

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

There is no one correct way to manage and lead a school. South Africa has many different types of schools and many different school communities, and what is successful for one school may not be successful in every other situation. It is up to the school managers and leaders to choose the best way to manage and lead the school.

We can learn from the past about what does not work to build a strong and effective school system. The apartheid system was characterized by inequality: racially, regionally and in terms of gender. Many black children went to school, but received an inferior education. The learning environment collapsed in many schools. Black schools did not receive the resources they needed and this created apathy and despondency. In many cases, the resources and relationships, which make a school, were totally destroyed. In others, a strong culture of resistance took root among staff and learners. By the 1990's resistance to apartheid had shown that certain education practices do not work and the culture of opposition had undermined the role of school management and leadership. (Tirisano, *Managing and Leading Schools*, 2000:1-2)

Not all change requires that people believe in what is being changed, only that they get it implemented. The pace of rapid change today, however, forces organizations to re-evaluate their beliefs about the change process. Forced change, without the workers' support, will result in a half-hearted, inefficient operation (Fossum, 1989:1). Most managers assume that a problem is solved when employees verbally agree to a

change. Later this manager may learn that the employees have neither accepted nor learned how to implement the change.

“The South African education system is supposedly undergoing a radical transformation. Whether such transformation is taking place in the spirit that it should is highly questionable. The many years of struggle against apartheid culminated in South Africa’s first democratic elections in 1994, bringing into power a new democratic government with new value systems. A major issue and cause for speculation, however, is the effectiveness, at the level of implementation, of subsequent education policy directives from government” (Mda and Mothata, 2000:64).

South Africa’s new system of education emphasizes equal access and improving the quality of education. To successfully put into practice the new educational policy, management in educational institutions must change. It is no longer good enough for a principal to be a good administrator: s/he must be a pro-active leader and manager in order to manage change in education. The new education policy requires school leaders to work in a democratic and participatory way to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective implementation of the changes in education. Poor resources and the absence of the culture of teaching and learning make it difficult. And even if school communities are willing to make a contribution, they are often living in poverty themselves. Often they are poorly educated and unemployed. School leaders and managers are in the front line of the struggle to develop the new ways of doing things in schools (Asmal, 2000:2).

The education minister's call for action places increased pressure on all managers in the education system to facilitate and implement education policy and change. The South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996, provides a uniform system for the organisation governance and funding of schools. School principals and school management teams have a crucial leadership role to play in achieving this vision and improving the standard of learning and teaching in schools. (Tirisano, introductory Guide, 2000:ii)

After seven years of democracy, our education system is still plagued by conditions left by apartheid. Low teacher morale is endemic: conditions in black schools are appalling: and inequalities remain entrenched. Education Minister, Kader Asmal, acknowledged as much when he declared that the system is in crisis (Weekly Mail And Guardian, 16-Aug-2001). The lack of confidence in the system cannot, however, be addressed only in material terms. We hear reports of remarkable schools that have excelled despite gross deprivation. They have heeded the government's call to return to a culture of teaching and learning.

The National Plan recognises that efficiency improvements are dependent on addressing the underlying factors that contribute to the low pass rate among Black students. Irrespective of equity of access Black students still account for a larger proportion of dropout and failure rates than White student. The national Plan's main aim is to ensure that all students are equipped with the skills and competencies necessary to function in modern society. (The Educator's Voice, April, 2001:10)The process of change is not easy. The managers of change find themselves often in the middle of the conflicting forces where people experience change differently

depending on different factors, for instance, previous experiences with change and peoples' roles and position in an organisation (Stokes, 1991:5).

The effective functioning of the school depends on the conduct of the principal and the leadership and managerial roles s/he fulfils. Campbell-Evans in Dimmock (1993:93) believes that current management of change in schools requires increased levels of staff and parental involvement in decision making. It is no longer enough for the principal alone to be clear about the facts, the goals and the obstacles in the school. However for educational change to occur, information must be shared. This has implications for communication patterns in the school and for communication skills required by the manager to work effectively with other stakeholders.

