

CHAPTER 3

MANAGING TRANSFORMATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The challenges facing the educational leaders of today, both internally and externally, are enormous. Very few people will dispute the fact that there is a need to make fundamental changes in the core technology of schooling for the 21st century.

The racial and cultural diversity and tensions still existing in our societies today adversely affect the education of the youth. The democratic evolution of society and more active participation of all stakeholders reveal a more appreciable involvement in the pedagogic progress of the child.

The economic trends in South Africa pose numerous challenges to the poverty-stricken population. The acquisition of quality education for the nation depends on parents' financial status. Other challenges facing the educational managers are the instructional programs concerning the Outcomes Based Education, which enhance analytical thinking, encourage learners to take transformative action, as well as justify critical decisions.

The complexities involved in the role of educational managers are of a quantitative nature, i.e. the increase in demographics in our societies and those that are qualitative in nature, i.e. the changes and transformation necessitated by the change in government.

The added roles in the duties of educational managers have made the acquisition of new skills and abilities essential. The principal has to act as humanely as possible towards his team as well as towards the learners he is responsible for. It is essential to consider networking with other agencies in the community, for example, the police service, to

help solve drug-related problems; social work or psychological services for problems related to domestic violence, abuse, and other related traumas. This kind of networking consists of all fabrics of interactions woven by all involved in the education of the child, each with the capacity to assist.

Teacher training programs should be restructured to prepare teachers for the 21st century. Scientific and technological training are set to allow teachers to specialize and focus on the fields that are important. This will lead to a better preparation of the learners. Teacher training programs have to emphasise the role that must be played by teachers in the economic, social and cultural environments of the learners. Modern teacher development programs have to be destined to enhance pupil interests and abilities.

While the centralisation of educational responsibilities and facilities is aimed at enforcing standards of learning and teaching, decentralisation encourages community involvement, problem-solving and better control and delivery of services and duties. Implementation of principles and processes agreed upon by all role players can lead to better management. By all means, decentralisation of the school system will affect the way in which school managers discharge their overall duties.

The culture of learning and teaching can be restored if problems are identified timeously. The success of the exercise depends on the openness, commitment and willingness to change and accept the mistakes of the past.

This chapter makes an attempt to explore the key aspects related to change, reform and transformation of the education system. Some of the main role players include the state, the citizens, the school manager, the teachers and the learners, and the manner in which they participate in the whole process of transformation.

3.2 QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

The Japanese say quality “begins with education and ends with education”.

For quality to improve, standards of performance have to be set high for everybody in the school. Greater effectiveness in the school can be assured when the school personnel have ownership in the product. The meaning of ownership is twofold, namely,

- (a) a greater degree of commitment towards outcomes; and
- (b) being accountable to those outcomes (Whitaker & Moses, 1994:50).

Quality improvement in schools occurs when all personnel utilise their talents and abilities to the optimum. Sometimes capabilities may remain hidden because circumstances do not allow full utilization of resources. In a school situation, quality improvement focuses on learning and teaching. The needs of a learner are the primary concern of a school.

Definitions of quality differ from individual to groups. Any attempts that aim at improving quality raise questions about the society, the objectives of schooling and the nature of participation by all stakeholders. Students, parents, education departments and funding bodies are among the stakeholders that schools have. Each of them has a different definition for quality. For example, most parents may be mostly concerned with examination results, whereas funding bodies may partly be concerned with cost-effectiveness. Decision makers at different levels in the education system may vary in their quality concerns. “Managing for quality therefore entails mediating between various quality agendas” (Preedy, Glatter & Levačić, 1997:2).

For transformation to occur, various processes, including the improvement of quality have to be monitored continuously. Quality has to be assured at all costs by increasing accountability and reassuring observers of the product (results) they expect from the

school. It is the duty of the management team to encourage the success of the quality transformation.

Quality improvement has to be well-managed and focus should be given to the processes of vision and the agreement about the value system in order not to lose sight of our aims as educators. In the words of Davies and Ellison (1997:131) about the management of total quality improvement in our schools, “it seems reasonable to develop a model of management which is totally consistent with the purpose of the school and which facilitates the maximum amount of time and task ...”.

3.2.1 Quality of working life

Quality of working life (QWL) aims at improving the internal conditions within an organisation. This is one of the biggest challenges facing today's management practices, with the objective of increasing and improving work-related conditions and the well-being of the worker, where stress and threats are brought to a minimum (Van der Westhuizen, Erasmus, Janson, Mentz & Theron, 1996:198).

