

Creating People-centred Schools

School Organization and Change
in South Africa

Writers | Themba Ndhlovu, Carol Bertram,
Nonhlanhla Mthiyane and Neil Avery

○ **Editor** | John Gultig, Dawn Butler

The SAIDE Teacher Education Series

Saide 
South African Institute
for Distance Education

Creating People-centred Schools

School Organization
and Change in South Africa

Learning Guide

Themba Ndhlovu
Carol Bertram
Nonhlanhla Mthiyane
Neil Avery

SERIES EDITOR

John Gultig
Dawn Butler



Creating People-Centred Schools
ISBN 978-0-9869837-1-9

© 2010 SAIDE



This work, a digital version of the SAIDE/Oxford publication of 2002, is released under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 licence.

1ST EDITION EDITOR: John Gultig, Dawn Butler
1ST EDITION VIDEOTAPE: Kagiso Educational Television, with Themba Ndhlovu and John Gultig
1ST EDITION AUDIOTAPE: Ulwazi Educational Radio, with John Gultig and Mike Adendorff
DESIGN FOR DIGITAL VERSION: Michelle Randell
ILLUSTRATIONS: Carol Sieweke

SAIDE
PO Box 31822
Braamfontein 2017
T: (011) 403 2813
F: (011) 403 2814
www.saide.org.za; www.oerafrica.org

The first edition was funded by the WK Kellogg foundation. This digital version has been funded through the International Association of Digital Publications.

SECTION FOUR

Changing schools

4.1	Understanding change: first ideas	95
4.2	The complexity of change processes	99
4.3	Approaching change systemically	107
4.4	Coping with the fears evoked by change	113
4.5	Leading and managing change	116
4.6	Changing schools: the school-as-organization approach	118
4.7	Changing schools: the school-as-community approach	129
4.8	Final tutor-marked assignment	134

Understanding change: first ideas

4.1

Introduction

In Section Two we looked at ways in which South African schools have been organized until now. We found that, traditionally, South African schools were hierarchically structured organizations in which key decisions were taken by people at the top and communicated down to ordinary teachers. There was a high level of work specialization and little collaboration, and there was little or no communication between peers.

In Section Three we found that changing global and local contexts, as well as new government policies, suggested that South African schools would have to change. The new vision of schools is characterized by less hierarchical structures, more participative decision-making, more flexible job functions, a great deal more teamwork, and a commitment to ongoing personal and organizational development. Our analysis of school organization research revealed that there is a great deal of commonality in what different researchers regard as 'effective' or 'good' schools. We also noticed that there are many similarities between the characteristics good schools are regarded to possess, and those seen as important in new South African education policy. Finally, we explored the concept of a *learning* organization – a popular form of this new organizational vision which is used within both education and business.

This information has given us a fair idea of what our school could or should be like. But we still have only a hazy notion of *how we can go about changing* our present organizations. In this final section of the module, we will explore the concept of change. We will begin our investigation into how change occurs by reading a case study of an enterprising school principal who has to implement *Curriculum 2005* in her primary school.



Case study: Advanced Primary School

Ms Zondi has been the principal of Advanced Primary School for many years now. Most teachers respect her because she is well-organized, but some have criticized her for wanting to 'do everything herself'. Although she has learnt about the importance of delegation in the management courses she has attended, she still finds it difficult to entrust teachers with responsibility because she feels they 'won't do things right'.

At a principals' meeting, Ms Zondi heard about the launch of Curriculum 2005. Being organized, she immediately invited a departmental official to visit her school and speak to her 18 teachers about the new curriculum. Ms Zondi told her teachers that they had to attend the meeting – scheduled for the following Tuesday – because it would give them important information about how they would have to change their classrooms. Most of the teachers were pleased that teaching would finish early, but were rather nervous about the meeting: it wasn't usual to have an outside person addressing them in their school, and they were also not used to discussing their own teaching with other teachers.

However, the next Tuesday the staffroom was full. Ms Majozi (from the department) began by handing out a pile of notes to each teacher. She said there was a lot to learn about Curriculum 2005, so she would briefly summarize the notes she

“
*... teachers
 said they
 taught the learning
 area called
 ‘Communication’, but
 what they
 did in their
 classrooms still resem-
 bled what they had
 done when teaching
 the subject ‘English’ ...*
 ”



Spend a few minutes thinking about why Ms Zondi's attempt to change the school's curriculum went wrong. What could she have done differently?

was handing out, but expected staff to read them more thoroughly at home. She invited them to ask questions, and then began explaining why South Africa needed a new school curriculum, and what the key changes would be. For the next hour, the teachers heard phrases like ‘focus on skills, not content’, ‘allow learners to work co-operatively’, ‘design meaningful learning activities’, ‘allow learners to discover knowledge for themselves’, ‘make sure learning occurs in groups’, and ‘assess your learners through portfolios, projects and oral tasks, as well as using written tests and exams’.

Ms Majosi's input was very entertaining. She spoke well, and told a number of funny stories. But the teachers felt quite confused. They were not sure what a number of Ms Majosi's terms meant in practice. For instance, many felt they were already engaged in ‘meaningful activities’ and teaching children skills! So what did Ms Majosi really mean? And some wondered how changes like ‘discovery teaching’ or ‘group work’ were possible, because they had so few resources, and very little space in their classrooms. But, despite the confusion, most teachers were too nervous to ask questions because Mrs Majosi seemed to be so knowledgeable – and in such a hurry. In fact, she had so much to say that there was no time left for questions. She apologized for this, and then rushed away to another appointment. The teachers left the school feeling quite overwhelmed.

Ms Zondi, however, felt happy: her teachers told her that they had found the talk ‘interesting and enlightening’. Her opinion was that the talk really had covered all the things the teachers needed to know, and that her school was now ahead of other schools in the area. In her pleasant way, she told the teachers that she would be ‘looking out’ to see that they were changing the way they taught. This made the teachers feel even more overwhelmed, and increasingly nervous.

The main topic of discussion among the staff over the next week was Curriculum 2005. Some teachers began complaining that it was ‘unfair’ for Ms Zondi to expect them to change. ‘I've been teaching for more than ten years, and the methods I've been using are fine. Very few learners ever fail. Why must I change?’ said one. ‘What nonsense this new curriculum is!’ said another. ‘How am I expected to try out all these fancy ideas and still get the Std 5s ready for high school?’ ‘The department and Ms Zondi should try this group work themselves and see what a waste of time it is,’ complained a third. Yet another teacher added: ‘I have tried using different assessment methods before. But my learners don't take these methods seriously because they say the marking is biased ... they say it's just my opinion.’

By the end of the week, the attitude among the majority of teachers towards Curriculum 2005 had turned very negative. Teachers were talking more and more about how OBE had ‘failed elsewhere’, about how the department was ‘out of touch with reality’, and about how Ms Zondi – whom they used to like – was actually lazy and authoritarian. Some teachers were suggesting that OBE was simply a way of getting rid of teachers!