Smit and Cronje (1992:236) indicate that management should be sensitive towards potential change in order to prepare and plan for the process of change. Managers should be aware of the steps involved in a change process to increase the possibility of the successful implementation of change (Smit and Cronje, 1992:23). When implementing change within an organisation, it is often met with individuals or organisational resistance towards the changes, for example, the issue of some school bodies trying to derail transformation (The Star, 19-Oct-1999). Afrikaans school governing bodies in Mpumalanga regularly interfere in the management of schools in an attempt to derail transformation. The education department spokesperson Peter Maminza said a growing number of Afrikaans school governing bodies were operating outside the legislative guidelines established by the SASA. "Various tactics can be employed to overcome this resistance, for example, communication, participation, facilitation and negotiation" (Robbins, 1991:644).

Among the changes in the education sector has been the banning of corporal punishment in all schools under the South African Schools Act (SASA). This prohibition has recently been challenged in the Constitutional Court, but the appeal has been dismissed. Therefore corporal punishment no longer has a place in our schools. Failure to comply with this prohibition could result in educators having to face charges of assault. The question being asked by most people is, what do we do now, what are the alternatives?

Minister Asmal, in the preface to the Report of the Working Group on Values and education points out that: it will be extremely foolish to remain complacent about deep suspicions that continue to exist in the country. It would be foolish to expect that the severe corrosion of human dignity would heal quickly and without purposeful effort, active reconciliation and focussed attention to developing values necessary to underpin our democracy (200:3).

It is essential that management select an appropriate change strategy to introduce change. This s/he must do with the team selected to plan and implement change. To prepare an organisation for the changes that result from the implementation of educational change, it is necessary to understand the organisation (Dahlbom and Mathiassen, 1993:169). To achieve this goal one can, for instance, study the organisations' behaviour. Organisational behaviour focuses on the behaviour of people within an organisation and on how that behaviour affects the performance of an organisation. It includes topics such as motivation of employees, behaviour and power structures of leaders, interpersonal communication, group structure, change

processes, conflict handling and work stress (Robbins, 1991: 643) In the case of black schools, the above topics needs addressing.

This study will focus on management of change as it determines school climate in the traditionally black schools in the Gauteng Province. It is also necessary to include in the study the way in which managers prepare for and cope with changes in order to facilitate the adaptation of change management for the implementation of educational change.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

When considering the rapid change in the education system in the new South Africa, today's school manager is faced with an urgent and ongoing need for careful evaluation of the various intervention strategies to use. There are environmental forces that require school managers to implement comprehensive change programs in order to overcome resistance (Robbins, 2001:539-540).

Considering the rapid change in areas of curriculum, governance and management, today's managers need to have core competencies to manage schools effectively.

Thus the problem statement can be formulated as follows:

- (i.) Do school managers possess the training, skills and behaviour patterns to manage change in their schools? Schools need managers who can manage change in education in a transparent, accountable and democratic way to improve efficiency and productivity.

- (ii.) What kind of relationships exists among stakeholders in education in relation to the organisational climate of the school? School managers should empower stakeholders by fostering attitudes and values so that they will show respect for other people and their democratic rights.

- (iii.) What problems, resulting from management of change, cause conflicts, which affect the organisational climate of the school? Schools need managers who let people participate fully in tasks, trains people to work in teams and gives new skills.

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

Managing change requires an orchestrated effort that involves coaching and monitoring progress as well as wise decisions and appropriate training. Finally the purpose of this study is to answer questions regarding school climate in traditionally Black schools in Gauteng and how these affect the management of the change in the schools.

This study has the following aims in view:

- (i.) To determine whether school managers possess the necessary training, skills and behaviour patterns to manage change in their schools?

- (ii.) To find out what types of relationship exist and the organisation climate resulting from this relationship.