The quality of working life is described as a process whereby all the members of the organisation have a certain degree of involvement and participation in the decisions of the organisation concerning their work as well as their environment (Van der Westhuizen *et al.*, 1996:225). The quality of working life is further described as good supervision, acceptable working conditions, adequate salaries and other benefits, and work that is challenging and interesting.

The above descriptions clarify the fact that QWL refers to personal satisfaction gratified in the Work being done in the school. Personal gratification may lead to the optimization of human potential and the ability to participate in meaningful decision making processes. If the above mentioned aspects of QWL are anything to go by, then personal satisfaction and all that goes with it will transform our education with

increasing influence and the ability of the school personnel to bring about changes. This will ease the problems of managing an organisation like the school.

QWL is regarded as a popular, humanistic approach to work organisation, and if not taken seriously, by the next millennium, workers will lack motivation and drive, be dissatisfied and lack creativity. The main aims of QWL are summarised as follows:

- to relieve alienation, boredom and job dissatisfaction;
- to counteract decreasing motivation and increasing counter productive behaviour
- to make the most of human life
- to address rising expectations in declining organisations
- to do something about mechanisms and changing ideas (Van der Westhuizen *et al.*, 1996:230).

QWL leads to people's change in attitudes, norms and values. The education system of the day has failed to attract teaching corps of high quality because of its failure to provide the necessary resources and the lack of financial incentives that is found in industry. Most teachers have experienced professional burnout, stress as well as high levels of demotivation and feelings of insecurity. This has partly led to poor matric results.

3.2.2 Managing quality of working life

For human dignity to be accommodated in the educational situation by considering the quality of working life of all the workers, management, together with governing bodies, have to set up a policy that would engage every worker into meaningful participation in the work situation. The following hints may improve the quality of working life of all participants in the school:

- ❑ decision-making bodies should incorporate all affected members on a rotative basis to ensure fair and meaningful participation by everybody;

- when time-tables are drawn, teachers should be placed in subjects and other activities so as to bring about optimum potential as well as interest in the job;
- labour-related issues should be treated with sensitivity without compromising the aims of the institutions;
- employee's needs as well as the organisation's requirements should be in the interest of all stakeholders and bring about maximum production;
- management must encourage scientific research, technological development and creativity for the benefit of the organisation and society;
- hardworking individuals must be encouraged and be recommended for promotions.

If QWL is well-managed, transformation in our schools and its management will become the responsibility of all stakeholders, the essence of which is realized by the teacher and the school manager for the benefit of the learner.

Effective managers are expected to deliver high-quality education for the learners and provide both challenge and support for the teachers and all those associated with the school. It is a complex matter to transform an organisation to meet quality standards and performances. It cannot be likened to a bulldozer demolishing an establishment; rather it has to be accomplished slowly and persistently. This can be done “inch by inch and row by inexorable row. Convert one process after another, strive for constant improvement and continuous education” (Fullbright, 1991:48).

3.3 THE ROLES PLAYED BY THE CITIZENS, THE SCHOOL AND THE STATE IN TRANSFORMING THE SCHOOLS

Transformation of the education system is based on the new relationship, mutual co-operation and cohesion of function amongst the main partners in education, namely, the citizen (parents and the governing body), the school (management, teachers, learners and other personnel), and the state. Each of them has rights that must be respected.

3.3.1 The citizens

Kalous and Wieringen (1996:11) say: “The citizens have the right to choose their educational path according to their interest and abilities; to select the appropriate educational institution; and to have access to education regardless of any possible handicap in terms of health and social status”. Parents, learners, community and civic organisations are bound to participate and play an active role in the transformation of the education system as well as school management. “Whatever the form taken by community education, it has to measure up to five criteria. They are access, involvement, shared governance, use of the community as a learning source, and a relationship with lifelong learning” (Sayer, 1990:53).

Managers of schools with vision will engage in specific strategic efforts to market the school so as to draw quality products to the school and thus enhance competence.

3.3.1.1 *Marketing for schools*

Davies *et al.*, (1997:207) explain marketing in education as “the means by which the school actively communicates and promotes its purpose, values and product to the pupils, parents, staff and wider community”. In this instance, the pupil can be seen as a *consumer*, whereas the *customer* can be regarded as the person making the choice of school, namely, the pupil, or the parent, or a joint decision.