However, there were a few teachers who were trying to make some of the changes. But they were struggling. They found they didn't have enough books for learners to do their own research, that learners often don't take group work seriously, and that school periods were simply too short for learner-centred activities. They were also angry at Ms Zondi because she was always ‘too busy’ when they asked her for assistance. Still, after a couple of months, some of the wording in the school's curriculum and even in teachers' work-plans did reflect OBE language. So, for instance, teachers said they taught the ‘learning area’ called ‘Communication’, but what they did in their classrooms still closely resembled what they had done for years when they had taught the subject ‘English’.

Ms Zondi was happy ... until she did her surprise ‘inspection’. She found that very little had changed, although many teachers talked positively about the ‘new

methods' when they were talking to her. Feeling quite angry that 'all her efforts' had simply been ignored by 'ungrateful teachers', she called a staff meeting. Only half the staff attended, most of whom said they agreed with the new methods and were trying to implement them. They said it was the other teachers – 'those who never attended meetings' – who were the cause of the problem.

Analysing the school's approach to change

Before we can begin making suggestions about what we think went wrong, we need to *understand why* Ms Zondi (and the teachers) thought and behaved the way they did. A good place to start is to examine their underlying beliefs, or the 'mental models' (to use Senge's language) that they had about their school and about how change should happen in the school.

Ms Zondi's approach to change

- 1 She heard about the new curriculum and wanted the teachers in her school to know about it.
- 2 She called a one-hour staff meeting (at relatively short notice) and invited an outside expert to tell teachers about the new ideas.
- 3 She was happy with the input, which was both extensive and entertaining.
- 4 She told teachers that she expected them to change their teaching methods.
- 5 She was angry when the teachers did not change.

What were Ms Zondi's *assumptions* about change? She assumed that if teachers *heard about new ideas* from an outside expert, and if she *instructed them to change*, then they would change their teaching practices. She realized that teachers needed to be given time to ask questions and, when they didn't do so during the meeting, she was convinced the new ideas had been understood and accepted by her staff.

Ms Zondi understood change as a simple, linear process: she believed that if she followed the correct steps, change would happen as she planned it. She believed that teachers would, to a large extent, welcome these new methods and want to make the changes in their classrooms. After all, they had all suffered under Bantu Education, so surely all teachers would welcome the ideas of the new, democratic and non-racial government? She didn't anticipate that teachers might resist, or that there would be reasons why they didn't want to – or couldn't – change.

Ms Zondi assumed that change could be introduced in a top-down way: that she could order or mandate it. She didn't allow teachers the time to discuss, understand and ultimately accept that these changes could benefit them. In other words, she did not allow time for teachers to 'own' the changes, nor did she take into account other factors which might make implementation difficult, such as a lack of skills or resources.

linear: things follow one another in a straight line of cause and effect

The teachers' experience of the change process

- 1 When they were told about the meeting to introduce changes, most teachers were pleased, but nervous.
- 2 During the meeting, a number of teachers weren't really sure about the ideas being conveyed, but were too nervous to ask questions. While they liked the ideas and reasons for the change, they didn't really understand how they applied to their teaching.
- 3 After the meeting, teachers discussed the changes among themselves, but felt it was unfair of Ms Zondi to expect them to change the ways they taught. Some felt they should give it a try, while others simply refused (and found press clippings which, they said, showed how 'impractical' the new ideas were).
- 4 The teachers who rejected the 'new methods' felt that those who were trying to implement changes were discrediting them and their refusal to change their

teaching. The teachers trying to implement changes felt that they were being undermined by these teachers, by the lack of support from Ms Zondi, and by the lack of resources.

- 5 The school continued much as it always had. Some teachers tried half-heartedly to implement new ideas, but became increasingly disillusioned, while the majority of teachers simply taught as they always had. However, when they spoke to Ms Zondi, they used the new OBE terminology to describe their teaching.

Thuthuka teachers discuss the experience of Advanced Primary

'Hmnn ... this sounds like my experience at Thuthuka!' says The Rake, smiling broadly. 'I can sympathize with Ms Zondi!'

'Ja, you would!' replies Nomusa, with an equally broad smile. 'I sympathize with the teachers ... particularly those teachers who tried to change, but got support from no one! But joking aside, I think you'd agree with me that we would no longer make the mistakes Advanced Primary made, now that we know something about change ...'

'Absolutely,' says The Rake. 'Going back to my old point ... Ms Zondi's problem was that she didn't think holistically. She didn't take into account that she needed to think of all the different things that might get in the way of change actually happening ... like teachers' fears and attitudes, like a lack of resources, a lack of skills and a lack of understanding on the part of teachers, like inappropriate timetabling ...'

'Yes, we know from that reading by Hopkins that change requires work on both structures and cultures,' says Sindi. 'But there are other issues that I found interesting – and so familiar. First, the teachers never really expressed their grievances to Ms Zondi. They actually lied to her ... probably because they didn't want to offend her! And she never really set out to discover the real feelings of the teachers. Also, linked to this, was the complete lack of any structures through which teachers could participate in decision-making. This ultimately led to tensions among teachers and all sorts of misunderstandings about the 'new methods'. In fact, by the end of the case study, teachers had rejected even the ideas which they had liked initially!'

The Rake reminds the group of the Senge article. 'You remember that he talks about many of these problems there. He says, for instance, that change can only be sustained if strong teams are built, if teachers are motivated and enabled to perform competently (they have personal mastery), and if we all stop thinking in our old, linear models and begin seeing factors at school as interrelated.'

The discussion also reminds Sipho of a diagram in the book by McLagan and Nel (see page 23 of your Reader). 'Although this deals with the "big" change from authoritarian to participatory organizations that we spoke of earlier, I think it does provide us with some ideas,' he says.

'For instance, the writers talk of two "transition tensions" being "embedded and habitual practices and traditions" and "resistance to change". I think this goes some way towards explaining why staff did not implement change. They also talk about "using the language of participation to describe authoritarian practices" – which seems much like what the staff were doing when talking to Ms Zondi!' says Sipho.

There is a lot more we can say – and hopefully that you are saying! – about this case study and its 'lessons' for implementing change. Probably the most important lesson is that change is complex: it has many dimensions and needs to be approached thoughtfully. Ms Zondi's experience demonstrates strongly that there is a difference between *telling people about* change and *creating a process in which change actually begins occurring*.



You will notice that we often refer back to various articles – like those by Hopkins and Senge. This should alert you to two things:

- first, these are obviously regarded as key readings within this module and need to be well understood;
- second, we understand learning to be cumulative – we use knowledge from previous articles (Hopkins, or Christie and Potterton, for instance) to understand new concepts and ideas.

The complexity of change processes

4.2

What can we learn from research about change?

Clearly, the way Ms Zondi approached changing her school's curriculum was not successful. Michael Fullan, a Canadian school organization researcher, has written about educational change for many years. He believes that one of the reasons why so many change projects in schools fail is that people have a *faulty way of looking at change*.