- (iii.) To determine whether procedures followed in the implementation of change do not result in conflicts in schools.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to realize the aims of this study the following research methods are used:

1.4.1 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Quantitative research involves description and data collection processes, research designs and statistical procedures that enable research in social sciences to parallel closely the work of natural science researchers. Such research follows the scientific method as far as possible in as much as it attempts to accurately and objectively research social factors (Vockell, 1995:192-193). Quantitative data collection techniques include, the experiment, the social survey, questionnaires and structured interviews. The choice of the measuring instrument is made simply on strategic grounds, that is, the method of collecting data is always subject to what a researcher understands knowledge to be. Quantitative research strives to be objective, but the human nature and the imprecision of measurement processes in education guarantee that research in education can never be as objective as that in physics and biology (Vockell, 1995:192).

1.4.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The aim of qualitative research is to purposefully select informants that will best answer the research question – What is the effect of management of change on the organisational climate of Black schools? Le Compte (1992:744) maintains that the central issue in qualitative research is why things happen. In the qualitative research paradigm, the researcher experiences, inquires and examine phenomena. Qualitative structured interviews will be conducted with focus groups. Qualitative evaluators conduct their research within the context of real lives of real people, therefore, the research will take place in schools, where management teams, educators and learners will be observed. Le Compte (1992:743) postulates that what people tell tends to reveal how they believe things should be whereas what researchers observe firsthand is more likely to reveal how things are.

1.4.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this research project a literature study will be undertaken to gather information and to make a conceptual analysis of the issue of managing change in the traditionally Black schools in the Gauteng Province. The existing literature sources with relevance to the topic under investigation will be studied. The literature sources to be included will amongst others be: text- books, manuals, journal articles, theses, school records, acts and education guide.

A detailed study of the following acts, which provide for change in education management, will be made. They all resulted in change implementation relating directly with management of change.

* National Education Policy Act No.27 of 1996-National Educational Policy Act, 1996.

* South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (Assented to 6 November 1996).

* The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act No 108 of 1996.

The literature study is chosen as a research method with the aim of clarifying aspects of a problem and obtaining relevant information, determining facts and theories that serve as a reflection and evaluation of the literature related to the topic (Kgaphola, 1999:5). Further more, literature surveys help to relate the study to the larger ongoing discourse in the literature about managing change, and specifically the school climate as an aspect that is largely determined by management of change, filling in gaps and extending prior study. (Marshall and Rossman, 1995:6). It also provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study, as well as a benchmark for comparing the results with other findings (Creswell, 1994:21).

1.4.4 EMPIRICAL STUDY

The type of empirical study to be undertaken will mainly be questionnaires and interviews. A questionnaire is developed and pre-tested. The aim of the questionnaire is to gather information from secondary school principals, teachers, learners and School Governing Body (parent members) and to obtain their views of problems

facing organisations during the management of change and how this affects the school climate in the traditionally Black schools in the Gauteng Province.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted on a provincial level to find out how change is managed and the school climate that results from management of change. This research technique is chosen because the researcher has the opportunity to explain concepts that are not clearly understood by the interviewee. The interviewer obtains the original responses on a face-to-face basis. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:240) supports the view that “ conclusions made from findings of this nature are mostly reliable and generate a pool of intelligence which may help solve problems of management of change” in Black schools in the Gauteng Province.

1.5 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This research is limited to one province because of the length of the research and because this is a limited research project. The researcher will conduct an investigation into the extent to which school climate is determined by the management of change in the traditionally Black secondary schools in the Gauteng Province: The investigation will be focused on the current climate of educational development for professional growth. Further more, special attention will be paid to the facilitation and implementation of education policy and change. Recommendations will also be made to address the educational condition in Black schools in the Gauteng Province.

