecessors are the former Cape Education Department, Department of Education and Training, and House of Representatives. Many of the senior officials and Circuit Managers have been in their positions for less than three years. A major problem, and understandably so, has been the lack of role clarity (Department of Education 1996: 29). Vast geographical distance makes regular face to face contact with schools the exception rather than the norm.

The relationship between Department and school is relatively new and fluid. The determined and constructive negotiator can be an important asset to the school during times of change, enabling it to deal effectively with externally initiated change (Wallace 1991, 1992).

Manager of Multiple Roles

An underlying assumption of this study has been that managerial competence is a vital contribution to whole school development and quality education. There are problems in the way schools are currently managed, but these should not be allowed to diminish the achievements of the past five years. There are now valuable participatory structures, such as School Governing Bodies. Integration of many schools has taken place rapidly, and the attitudes and multicultural skills of educators are improving. A Human Rights culture which respects the rights of learners and parents is emerging, supported by alternative systems for dealing with, for example, disciplinary issues. These are considerable achievements.

Daily exposure to conflicting and often changing role expectations is a major source of emotional fatigue for school managers (Whitaker 1996). School Managers have been under considerable pressure over the past few years, which has required them to implement an unprecedented array of change initiatives. We salute them!

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