Most people think – like Ms Zondi – that change happens in a linear fashion, with one step following logically from another. Ms Zondi thought that if she introduced the teachers to the new curriculum, they would be willing to try out new methods of teaching and assessment. She assumed that the main reason why teachers didn't use a greater variety of teaching strategies or implement *Curriculum 2005* was that they *lacked information* about the new curriculum. This kind of thinking, in which it is assumed that there is a direct relationship between a *cause* (new information about *Curriculum 2005*) and an *effect* (changed teaching practice), is called *linear* (or *mechanistic*) *thinking*. It can be represented like this:

New information about *Curriculum 2005*  changed teaching practices

Figure 4.1 A representation of the fairly simple, mechanistic thinking about change demonstrated by Ms Zondi

But the experience at Advanced Primary suggests that this assumption was wrong: teachers didn't change as a result of hearing new information. In fact, the impracticality of linear thinking is not a new discovery. You may remember the case studies in Section Three where we found that changed structure doesn't *cause* changed culture. Instead, we found a far more complex and dialectical relationship between the two. The same kind of relationship is also in play here.

We could argue that giving out the new curriculum information in a context where teachers are insecure about their own abilities and their own future as teachers, may well *retard* change. The teachers still had too little information to understand and implement new methods of teaching with any confidence. However, they *did* have enough information to realize that:

- they required new *training* and *resources* to implement many of the practical-sounding ideas;
- the new curriculum was a big change, and it might have consequences for their careers;
- *Curriculum 2005* promised to increase their workload, at least in the beginning.

As a consequence, their *fear* of the new system probably increased, leading to increased resistance. This fear and resistance is already expressed in statements like 'our old methods worked perfectly well', or 'this hasn't worked anywhere', or 'Ms Zondi is being unreasonable'. All these variables meant that change couldn't happen as Ms Zondi intended it to.

We can represent a more *complex* kind of thinking about this issue – which possibly explains how information/knowledge actually increased teacher resistance – in the following way:

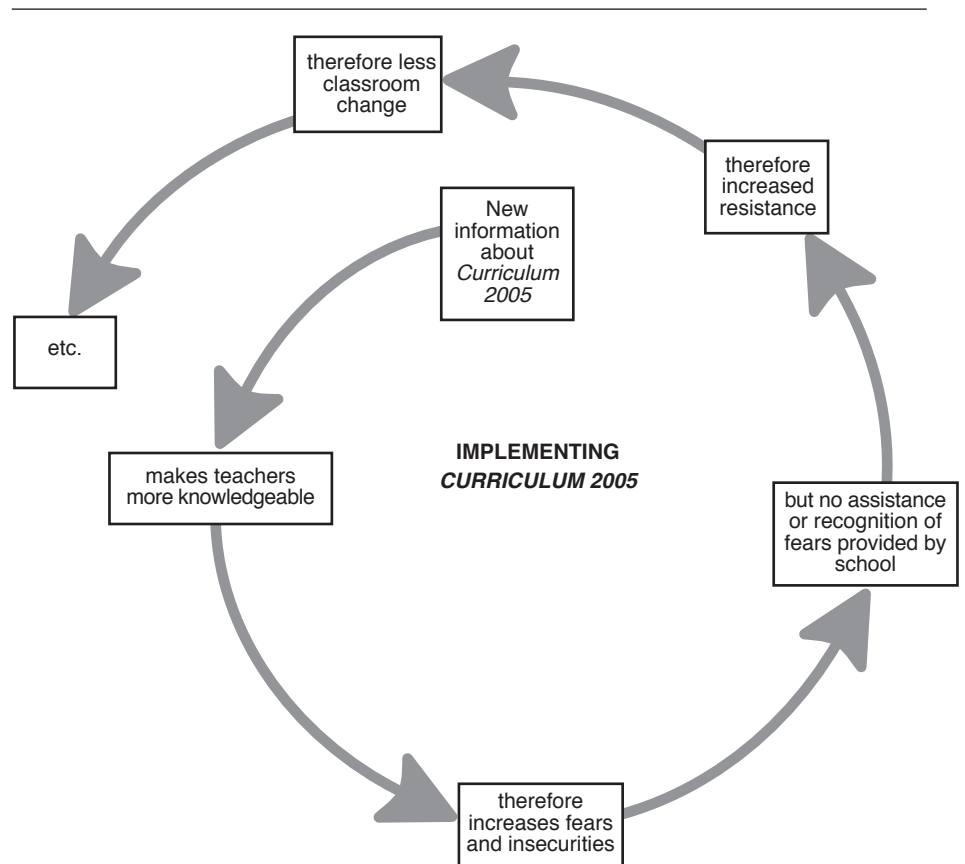


Figure 4.2 A more complex representation of the relationships between different parts of a change process

Which kinds of change strategies work?

As Fullan stresses, the change process is a complex one. However, Fullan (and other researchers) have begun to identify:

- kinds of thinking about change, and strategies for implementing change, that ***definitely don't work*** (thus we try and avoid these);
- other kinds of thinking and strategies that have a ***much greater possibility of bringing about real change*** (as opposed to what Hopkins calls the 'appearance of change').

Before we learn more about this, do a quick check on ***your thinking*** about change. To do so, read through this list of statements about change, and tick one of the columns to indicate whether you agree or disagree with the particular statement.

Table 4.1 Fullan's list of 'common-sense' ideas about change

Statements about change	Agree	Disagree
• Resistance is inevitable, because people resist change		
• Every school is unique		
• The more things change, the more they stay the same		
• Schools are essentially conservative institutions, harder to change than other organizations		
• You just have to live reform one day at a time		
• You need a mission, objectives, and a series of tasks laid out well in advance		
• You can never please everyone, so just push ahead with reforms		
• Full participation of everyone involved in a change is essential		
• Keep it simple: go for small, easy changes rather than big, demanding ones		

ACTIVITY 18: FULLAN AND MILES – GETTING SCHOOL REFORM RIGHT

Turn to Part 6 of your audiotape (side 2; *after* section on learning organizations). Listen to Nel and Mahanjana talk about the challenges of change, and some of the skills and strategies we require to be successful change agents. Note important points in your workbook. Now read 'Getting school reform right', by Michael Fullan and Mathew Miles (Readings, Section Three, 'Schools: The processes and constraints of change'). In Part 1 of this reading, the authors suggest that there are seven key reasons why school reforms fail. In Part 2, they offer a number of 'lessons' for successful change. You will notice that many of these 'lessons' are direct responses to the reasons the authors give for failures in change processes.

As you read, prepare to do the activities below. But notice that the writers emphasize the importance of making links between the different parts of an argument in order to understand the issue under discussion. When you read, take this advice seriously: make the links! And do so – critically – by trying to apply their ideas to change processes in South Africa, and to the ideas offered by Nel and Mahanjana.