It is not sufficient to have a quality school, many people have to know about it; hence the importance of marketing the school. This can be referred to as internal marketing. The school manager has the responsibility to market it to the catchment area (the school environment and its boundaries). It is sometimes evident that the staff do not always send the good messages to the parents and the broad community groups. One of the reasons could be the inability of certain staff members to influence key issues of policy and practice and thus blame management for poor performance. If the participative management approach is applied, then smooth sailing to marketing practices in the school is envisaged (Preedy *et al.*, 1997:284).

3.3.1.2 Managing marketing processes within the school environment

Marketing management is likely to be effective once a good marketing strategy is in place. The term marketing mix refers to the management of marketing within an organisation. It mainly refers to opening communication channels between the school and the public, the politicians and other stakeholders. Both the internal as well as the external marketing approaches are crucial to the school manager. There is no way that a school can experience good marketing strategies if the culture of the school, and hence its image, does not live up to the expectations of the stakeholders.

Schools should certainly move towards a customer-orientated culture, as well as creating a proactive staff, for it to translate any marketing strategies to the community. Indeed the school must strive towards promoting positive images to the people around it. For transformation in the schools to thrive, strategic marketing policies and practices are essential.

Significant attention should also be given to the financial implications of marketing. Sound financial resources are required to achieve the objectives of the school's marketing strategy. Clear lines of managing the financial resources will lead to responsibility and accountability on the part of the school manager, if delegated to other

members of staff and parents. However, care must be exercised to ensure that not a large slice of the school's budget is spent on marketing tactics and strategies, as this will cheat the learners as beneficiaries in some way.

South African schools engage in fetes, PTAs, Governing Bodies and other structures where parents are involved and participate. School Governing Bodies will have to interact with the school management in order to see how best to take responsibility in making decisions that affect their schools.

The South African School's Act guides the governance of transformation in terms of training of the members of the community, senior management teams in schools, students, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents, as well as the management of school pedagogy (Godden, 1996:41). While members of the Governing Bodies represent the school and its community, they help articulate the school's vision and mission, and help promote the best interests of the school to ensure that the learners receive quality education. Governing Bodies help the staff manage the financial resources and conflict in the schools. Parents, as members of the community, have a role to play in the transformation of the school and its management by participative involvement in the school's activities.

3.3.1.3 Training of the school governing bodies

Extensive training was undertaken by School Governing Bodies (SGBs) which challenged them to take the responsibility of ensuring that teaching and learning prevails at the schools, ensuring conditions of tolerance and create communication channels between the schools and the parents. They have to ensure that quality education is provided, school policies are drafted and adopted, and that stakeholders take their proper places. The main purpose of the program is to ensure that SGBs are provided with the skills and the necessary information to govern.

SGBs were democratically elected in 1997, while the South African Schools Act (1996) gives them more powers to govern and be involved in running the schools and assisting with policy formation. All SGBs have to work towards the improvement of the quality of public schooling and instil confidence in the public concerning the standards of schooling, by encouraging true participatory democracy in the development and transformation of the schooling system. By so doing, the poor and marginalised communities will have a voice in the running of their schools. “To build organs of people’s power and civil society to ensure that all SGBs have the capacity to interact democratically and interface with government on matters of transformation in the schooling system” (School Governance Talks: The Gauteng Department of Education, 1(1), 1997).

The 1998 training program of SGBs covered the following essential aspects in the form of modules:

- Vision and mission statement writing
- Constitution writing
- Roles, functions and responsibilities of SGBs
- School Development Bodies
- Code of Conduct for Schools
- Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution
- Making School Governance work.

The 1999 training program has included the following key aspects:

- Curriculum 2005
- Financial Planning and Management
- Education Policy and Legislation
- Constructive partnerships and fund raising.

3.3.2 The school

The school's human resources comprise mainly the principal, the teacher, the learner, and non-teaching staff. In this section, the principal plays his role as a change agent and it will be interesting to note how he manages change in the school. It is in this regard that change, restructuring and other related terms form a pathway to transformation.

3.3.2.1 *The school manager as a change agent*

“School management is no longer about ships and captains on the bridge. It is about managing the currents and seas which are part of everyone's life and learning” (Sayer, 1990:45). He continues to make school managers aware of the challenges facing them in their duties in the school and the society as a whole. “The problem is not about managing an institution, it is about society as a whole” (Sayer, 1990:18).