1.6 RESEARCH PROGRAMME

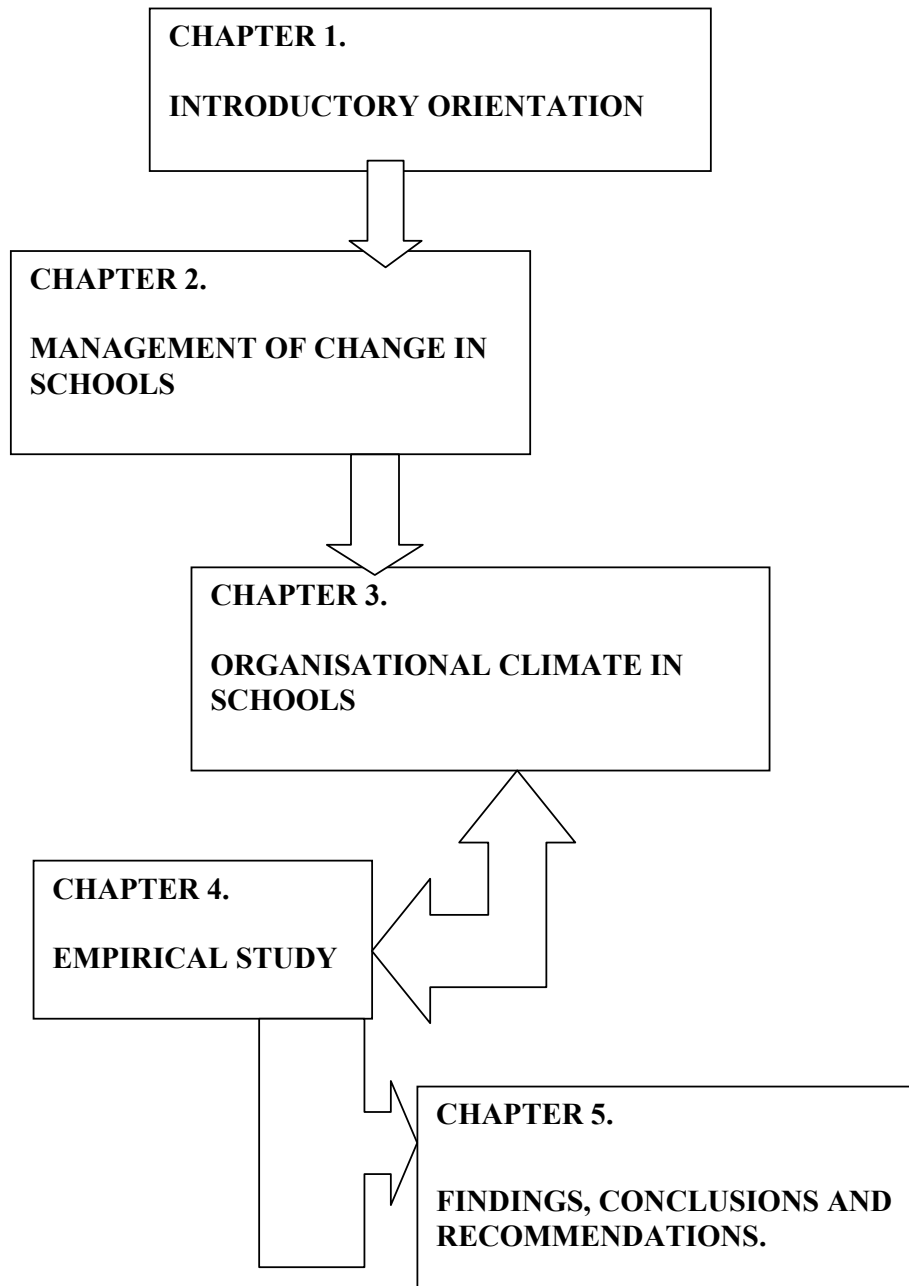


FIGURE 1.1 Research Programme

The following programme or framework will be followed (Figure1.1.)

Chapter one covers the introduction, orientation, statement of the problem, the purpose of study methods, research plan or programme and clarification of concepts.

Chapter two will investigate by means of literature study the management of change as it affects the school climate in Black schools in the Gauteng Province. The second purpose is to develop a theoretical framework which can be used in data collection, analysis and recommendations.

Chapter three will outline the school climate in detail. The types of relationships existing between stakeholders is an independent variable whose influence on school climate will be determined.