- a** Draw up a table with two columns in your workbook. Head the first column WHY REFORMS FAIL and the second column LESSONS FOR SUCCESS. In your own words, and with your own examples, summarize the advice Fullan and Miles, and Nel and Mahanjana offer us about change under these headings.
- b** In the section headed *Individualism and collectivism must have equal power* (Part 2, page 80), Fullan states that 'Collaboration is celebrated as automatically good. Participatory site-based management is (seen as) the answer. Mentoring and peer coaching are a must. Well, yes and no ...' What reservations about participation does Fullan express? Does Nel have similar reservations and advice about participation? What lessons do these hold for your actions?
- c** Ms Zondi still wants the teachers in her school to grapple with the requirements of *Curriculum 2005*. Write down some suggestions of how she might go about it differently, drawing on the knowledge that you have learned from Fullan and Miles, as well as Nel and Mahanjana, to do so.



This is a long but important activity. We suggest you spend about 2½ hours on it. Make sure you link these new ideas to work you have done so far, as well as to your *own* school experiences.

reservations: private doubt or concern about aspects of the thing being considered

- d** Reasses your answers on Table 4.1. Does your thinking differ from that of Fullan and Miles, and Nel and Mahanjana? Who is correct?

Re-evaluating Advanced Primary's change process

This is how Thulani used Fullan and Miles to analyse the change process at Advanced Primary School. Keep in mind that Thulani's suggestions may not necessarily be wise and correct! So read through them critically, compare them with your own, and then make a judgement about whether he or you have understood Fullan's and Miles' ideas better.

A memo to Advanced Primary

by Thulani Shabalala

Advice to management

Ms Zondi, there is little research evidence to suggest that authorities can order ('mandate') people to change. This is particularly so in education, where change processes are complex: many linked factors either assist or constrain change. But second, fear of change plays a great role in increasing people's resistance. Thus, I'd strongly suggest that you involve teachers in ongoing discussions about the change. In these discussions, you should:

- deal with teacher fears on an ongoing basis;
- thoroughly discuss why the change is necessary, and allow staff to raise their concerns about difficulties with implementation;
- recognize that change requires the use of resources and, within realistic limits, try together to find ways of overcoming these limitations.

The important point is to realize that change is a journey: it takes time, but it also requires that all staff are on the bus! If this is done, teachers will feel that they own the process of change, so it will have a much greater chance of success.

Fullan and Miles, experts on implementing educational change, argue that change processes need to be managed. You cannot just tell staff about the change and then sit back and hope it happens! This management function must include, I think:

- inspiring and leading your team (which includes developing - in the processes of change - a vision towards which your school can move, as well as the benefits change holds for all stakeholders);
- taking difficult decisions when necessary (in other words, as principal, you need to make decisions and use the authority you have to ensure that change happens!);
- creating the processes and atmosphere at Advanced Primary which make the problems you face 'your friends'; this may sound strange, but it means that you must see change as a learning process and not be afraid to take risks, as long as you reflect on the consequences;
- ensuring that both you and your staff don't settle for simple solutions - for symbols rather than substance; instead, constantly think systemically - think about the relationships between all the parts of a school, and ask how they are impacting on the change process.

Advice to staff

As a teacher, I understand your fears and anger at the change that Ms Zondi implemented. I also think that many of your criticisms of the

“
... deal with teacher
fears of change on an
ongoing basis ...
”

process were legitimate. For instance, we do need to understand how to change our teaching rather than simply know what the new ideas are. And the change does have resource and timetabling implications.

But equally, as teachers, we need to be more active in deciding on the direction school change should take. It is no good pretending we are changing and then talking behind management's back: we now have a right to be involved in decision-making. I think this fear at confronting authority and taking responsibility for decisions is a particular version of what Fullan and Miles call 'faulty maps', and Senge calls 'problematic mental models': we are still behaving as if we have no right to participate in making change decisions. We must change this mindset! We need to begin to see ourselves as leaders too!

So, the first important point to realize is that successful change can only occur with teachers' participation: it can't be mandated. But second, we need to recognize that principals have the right and duty to take decisions – even if some of us disagree, as long as they have consulted us properly. Otherwise this process of change will simply die. Third, we need to be patient – change takes time. What we need to do is reflect constantly on how well we are doing in this journey, rather than expect immediate miracles or simply give up. Finally, we need to work with all stakeholders – learners, parents, management, other teachers – and on all parts of the organization. We need to understand the school as a system where, if one part doesn't function well, other parts of the change process will die. For instance, in your case, some teachers rejected the change and it never happened, and timetabling wasn't altered so teaching in a new way was prejudiced. Change is complex!



Note again how Thulani uses the theory developed by Fullan to understand why change didn't occur at Advanced Primary. He constantly applies it to the problem he is dealing with.

External and internal factors in processes of change

External change factors

Advanced Primary School was trying to deal with change that was coming from outside the school. The national Department of Education had issued a policy about the new curriculum and Ms Zondi was responding to an **external** pressure for change. External policy is often difficult to implement, for a number of reasons:

- Macro (countrywide) policies can't take the **particular contexts** of different schools into account. For example, the Schools Act requires that all schools must establish governing bodies, and that parents have the greatest representation. In secondary schools, learners also need to be represented. Here is what the principal of a school near Isandlwana, KwaZulu-Natal, said:

We are experiencing great difficulty in setting up this governing body. Parents refuse to have students sitting with them. They say that students do not have the authority or the understanding to make decisions.

Other schools might not experience the same problems. For instance, it seems that these problems could emerge because of deep, traditional beliefs about respect for elders, a problem not likely to be encountered in urban schools in Cape Town or Soweto.

- A second problem with externally-driven change is that it is often initiated to meet some rather broad and often abstract-sounding policy. So, even though the change may be very important, the **reasons why it needs to be implemented** are not always clear to teachers in schools. As a consequence, it is far more likely to be rejected, or only implemented at an **appearance** level rather than a **real** level. Change agents – including principals who may themselves not be completely convinced of the need to change – will have to work a great deal harder to sell the





Think of the way in which outcomes-based education and *Curriculum 2005* have been implemented in South Africa. Do these points make sense in our context?

need for change to teachers. It is more difficult to get local teachers to 'own' externally-driven change.

- Linked to these points is the fact that sometimes the initiators of macro changes – like national departments of education – are more concerned with the **symbols** rather than the **substance** of change. While, ideally, they may want policies to work well, in practice they would not be unhappy if they only **seemed** to be working well in schools. In other words, some people argue, governments which initiate curriculum changes (like OBE, for example) want to be **seen** to be doing something good ... regardless of whether it is actually happening in practice. This may lead to a great deal of money and time being spent on **publicizing** the change process, rather than on the difficult internal **implementation** processes in schools.