The principal is expected to work in partnership with and be supportive of staff and student activities and their deliberations. This will assist those involved to grow, develop and have the capacity to change. The principal has to make this partnership work. Management is about sharing ideas and vision and being responsible towards the community. “Instead, the priority has to be to enable all who contribute to education to be involved in constant change and development of the whole service, in anticipating and indeed engendering worthwhile change” (Sayer, 1990:62). The sharing and communication of a vision is one of the key responsibilities of the principal.

At the heart of educational institutions and its management is the issue of people-centredness. Educational management is a challenging exercise that is aimed at the development of human potential. With limited resources and widespread demoralisation among teachers, educational managers are expected to deliver and produce results that will satisfy the learners, parents and the departmental authorities. As a result of the above, “the school leader is characterized by a strong drive for responsibility and task

completion, vigour and persistence in pursuit of goals, venturesomeness and originality in problem solving ... self confidence and a sense of personal identity, willingness to accept consequences of decision and action, readiness to absorb interpersonal stress, willingness to tolerate frustration and delay ..." (Dimmock & O'Donoghue, 1997:13).

Concerns have been raised that principals and teachers may be turned into technicians because of an emphasis on productivity and efficiency. There is also an anticipation in the shift of the role played by the principal, from the supervision of instruction to supervision of fiscal operation of the school. This shift in emphasis will make the principal a business manager. The complexity of the change process and transformation of school management is made difficult by "the simultaneous demands for excellence and quality, for economic restraint and accountability, and for an adaptive and responsive system able to meet the needs of a rapidly changing technological society ..." (Dimmock *et al.*, 1997:22).

To say that managers are only expected to plan, organize, control, and make rational decisions on a scientific basis is an understatement. Management is about "firefighting", resolving chaotic situations and even keeping the ship afloat during threatening seas; it is about securing stability and continuity of learning, teaching and other related activities, and also avoiding breakdowns by sustaining production and good work (Bennet, Crawford & Riches, 1992:6).

The school principal is directly in contact with the teachers on a day-to-day basis. He plays a threefold role:

- (a) A leader of a teaching team which he must encourage and backup. He also has to organise his team around issues of innovations, changes and transformation on key aspects of education.

(b) He is a manager of the teaching which goes on in the school. Hersey and Blanchard examine the type of skills necessary for the principal to master, namely

- Technical skills:** ability to use knowledge, methods, techniques and equipment necessary for the performance of specific tasks;
- Human skills:** ability and judgement in working with and through people;
- Conceptual skills:** ability to understand the complexities of the overall organisation.

(c) He must exercise control, viz. one in which he is a leader, and the other one in which he is a subordinate. A manager is responsible for motivating, organising and controlling his subordinates.

The following are the qualities that make a good manager, as listed by Aylett (1991:9):

A manager must be:

confident, courageous, analytical, creative, self-critical, honest, resilient, good at problem-solving, adaptable, patient, skilled at communication, open-minded, well-trained, a lateral thinker, a generalist (not a specialist), someone with an eye for detail, a good team worker, good at handling crises, an able leader, thoughtful, able to prioritise, able to take decisions, a person with intellectual integrity.

The changed way of the manager's role may be summarised as follows:

- The people work *in* a system.
- The manager should work *on* the system
- To improve it ...
with their help (Fullbright, 1991:53).

Management of change in essence means that the middle and senior management face new roles and extra commitments. It is not a new kind of management. The difference is that it involves good techniques of management. In this situation, many people complain of the pressures of the job, when in essence it means the pressure of change. It all depends on the pace of communication and the nature of management.

In the educational management context, change may refer to the fact that the school principals:

- have to focus on new controls and regulations;
- intensify competition between other schools in the area and elsewhere;
- take part in technological developments;
- face challenges and demands in the workforce and market place;
- make resources available.

The process of change needs to be well-managed. Most of the school's activities revolve around the principal who determines to a large extent the success and pace of change. "... an educational leader must lead the change – not merely be subject to it" (Van der Westhuizen, 1996:145).

The educational manager's persuasive communication is a means of changing other people's attitudes and perceptions for the benefit of the organisation. The principal as a manager has to encourage teachers to perform to their optimum by persuading them to get involved in different school activities. There has to be, amongst other things, a feeling of trust and consideration that will help with informed decision making, high satisfaction levels and ultimately effective teaching (Van Heerden & Calitz, 1998:1).