Chapter four will deal with analysis and interpretation of a selected sample of the empirical data. The quantitative presentation will be based on the perception of all stakeholders with regard to the effect of management of change as a determinant of school climate.

Chapter five will provide findings from the research group by use of questionnaires to analyse quantitative findings and to make recommendations and conclusions.

1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.7.1 CHANGE

Fitch et al (1992:16) defines change, as “making a difference, transforming, giving a different position, course or direction, or making a shift from one process to another.

Change is synonymous with alter, vary or modify. Change implies making either an essential difference, often amounting to a loss of original identity or a substitution of one thing for another”. Change is all around us and the capacity to manage change effectively is the crucial attribute of the successful manager in today’s organisations in this case the traditionally Black schools in Gauteng. Carnal (1991:1) states that in such a world, the dilemma facing educational leaders is how to maintain stability in the organisation as well as provide creative adaptation to societal demands and the culture of the education system itself. (Beckhard and Pritchard, 1992:1).

1.7.2 CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Managing is the key word. Plant (1987:11-13) purports that managing means taking control of and shaping the direction, then influencing in some way the outcome of changes, but this attitude is rare today. The values, attitudes and responses of individuals and groups of people to this approach are altering. People are no longer prepared to accept being manipulated, influenced or pressured into accepting changes which they don’t understand or which they don’t agree with. And what’s even more fundamental is that, whilst disliking and resenting being manipulated is not a new experience the willingness to articulate the feeling is increasingly acceptable.

In order to be an effective manager the principal should be able to utilize all available resources for the improvement of educational change. S/he should be able to demonstrate an understanding of current trends in school curriculum, know the attributes of quality teaching and provide effective feedback to teachers about the changes in education (Johnson and Schulz, 1990:5). Curriculum 2005 (C2005), is a new education curriculum that is driving the process of education transformation. It is fundamentally different from the school curriculum of the past, which was divided into discrete, subjected areas and was largely content based and teacher driven. It is outcomes-based with a special emphasis on integration and continuous assessment. To motivate and improve the performance of educators and learners, the manager should

- ◆ Set instructional goals and prioritize
- ◆ Improve instruction
- ◆ Conduct effective classroom visits
- ◆ Conduct effective staff evaluation
- ◆ Demonstrate a commitment to improve instruction (Johnson and Schultz, 1990:5).

The principal may be faced with a number of problems in the supervision of instruction, such as staff evolution and problems associated with incompetent teachers. Very often there is a struggle for power and seniority from less qualified teachers who resort to unethical tactics to achieve their goals. This is most prevalent in the traditionally Black school where a culture of resistance has taken root among staff and learners. Positive developments are not easily accepted because they are viewed with suspicion because, according to Mehl (1994:8-11), educational change

will only be possible if the people most intimately involved in education are entrusted with its reconstruction.

1.7.3 SCHOOL CLIMATE

The elements that make up school climate are complex, ranging from the quality of interactions in the school to the ones outside the school, from the physical structure of the building to physical comfort levels of the individuals and how safe they feel. Even the size of the school and the opportunities for students, teachers, the management team and parents to interact in small groups, both formally and informally, add to or distract from the health of the learning environment. (Frieberg, 1998:22)

Everard and Morris (1990: 41) maintain that the principal should work co-operatively with a number of people from different walks of life. This skill is demonstrated when the principal can cope with his/her immediate senior, the district officials, teachers, student, parents and the community at large. The human relations approach emphasizes the importance of creating good harmonious relations in the organisation. A principal who has educational management training is sensitive to needs. S/he understands the meaning of other people, is a good listener, human relations facilitator and good at communicating with others.

1.7.4 THE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Organisational culture refers to a system of shared meanings held by members that distinguishes the organisation from other organisations. (Grobler and Schalekamp, (no

date: 14) state that culture comes from within people, and is put together by them to reward the capacities they have in common. Culture influences everything that go on in schools. In this study, the culture of teaching and learning needs addressing after its collapse because of resistance to past injustice of the apartheid system.