Internal change factors

In other situations, schools may decide to change certain aspects because they are facing **internal** problems. For example, a primary school may find that many of its learners are struggling to read, and might want to introduce a different kind of reading programme for learners. Or an urban high school may be experiencing problems because some learners are bringing knives and guns to school which is making teaching (and life generally) more difficult (and unpleasant) for teachers and the other learners. In both cases, the local school community has a **real interest** in change – in other words, they will find it relatively easy to **identify with** a project aimed at dealing with these problems. It is also more likely that teachers will focus on real rather than symbolic changes, because the latter won't make life or teaching any easier for them!

But as Fullan and Miles suggest, well-functioning systems require a balance of internal and external influences. While it is important for schools to work on internal development continuously, they should also realize that they are part of a wider educational movement. They need to learn from ideas outside their own school if they want to contribute to the development of a learning **society**.

This issue emerges again later (in a slightly different form) when we discuss different strategies for school change. Within school change literature (and practice) there is fierce debate about whether external facilitators should play a role in internal school change processes and, if so, what kind of role they should play. While external facilitators do bring new ideas and a sense of authority into local change processes, their lack of knowledge of local contexts may lead to the suggestion of inappropriate actions or the alienation of local stakeholders.



If you have the video that accompanies this module, fast forward to counter number 4 and watch the section titled 'The school-as-organization approach'. Notice the way in which external facilitators are used in these school development approaches.

Summing up: thinking about possible barriers to change

Before we move to the next sub-section – in which we explore three key problems in change – we'd like you to read this summary of an article on change by Per Dalin. Dalin is an important Scandinavian researcher in the area of school change. In his book called *Limits to Educational Change (1978)*, he reports on his analysis of a number of school change processes in different countries. He argues that four broad categories of **barriers to change** were noticeable in all the countries studied. Here is a summary of his list (with our examples).

Barriers to change

1 Value barriers

Value barriers exist because individuals and groups have different ways of seeing things. This means that two people can look at the same innovation in a completely different light. One person will think it is a good idea, and another person will think it is the wrong way to go. All changes – and responses to changes – come from *an underlying value perspective*. Think about the introduction of Model C schools in South Africa in the early 1990s. Some people welcomed the change, others did not. They were seeing it from their own understanding of what was important.

2 Power barriers

Significant innovations usually involve a redistribution of resources and changes of authority structures in the system. There is often resistance when power changes hands. This question is also related to who has the power to make the decisions about change. Often we want to resist change if we are told that we *must* change by someone who has more power than we do.

3 Practical barriers

One of the biggest problems with change is to bridge the gap between the *idea* or *plan* and the *implementation* of that plan in the school or the classroom. There are a number of key factors that are important to help the implementation of change. Per Dalin lists five main factors:

- **Time:** On a macro level, this means allowing many years for the innovation to happen. It took Britain 25 years to usher in the large-scale reform of introducing comprehensive schools. While change may not always take this long, we still need to allow time for it. The South African Ministry of Education has said that the phasing in of a new curriculum will take up to ten years (if not longer). On a micro level, teachers in schools need time to change also. If they need to implement a new curriculum, they need time to attend staff development courses, time and space to try out new teaching methods, and time to discuss issues with their colleagues. Too often, schools expect teachers to try new things on top of a heavy workload.
- **Knowledge:** Schools need to have knowledge about the *innovation* they are trying to adopt, as well as about *how change happens*. For example, teachers need to know *why* they should change their teaching methods, as well as *how* they should do so.
- **Organizational development:** For implementation to be successful, schools need to develop their *capacity to manage* the process. There must be support for teachers, both in terms of resources and skills. When the roles in an organization change, as often happens in a change process, this can create interpersonal conflicts.
- **Specific objectives:** If innovation is going to work, everyone involved needs to know what is happening and why. One of the problems with implementing external policies like the new curriculum, or introducing representative governing bodies, is that schools simply do not have the information they need, or the information they do have is too vague.
- **Resources:** Change requires resources. It is difficult for teachers to change their teaching styles if there is not enough learning material available to support this.

4 Psychological barriers

Experience shows that people find it difficult to change. We tend to continue doing things that we are familiar with. Familiarity provides security, and it is



You may notice that many of Dalin's ideas are similar to those you have learnt about earlier, although he organizes them differently. What is the implication of this repetition for you, as the learner?

- First, it suggests that different researchers in different parts of the world have noticed similar features in change processes. This should give you confidence that these features would probably also occur in any change project you were to implement.
- Second, don't simply write all these ideas down *again*. Rather ask: 'What *new* ways of thinking does Dalin add to my understanding of change?' Then write down only those new understandings, in your own words.

difficult to enter into the unknown. To be willing to change, we need to believe that the change is worthwhile. We need to see some meaning and advantage for ourselves in the change. This does not necessarily mean we get money for it! A change could be worthwhile, for instance, if it improves our working conditions, if it will lessen our workload, if it reduces conflict, or if it makes our teaching more interesting.

In the next sub-section we focus on three issues that both Fullan and Miles, and Dalin, have identified as critical to successful change:

- The need to think about and approach change *systemically*.
- The need to take into account the *personal fears* that are evoked by change.
- The need for *good leadership* to manage the process of change.



A particularly good but different view of school change in South Africa is Davidoff and Lazarus. 1997. *The Learning School*. Cape Town: Juta. We have used an excerpt from this book as a reading in this section.

You may legitimately ask 'But why these three issues? There are so many other issues.' And this would be a good question. Many other books may well focus on different issues and treat them differently. As we suggested earlier, this is one particular story – our story – about school organization and change. So, take our ideas seriously, but also understand that they must be critically assessed.

But here are some justifications for our curriculum choice. We focus on:

- The *need to think about and approach change systemically or holistically*. So much recent literature on organizational change (and on learning organizations) – as well as our experience of change in the institutions in which we work – emphasizes the interconnectedness of things. It seems that successful change agents – and we hope you will be at least apprentice change agents by the end of this module – have to be able to think systemically.
- The *need to take into account the personal fears that are evoked by change*. First, our own experiences, as well as studies from elsewhere in the world, have made it clear that fear is a common reason why change projects fail. But second, if you understand organizations to be essentially human institutions, as we do, then dealing with basic human emotions must be a central task of change agents.
- The *need for good leadership to manage the process of change*. So often in South Africa, change is either imposed by an authoritarian leader or else, in so-called 'democratic' structures, it is not managed at all. In both extremes, change fails. So, if we are committed to the success of change, we need to develop a leadership which balances wide participation with firm decision-making.

Approaching change systemically

4.3

Introduction

You may have noticed that The Rake – Thuthuka’s deputy principal – is a fervent disciple of systemic thinking (he calls it holistic thinking). In fact, he has become the butt of many good-natured jokes at Thuthuka because of this. However, since reading the article on learning organizations by Peter Senge, and attending a workshop he ran in Durban, the Thuthuka study group have become fans too. But, as Nomusa complains: ‘It sounds so sensible, but it’s so difficult to think like that ... and to analyse Thuthuka in that way.’