For persuasive communication to be used competently by the school manager, the school manager has to:

- know his staff well in order to lay a good foundation for confidential discussions;

- regard people as individuals; people have strong and weak points which have to be utilised to the optimum;
- be knowledgeable about change and other important issues concerning his work. This will lead to trustworthiness;
- identify problems timeously through communication. This will help to evade conflict.
- encourage participative management which will help uplift motivational levels of teachers and their participation in problem solving.

According to the Provincial Gazette Extraordinary 1 (113) of 1995, the responsibilities of principals are:

- (a) to ensure that educational services of quality are provided in that school;
- (b) after consultation with the staff, be responsible for the educational activities at school, the professional administration of the school and the implementation of the policy by which the school is governed;
- (c) promote a culture of learning and teaching at the school;
- (d) promote a high standard of professionalism and management at the school.

3.3.2.2 *The teacher and the learner*

The new role of the teacher in a changing environment may be described as that of a “supervisor”. Teachers are expected to:

- understand how their work fits into the overall aims and curricula of the school;
- coach, counsel and teach, and not to judge;
- remove obstacles in their work, in order to make teaching and learning enjoyable;
- determine who is outside the system and need their help;

- work towards the improvement of the teaching and learning process;
- create an atmosphere of trust;
- forgive a mistake;
- listen and learn (Fullbright, 1991:85).

Although the responsibility of creating an environment that would bring about student joy and encourage students to be creative rests with the school management, the implementation thereof will be hard to accomplish. It is difficult but not impossible to create an atmosphere where learners, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents will work harmoniously, effectively and comfortably with the aim of fostering excellence and continuous improvement in the quality of learning and teaching.

The training received by teachers is reflected in the education they give, and its effects reflect in the lives of the pupils. Teachers are required to co-operate closely during the transformation phase. Their contribution to, and implementation of these changes in the education system will influence their dissemination and effectiveness. There should be a link between teacher training and educational research, curriculum design and the production of teacher materials. This will enable teachers to play an important role in the development of their careers as well as the complexities involved in transformation and innovations of the education system.

The emergence of new kinds of educational technology, particularly audio-visual media, has played an important part in this change and the teacher is not expected to use new educational tools against a background of new surroundings, and new ways of using educational facilities. Teacher training must, furthermore, take into consideration the need to strengthen and improve preparation for the teacher's working life, scientific and technical training. Each individual teacher is expected to understand his environment better.

The training of various categories of educational personnel must be pupil-centred and not teacher-centred – hence the transformation of the teacher’s role, and also a change in the functions of other people engaged in the education system, who in one way or the other, work with the teachers.

Today’s teacher is increasingly engaged in the implementation of new educational procedures, taking advantage of all the modern resources. Teachers should not only be transmitters of knowledge, but have to serve the interests of the learner holistically.

The economy and the society determine broad long-term needs that enforce a refocusing on the content of teaching and learning in the schools. Industries need a type of workforce that will reflect the competencies and acquisition of skills in the competitive global economies. This is endorsed by Bush and Middlewood (1997:13) “While governments urge schools and colleges to prepare young people for the world of work, specific skills are subject to obsolescence as a consequence of industrial change”.

There are also indications that social problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment, crime, family breakdown, will continue in the future. An increasing number of learners will be affected by these trends. It is imperative that teachers seriously help to address these problems.

Teachers form the key to the success of the education of our future leaders. The delivery of high quality education, and the professional preparation of the teachers must be of such a high standard that their teaching competency is actualised and sustained.

The responsibilities of educators include the following:

Educators shall –

- endeavour to promote the intellectual and personal development of learners;
- promote a culture of learning and teaching;
- endeavour to foster in learners a culture of human rights;

- act in a just and impartial manner in his/her dealings with learners; and
- take the appropriate measures to attain and maintain a high level of professionalism.

The learner also plays an important role in the transformation of a school system. One of the basic reasons for schools to exist is the very fact of teaching pupils to think independently, make informed decisions and survive. Above all, he has to be taught to respect the rights of both majorities and minorities in the school without endangering anybody's culture.

One of the fundamental challenges facing the learner today is to exercise cultural tolerance. The learner has to acknowledge the fact that although we live in diverse cultures, with different life styles, and even have different sources of inspiration, we still have a lot in common. By communicating, learners can share a lot of this common element with others and still develop and grow into responsible adults. This should form the basis of increasing co-operation and mutual co-existence and can lead to positive perceptions of the world and its demands on the youth.