Cunningham and Gresso (1993:33) indicate that research on effective school management has identified many characteristics common to an effective school culture. These researchers point that culture must be at the centre of all administrative efforts if we hope to continuously improve organisational effectiveness.

Organisational effectiveness can be achieved if, among other things, school develops a culture of excellence.

Research by Greenberg and Baron (1990:314), Robbins (1993:609); point out that culture may be traced to the founders of the school. The organisational culture often develops out of the school's experiences with the external environment. The school's current customs, tradition and general way of doing things, emanate from the school's previous experiences and successes it has had with such endeavours. Traditionally-Black schools' culture needs addressing in the transition from the apartheid system because it was almost totally destroyed.

1.7.5 THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Research by Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994:156), the white paper on the education and training (1995:22), Pollard and Tann (1990:155-156) indicates that a

well-designed learning environment can create favourable relationships between all the members of the organisation.

Lessem (1991:9), Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:141), proffer that if the people of the school want to build an excellent learning environment, during educational change, they must have some feeling for quality of work. He suggests that:

- ◆ They must have a sense of what is good;
- ◆ They must know what carries them forward; and
- ◆ This sense is something a manager can develop.

Dalin, Rolff and Kleekamp (1993:2) note that the learning environment is found in an organisation that is able to respond creatively to changes in the environment. An organisation that has embedded capacities for school-based curriculum changes, for staff development; and not least, that has institutionalized the process of an ongoing assessment. The learning environment such as this one is the single greatest influence in shaping a corporate culture. The Gauteng Department of Education is at present training educators in the province in this regard. Most educators are positive and respond creatively to changes in education.

1.7.6 EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment represents a radical change in schools. It changes the way people behave and the way matters of schools are being conducted. We must understand these changes in order to manage the process of empowerment in an informed way, (Kinlaw, 1995:155). During the process of educational change, empowerment

describes those values, hopes and initiatives associated with distributing authority and sharing power throughout the school. Despite the importance of the manager and the difficulties attached to the job; few efforts are made to help newcomers as well as old members to be competent in establishing and managing change effectively. Educators and not principals mostly attend workshops. This is a flaw because research shows that education management development, especially for school managers, is the key to successful transformation in the education arena (Task Team: 1996:38).

Both new and veteran principals are the main initiators of change and resistance to change. Theory of change and resistance to change bring to light the importance of the support and involvement of the innovation (Basson et al; 1991:625)

Potential difficulties also could arise when one or more tiresome deputies have unsuccessfully applied for headship positions. Unsuccessful candidates initially express resentment by opposing or not accepting changes, more especially in situations where the deputy was led to believe that s/he would be offered a job (Weindling & Earley, 1987: 15). It could be concluded that new principals may face some problems with members of the senior management team.

This implies that the new principal should be aware of the realities of the new settings and try all available strategies to win the support of the senior management team, because lack of their support may breed other staff problems like insubordination and sabotage.

1.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter a brief orientation to the study is provided, outlining the problem to be investigated and formulating the aims of the study. The major focus of study, is, providing information about management of change in the traditionally Black schools and the competencies needed to establish as well as manage change effectively in the educational organizations. “Effective management of change in education, as well as learning centre effectiveness, is the key to the provision of accessible and effective education for all” (Education for all, 1996:121). The current situation in school management requires that the principals of public schools of South Africa need to provide vision and unity of purpose within challenging, dynamic and highly political settings. Hence it is important for principals to possess certain competencies in order to manage change effectively in their schools. (Reynolds, 1994:8).

In the next chapter, the author will discuss management of change in general and then concentrate on the transformation process, which implies new developments, directions and demands on the part of management, including the principal. Research shows that dwindling resources, crumbling facilities, increasing public criticism and expectations, growing numbers of students and increasing demands by teachers and parents pose serious challenges to principals at virtually all levels and in every area of the country (Reynolds, 1994:8)