Nomusa is right. It is difficult to break old habits, and thinking in a particular way – whether systemic or non-systemic – is a *habit*. The first step is knowing *about* new ideas and thinking that they make sense. But the second, more difficult step is to know *how to use* these new ideas. We will introduce you to a few more ideas about systemic or holistic thinking, and will *begin* giving you practice in using these ideas. However, to become a good systemic thinker, you need to *practise and read*, and *practise and read* ... until this kind of thinking becomes a *habit*.

Thinking about Thuthuka’s discipline problem

Let’s begin with a problem. You may remember various discussions among Thuthuka teachers about their difficulties with late-comers (and discipline more generally). Well, since The Rake is part of this study group – and is in charge of discipline – he thought he’d ask the group for some assistance in dealing with this problem. You may remember that the initial response from Thuthuka teachers was a flurry of comments like:

- *‘It is these hooligan learners we have to deal with who make some of us lose hope and give up’;*
- *‘Lack of discipline is the cause of the destruction of the culture of learning and teaching ... Learners should be learners, and unless we emphasize and enforce respect, we may as well forget it’;*
- *‘Abolishing corporal punishment ... was a recipe for disaster.’*

We were also told that teachers did not help to get learners inside on time as they thought this was The Rake’s job. In fact, many teachers also wandered into school and class late.

What’s wrong with staff suggestions about how to change this situation? As The Rake said earlier, the staff are treating the school’s problems *in parts* rather than trying to get a ‘whole’ picture of them. This lack of systemic thinking leads to change suggestions being limited to *obvious but simplistic* suggestions, like learner discipline. The staff were thinking in a linear, cause-and-effect fashion: ‘If we increase the severity of our discipline, the *effect* will be better behaviour from learners.’ They reduced the situation to a simple problem that had a simple solution, rather than asking questions like:

- *Why* are students undisciplined?
- What impact does the way the school is managed have on the poor discipline?
- Does teacher behaviour affect learner behaviour? How? Why?
- What impact does the family background of learners have on discipline?
- Is it possible that the caning that occurs actually contributes to – in other words, partly *causes* – the discipline problem?

“
... to become a good systemic thinker, you need to practise and read, and practise and read ...
”

Okay. So we have possibly identified the **problem** with the way in which Thuthuka teachers think about their disciplinary problems. But where can we go to get **new** ideas – ideas about how we can begin **thinking** about these problems in more insightful ways?

Relating systems thinking and Hopkins' link between structure and culture

You may remember that Fullan and Miles had this to say about systemic thinking:

What does it mean to work systemically? There are two aspects:

- *reform must focus on the **development and interrelationships of all the main components of the system simultaneously** – curriculum, teaching and teacher development, community, student support systems, and so on;*
- *reform must focus not just on structure, policy, and regulations, but on **deeper issues of the culture of the system.***

So, systems thinking is about asking **why** questions ... **again and again** ... rather than simply assuming a **one-cause, one-solution** answer to problems. By asking **why** in this way:

- we have a means of finding out how many **different** factors contribute to problems;
- we have more chance of finding out which of these many 'causes' are more important than others.



At this point, we suggest you re-read the excerpt by Hopkins et al. – titled 'Culture and structure in school improvement' (Readings, Section Three). It is an interesting and important reading. You might also want to re-read the two case studies we analysed on pages 42–45 of this Learning Guide, and re-listen to the discussions about the difficulties of changing school cultures in Part 3 of your audio-tape. Would you change your analysis of these case studies now that you know so much more?

We can then begin changing the situation by making a **number of changes simultaneously**, but in a more **targeted** way.

Fullan and Miles also point to the need to focus on the 'deeper issues of the **culture of the system**', not just on the obvious and visible parts, like structures. They believe there are two main reasons why educational change fails. First, problems are complex and hard to handle. We have looked at this issue, and suggested that a systemic way of thinking is a useful strategy for understanding complex problems. Second, they argue, strategies used often don't focus on the things that will really make a difference. They assert that strategies which focus only on changing the structure of the school are likely to fail because the **real** issue is changing the culture.

This reminds us again of the importance of exploring both structure and culture, and understanding the interrelationship between the two, when we attempt to change organizations. It certainly provides a clue about Thuthuka's problems: perhaps the **culture** of late-coming and demoralization is so strong at Thuthuka that learners simply don't realize that their behaviour is problematic. In other words, this careless behaviour is the 'norm' – among teachers and learners – that has been learnt by all members of Thuthuka. Is this possible? And if it is, then will harsher discipline on its own, and directed only at learners, have the desired effect?

The five whys: a strategy for systems thinking

Many of Peter Senge's 'five disciplines' have been adapted and used as tools for analysing organizations and organizational dynamics in a book called **The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook**. The following excerpt, from an article in the book by Rick Ross called 'The five whys', is a demonstration of one such thinking tool. It is a fictitious story about a problem in a factory, but it demonstrates the kind of faulty thinking we often bring to bear on solving school problems. In telling this story, Ross demonstrates an alternative and more systemic way in which we can tackle common problems.

The five whys

A story

It's mid-afternoon, an hour before the shift changes at a manufacturing plant, and I'm the foreman. I'm walking through the plant, giving a tour to a friend who happens to be a systems thinker. Suddenly, I see a pool of oil on the floor so I grab the nearest worker and tell him: 'Hey! There's oil on the floor! For Pete's sake, somebody could slip in that! Clean it up!' When I'm finished, my systems thinking friend breaks in with a quiet question: 'Why is there oil on the floor?'

'Yeah,' I repeat to the worker, 'how'd the oil get on the floor?' The worker replies, 'Well, the gabungie's leaking.' All of us automatically look up. Sure enough, there's a visible leak up there in the gabungie. 'Oh, okay,' I sigh. 'Well, clean up the oil and get the gabungie fixed right away.'

My friend pulls me aside and murmurs, 'But why is the gabungie broken?' I say, 'Yeah, well, the ga-' and turn to the worker: 'Why is the gabungie broken?' 'The gaskets are defective,' is the reply.

'Oh well, then, look,' I say. 'Here. Clean the oil up, fix the gabungie, and, uh, do something about the gaskets!'

My friend adds: 'And why are the gaskets defective?' 'Yeah,' I say. 'Just out of curiosity, how come we got defective gaskets in the gabungie?' The worker replies, 'Well, we were told that the buying department got a good deal on those gaskets.' I can see my friend start to open his mouth, but this time I get there first. 'Why did the buying department get such a great deal?' I ask the worker. 'How should I know?' he replies, wandering off to find a mop and bucket.

My friend and I go back to my office and make some phone calls. It turns out that we have a two-year-old policy in the company that encourages purchasing at the lowest price. That's the reason for the defective gasket - of which there is a five-year supply - along with the leaking gabungie and the pool of oil. In addition, this policy is probably causing other problems throughout the organization, not closely related in time or space to the root 'cause'.

A problem-solving strategy

Step 1 - The first why: Pick the symptom where you wish to start; the thread which you hope you can pull on to unravel the knot. Ask the first why of the group: 'Why is such-and-such taking place?' You will probably end up with three or four answers. Put them all on the wall, with plenty of room around them.