Provincial Gazette Extraordinary Vol. 1 No. 113 of 1995 summarises the duties of learners as follows:

- (a) Every learner at a public school shall take good care of school property or of the department which is placed at his or her disposal, and shall return it to his or her school on or before a date specified by any educator employed at the school.
- (b) Every learner shall –
 - (i) promote a culture of tolerance and respect for the human rights of others;
 - (ii) promote a culture of learning and teaching;
 - (iii) promote respect for school property.

Learners have to acknowledge the fact that change is inevitable and that their input as well as their involvement in the deliberations leading to transformation will benefit them. Their approach and attitude towards life have to be redefined and redirected to make them better citizens.

The organisational culture of the school refers to the manner in which the school executes its duties and tasks in relation to its goals. It also affects and determines the way in which teachers and learners relate to each other. The willingness on the part of the teachers to dedicate and commit themselves to the execution of their duties helps to determine the realisation of educational goals. Learners must also subject themselves to the discipline in the school which will lead to successful choices and a full understanding of the reasons for being in the school. The management style of the principal is also affected by the organisational culture of the school by fostering change and creating a healthy organisational atmosphere (Van der Westhuizen *et al.*, 1996:77).

The statement made by Sayer (1990:38) emphasises the above facts: “Real change comes about from shared commitment, from negotiation and partnership in learning. It is that same partnership and shared understanding and commitment which has to be sought in the management of schools”.

A new light on the role of the learner has sprung out of the following observation: “If we accept the idea that the purpose of any organisation, public or private, is to build a high quality product or perform a high-quality service, then we must accept the idea that the workers in that organisation must do high-quality work ... In our schools, the students are the workers ...” (Fullbright, 1991:85). Schools must ensure that the workers (learners) are provided with high-quality machines, raw materials, methods and other resources for them to produce high-quality work. If we view learners as “workers” in our school system, we need to provide them with good textbooks, curricula, materials and other resources.

3.3.3 The state

The key questions regarding the governance, the management of education and the role played by the government in enhancing and ensuring the quality of education and its delivery can be phrased as follows:

How can a system of governance be transformed from a centrally controlled political power to a more accessible, democratic, decentralised, humanistic system corresponding to new social conditions and needs?

OR

What concrete steps can be taken to encourage support and understanding of the new vision of schooling by striking a balance between the personal developmental needs of the teachers and the needs of the society in a system which extends its diverse opportunities to all people and demands harmonious partnerships between all stakeholders?

The government has a responsibility to ensure that the priorities existing in various communities are designed in such a way that the democratic rights of all citizens are protected and that citizens have access to, and participate in education and all its operations. The state faces a challenge of making people understand and benefit from the democratic principles relating to education and other important issues. The issues of financing, curriculum, management and accountability as well as existence and provision of educational resources are of essence. Efforts to restructure and transform the educational system will strike a balance between individual and state rights and responsibilities.

The role of the state in education is very essential in determining the strategic objectives in the development of the education system by drawing up relevant policies. Among other things, the state, in broad terms, is responsible for:

- setting up the appropriate legal framework that determines standards and the achievement of a broader consensus.
- ensuring the functioning and cohesion of the system and mobility within the system by also proposing devolution of powers and encouraging maintenance of balanced proportions and the direction in which the system is moving (Kalous *et al.*, 1996:12).

For the state to fulfil its goals, it has to finance its education and provide resources as well as give other support systems. However, the main functions of the state in respect of educational administration is to provide the child with quality education in an atmosphere that encourages individual growth and development.

The approach of the new millennium demands changes in the field of work and our thorough preparations for it. The rapid pace of technology and the global nature of the economy characterize changes in our workplace.

3.3.3.1 Centralisation vs decentralisation

South Africa emerges from an educational system which was centralised and departmentalised according to race. The challenge to transform this system came about with the introduction of a democratic government in 1994, when a gradual phasing out of the old system led to provincialisation of educational administrative functions and the introduction of new legislation and policy.

Centralisation places a high premium on conformity and control in the hands of a few. The state uses its discretion in the formulation and implementation of policy and other crucial matters without proper consultation. Schools and staff are restricted to being evaluated and assessed on the basis of strict requirements and principles laid down by the system. The beginning of a democratic government has led to a review of

such issues. It is on the basis of the above problems that decentralisation seems a better option with regard to enhancing the management and governance of a school.