Steps 2, 3, 4, 5 - The successive whys: Repeat the process for every statement on the wall, asking 'why' about each one. Post each answer near its 'parent'. Follow up all the answers that seem likely. You will probably find them converging; a dozen separate symptoms may be traceable back to two or three systemic sources.

As you trace the 'whys' back to their root causes, you will find yourself tangling with issues that not only affect the gabungie (whatever that may be in your school!), but the entire organization. The policy to get the lowest price on supplies might have been caused by a battle in the finance office. It might result from a purchasing strategy, or from under-investment in maintenance. The problem is not that the original policy was 'wrongheaded', but that its long-term and far-flung effects remained unseen.

Avoiding the 'fixation on events'

To be effective, your answers to the five whys should steer away from blaming individuals. For example, in answer to the question: 'Why is there oil on the floor?', someone may say: 'Because the maintenance crew didn't clean it up.' Don't leave it there. Ask: 'Why didn't they clean it up?' ('Because their supervisor didn't tell them to.') 'Why didn't he do that?' ('Because the crew didn't tell him about it.') 'Why



This excerpt from Rick Ross' article is taken from Peter Senge et al. 1994. *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*. Published by Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 36 John Street, London WC1N 2AT. Tel: 0171 430 0224; fax: 0171 404 8311.



This book – Senge et al. 1994. *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* – has interesting descriptions of a large range of organizations – from hospitals to companies, and from local authorities to schools – that have used Senge’s ideas to change themselves into learning organizations. It also includes a number of exercises that institutions can use to develop their understanding of change and of learning organizations. It is a very useful ‘practical’ companion to *The Fifth Discipline*.



Spend about 1 hour on this activity. We suggest you do it collaboratively with a few of your fellow students.

didn’t they tell him?’ (‘Because he didn’t ask.’) etc., etc.

Blaming individual people leaves you with no option except to punish them; there’s no chance for substantive change. One of the benefits of the five whys exercise is that it trains people to recognize the difference between an *event-oriented explanation* and a *systemic explanation*. The systemic explanations are the ones which, as you trace them back, lead to the reasons why they didn’t clean it up, or he didn’t tell them to, or they didn’t ask. (Maybe, for example, poor training of maintenance people contributed to the oil puddle problem: but even the best-trained, hardest-working custodians in the world could not stop the gasket from leaking.)

To avoid being distracted by event- and blame-related ‘answers’, try this technique: as an answer is recorded, say ‘Okay. Is that the only reason?’

ACTIVITY 19: USING THE FIVE WHYS APPROACH TO ANALYSE A SCHOOL PROBLEM

- a What is the difference between a ‘systemic explanation’ and an ‘event-oriented explanation’? Think about this in the context of a school: give an example of how an issue would be explained differently, using the two different kinds of explanation.
- b Take a common problem – such as absenteeism, or late-coming, or high failure rates, cheating in tests and exams, or violence in the playground – at a school you know. Write down all the possible causes for that problem. Ask ‘why’ of each. Don’t stop at the obvious reasons: try to think on a deeper level. Also, look out for the connections between the issues. Organize your ideas in the form of a diagram.

Solving the problem of absenteeism systemically

Thuthuka teachers are excited by this technique. ‘It seems relatively simple, but has the potential to get past our previous, rather simple, explanations of our problems,’ says Siphso. ‘Let’s play around with this technique to get to a more complex understanding of the late-coming and absenteeism problem. At the moment, this rather simple diagram seems to represent our thinking,’ he says, holding up a diagram he has sketched on some newsprint.

Non-systemic/linear problem solving

Problem:	High absenteeism and frequent late-coming
Why?	Learners are undisciplined hooligans
Solution:	Tighten up on punishment for late-coming and absenteeism

A number of the group say that their thinking isn’t quite as simplistic as that. For instance, they did point to the problem of poor teaching too. But they agree that it is largely true.

‘But let’s get on with the “five whys” process,’ says Sindi. So they begin with Siphso leading the discussion (he asks the ‘why?’ questions) and summarizing it on the chalkboard. This is what the board looks like after about half an hour’s brainstorm

...

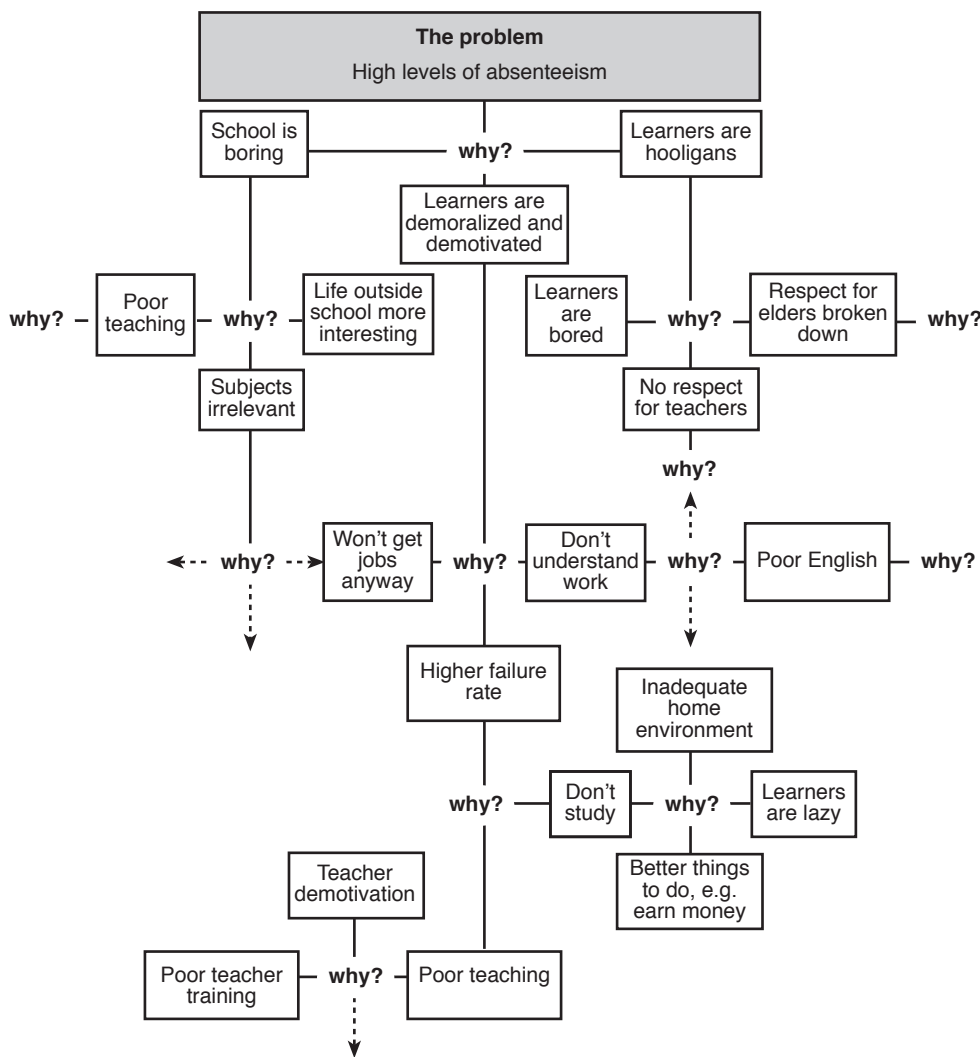


Figure 4.3 Systemic thinking demonstrates the complexity and inter-connectedness of different problems