★ **Advantages of centralisation**

- Centralisation offers the opportunity to plan and implement large-scale operations like curriculum, specialized training and service delivery.
- Centralised administration plays an important role at the district level by establishing, for example, criteria for promotion and attendance.

★ **Disadvantages of centralisation**

- The needs of the children are unpredictable, therefore routinization and detailed regulation are inappropriate strategies to apply when controlling the teaching process.
- Parents and teachers may have little access to or connection with the controlling centre. This can interfere with the development of the community commitment crucial to the public school.
- Centralisation may interfere with the day-to-day problem-solving activities of teachers and a sense of autonomy on the part of the school community (Bliss *et al.*, 1991:173).

Decentralisation of school management refers to doing away with state monopoly and dictatorship. This means that functions are redistributed to provinces, regions and districts with maximum delegation of management functions devolved to schools (Chapman, Froumin & Aspin, 1995:102). Decentralised decision-making involves moving the locus of selected district operations from the central office to the school site.

Decentralisation of schools depends to a large extent on the democratically minded school principals who will usually consult the staff on a wide range of important educational issues by holding regular meetings and exercising leadership on matters relating to principle, policy and delivery. From time to time, school principals will “shape, direct and monitor the decision making process; they will ensure that decisions reached are put into effect; and they will take measures to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of decisions that are made” (Chapman *et al.*, 1995:52).

However, as most schools will exercise site-based management in the near future, a combination of centralisation of key issues with decentralisation of operational functions will help management. With the budgeting being centralised at regional levels and relative financial resources being allocated to schools aiming at addressing the problem of equality and efficiency, a high degree of parental involvement will foster diversity within the school. The Minister of Education has announced a substantial reduction in subsidies to Independent Schools, and a better allocation of funds being distributed to marginalised Public Schools in order to address the issue of equality and quality.

There is a need for a deeper understanding of school management and leadership as the increased decentralisation of the school system will affect the school principal in various ways. The changed position of school management will increase pressure on the professional way in which the principal regulates activities in a school. A school has to demonstrate willingness to adapt to the new situation by recommitting itself to transforming its management and leadership as well as reviewing the socialisation process with the community which it serves.

The question is what functions should be decentralised to the schools and what central functions should be retained by the government department. Functions like curriculum planning, professional development, human resource allocation to schools, construction of buildings and other important facilities should be centralised. However, the maintenance of school property and grounds, the choice of subjects according to the

curriculum policy, purchasing of teaching aids and other educational materials, the management of extra-mural curricula, and the management of school funds are the responsibility of the school management teams assisted by the governing bodies.

Decentralised administration has an advantage at the school level in that classroom instruction can benefit from providing teachers with discretion sufficient to engage in problem solving, collaborate with colleagues, and develop curricula initiatives with the help of the school management team. By devolving certain powers from the district to the school administration does not refer to abdication of control of school policy and other activities (Bliss *et al.*, 1991:175).

There are times when successful decentralisation depends on strong centralisation aspects of an organisation. It is assumed that schools can be trusted, and while they need help, they do not necessarily need control. It is the responsibility of the district to provide services to those schools which need it the most, and to provide more freedom to those schools less in need.

3.4 RESTORATION OF A CULTURE OF LEARNING, TEACHING AND SERVICES (COLT)

The restoration of a culture of learning and teaching and the provision of necessary facilities is an exercise to be implemented by all stakeholders in the affected areas. It does not affect all areas equally. However, the need to address such problems cannot be overemphasised. The understanding of the culture of learning and teaching came about as a result of historical and structural conditions that created attitudes and activities that prevent learning and teaching from occurring in the schools.

In Soshanguve, situated north of Pretoria, the situation in the schools was described as desperate by a teacher organisation, SADTU. Problems included a high level of absenteeism among teachers and learners, dismissing classes before time, learners

roaming the streets during school time, frequent conflict between teachers and school principals, all had a disruptive effect on the teaching-learning environment. Poor matric results were at their lowest at 34% in 1996 as compared to Gauteng Province's 53%. A decision to resolve the problems led to a series of workshops in the area, from which strategies detailing the reconstruction of the culture of learning and teaching were documented (Makina, 1997:1).

Among other things, vision and mission statements were stated, wherein a recommitment was made to normalise the situation and improve the standards of learning and teaching in the area. Problems were identified, strategies formulated and prioritised, in the quest to find solutions.

A way of motivating both the learners and teachers to take an active part in education was identified as important. The need to re-introduce teacher appraisal and to upgrade and acquire facilities, resources and equipment are invaluable. Above all, the need to attract the interest and involvement of parents in the education of their children was rated as extremely important.

Government intervention strategies included the following activities:

- (a) The appointment of new district management teams with the co-operation of the MECs for Education and Security, with the aim of combatting vandalism and theft in schools.
- (b) A Presidential Project allocated R11 m to Gauteng for the purpose of renovating the schools. Schools received R8 000 each for this purpose.
- (c) The Committee on the Culture of Learning and Teaching was formed in order to inculcate the culture of learning and teaching in the schools.

3.5 MANAGING TRANSFORMATION

The intention to pay extra attention to innovative teaching strategies, contributing to enhanced learning for students, as well as management skills leading to tranquility, and the atmosphere conducive to learning and teaching, are the key factors to transformation. This will give a spark to a host of positive outcomes, including enhanced teacher morale and professionalism, student achievement, and greater parent involvement (Beck & Murphy, 1996:48).

The institutionalization of good instruction excites learners and makes them creative and collaborative problem-solvers. The adoption of dynamic teaching strategies is the prime mover in transforming our schools.

In the past, management practices have been built around one strong individual, namely, the school principal, who was responsible for the school's success. Transformation of educational management has recently regarded the school principal's position as that of a chief executive overseeing the production of a school. The focus on a single person taking decisions has given way to the existence of structures representing all stakeholders, and the sharing of responsibilities of decision making, management and leadership.

For schools to be successful, significant change and transformation in patterns of leadership and management have to be adopted. These changes focus mainly on the school principal, and has implications for the roles that other personnel, like the administrators and the teachers play in the school.

School principals have to understand that they have to make situational adjustments, like adapting sections of the curriculum to suit the communities they serve, so that dealing with change and transformation should be regarded as a challenge and not a problem. Top-down planning and management should give way to a more fluid, collaborative model of management where a free flow of ideas and inputs are acceptable.

Another major management task is how to cope with problems during the transformation process. A wide range of problems, severe or small, demand acknowledgement and action. Every problem solution needs support to ensure swift and acceptable response from those involved. For a manager to cope, persistence and tenacity are required. Any change program represents not only a demand on energy, but also poses a threat to existing routines and heightens uncertainty. Change programs need thorough consultations with all stakeholders.

Transformation can be well-managed if all those involved work towards the same vision and plan together. Vision gives the manager enough time to sense when things go horribly wrong, thus demanding timeous attention.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Transformation of the school system is a reality and can be achieved. If due regard is given to the application of correct procedures, acceptance of the need to transform, and the operationalisation of principles agreed upon, then transformation is achievable. There is no better way to achieve the above than to support efforts, be empowered with knowledge and be well-motivated to achieve the best.

Creating a vision for the school, working towards quality improvement of services, are the core aspects of transforming and developing the future adult. While technological and other audio-visual developments affect teacher training and productivity, the challenges facing educators are more complex.

The main function of the school is to deliver services to learners on an ongoing basis, a demanding task that requires full attention of the entire staff.

Several issues challenge the manner in which educators prepare the learner for the next millennium. There is an apparent change in expectations from the colleges, technicons,

and universities, in the way in which they tackle problems relating to the provision of quality education, financial resources and removing barriers on research productivity.

The next chapter gives a brief historical background of the South African secondary schools as well as organizational development and challenges in the Gauteng Province.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the South African secondary education system and to discuss the challenges facing the system.

- (1) The system that was fragmented according to racial divides and provided unequal opportunities for all.
- (2) The system that exposed South Africans to vast disparities, with unequal provision of resources allocated to black and white schools, where white, middle-class parents, as well as children of pre-school age had no access to education.
- (3) The system that saw key stakeholders at the likes of teachers, parents, students and the community excluded in the decision-making processes concerning education.

Education is a basic human right which must not be restricted according to age, colour, gender and class. It is from this standpoint that the ANC and its allied organisations set out to develop and redraft an education framework and policy from which the democratic government would work after the elections.

The post-election period saw the emergence of the National Education Co-ordination Committee, which developed policies for the adoption of the Interim Constitution, the