This discussion continues for quite a while as the teachers try to untangle the knotty problem. It is like a ball of string that is all tangled up and has many loose ends. Now that the teachers have a clearer understanding of the problem, they can see that it needs to be dealt with at a number of different levels and will take time. They decide they should still tighten up on discipline, but that more is required. They decide that:

- they will identify the learners who are regularly absent and try to find out why they are absent so often;
- it is necessary to improve the largely poor relationships between teachers and learners;
- starting a soccer club at the school will motivate learners, and agree that the teacher who offered to organize the club should ask the matrics to assist him;
- many learners who are absent frequently are also learners who perform badly and often fail. The teachers feel it is necessary to find out why these students are failing.

Making sense of the Thuthuka discussion

Senge tells this story about a rainstorm in the reading you did earlier:

A cloud masses, the sky darkens, leaves twist upward, and we know that it will rain. We also know that after the storm, the runoff will feed into groundwater miles away, and the sky will grow clear by tomorrow. And these events are distant in time and space, and yet they are all connected within the same pattern. Each has an influence on the rest, an influence that is usually hidden from view. You can only understand the system of a rainstorm by contemplating the whole, not any individual part of the pattern.

The 'five whys' brainstorm at Thuthuka made clear just how true Senge's statement is. Many of the possible reasons for absenteeism unearthed in this process were '*events ... distant in time and space, and yet ... connected within the same pattern*'. This observation has important implications for the actions we take in change processes. Initially the solution – increased discipline – was the immediate and obvious action to take. But now the staff realize that the best actions might be seemingly far removed, such as dealing with a lack of learning facilities at home, or working to motivate teachers, or building a better all-round culture at the school by starting extramural activities.

Senge says we need to understand:

- that we are all 'bound by invisible fabrics of interrelated actions' (in other words, that our individual actions have limited power to change things unless conceived of as part of other actions);
- that these actions (and thus change) take 'years to fully play out their effects on each other' (so we need to put in place processes, ***not just to stage events***);
- that, since we are part of that fabric ourselves, 'it's doubly hard to see the whole pattern' (in other words, we often cannot see how we contribute to the problems ... we are simply too close to them).

Senge suggests that this 'shift of mind' – from seeing ourselves as separate from the world, to seeing ourselves as connected to the world; from seeing problems as caused by someone or something 'out there', to seeing how our own actions often create the problems we experience – is a key characteristic of a learning organization. Systemic thinking is thus a crucial characteristic of a ***learning*** school.

Coping with the fears evoked by change

4.4

Introduction

Many people have argued that Senge's 'shift of mind' isn't possible in a context of fear and uncertainty which is common in times of change. Change, as we have suggested, is difficult and prone to resistance from those affected, even when it is regarded by most people as good and beneficial. If we want to initiate and sustain change successfully, then it seems important to find out why this is so and develop strategies for dealing with it. Otherwise, our aim of changing our school into a learning organization will fail.

Fullan and Miles tell of asking a group of principals to list the problems they faced in a specific change project:

More than half said 'resistance' – variously known as intransigence, entrenchment, fearfulness, reluctance to buy in, complacency, unwillingness to alter behaviours, and failure to recognize the need for change. These traits were attributed to teachers and other staff members, though not to the principals themselves.



intransigence: stubbornness, unwillingness to co-operate
entrenchment: being firmly established in a particular position
complacency: self-satisfaction, seeing no reason to change

But, they argue, to label these attitudes as 'resistance' diverts our attention away from the real problems of implementation. They say the label places the blame (and thus the responsibility for the solution) on others – those who 'resist', rather than on the implementers of change. The thrust of their argument – which fits with Senge's ideas about understanding change as the consequence of a number of integrated actions – places an emphasis on reducing fears in any change process by having:

- clear and achievable goals;
- inclusive processes;
- the intellectual and other resources to make it possible.

In a sense they are arguing: 'Plan well, and fears and "resistance" will decrease.' In subsections 4.6 and 4.7, we provide a number of strategies for school change that take into account these principles.

Managing personal fears of change

But this is only half the story, and Fullan and Miles admit this:

During transitions from a familiar to a new state of affairs, individuals must normally confront the loss of the old and commit themselves to the new, unlearn old beliefs and behaviours and learn new ones, and move from anxiousness and uncertainty to stabilization and coherence. Any significant change involves a period of intense personal and oral learning and problem-solving. People need support for such work, not displays of impatience.

In other words, Miles and Fullan argue that people are not simply *rational* beings whose fears can be satisfied by a clear and logical argument as to why change is necessary and good. Because we are creatures of habit, any change is experienced as a loss. It is a loss of those routines and procedures that were familiar and, in many ways, gave meaning to our life. Think of the *feelings* that the introduction of OBE has

generated in schools. Most teachers think we need to change the way we teach. **Rationally** then, most teachers support most of the new ideas. But that **understanding** doesn't mean that we don't have fears about it. These fears are evoked primarily by two things:

- the fact that we are uncertain about what is required of us by this change (in other words, by a lack of information, and of concrete models of the new teaching);
- the fact that we are being asked to give up the ways of thinking and implementing education with which we have **become comfortable**, and which have **served us well**. This is so even among those who did not agree with Bantu Education or CNE or rote learning!

In other words, the fear and uneasiness is evoked by the loss of the **familiar** and an absence of any **concrete and visible** alternative. Psychologist Peter Marris explains in the next reading why no matter how unsatisfactory this old meaning might be, or how good the change might be, the most common response to change will be 'resistance'. As a consequence, good change agents must give people the **time** and the **space** in which they can work through their feeling of loss and integrate the changes into their 'meaning systems'.



The Marris reading is complex, so read it carefully and more than once. You should spend about 2 hours on this activity. Try to apply Marris' ideas to your own personal experiences of change. It might also be useful to share these ideas with other students or teachers.

ACTIVITY 20: MARRIS' IDEAS ABOUT CHANGE

Read the article written by Peter Marris (Readings, Section Three, 'Schools: The processes and constraints of change'). Then answer the following questions in your workbook:

- Explain why Marris believes it is important to encourage conflict during change processes. Do you think he is correct? Can you support your answer with an experience of your own?
- Marris compares the fears evoked by organizational change with the feelings of personal loss. Is this a legitimate comparison? (If you can, you may want to describe the feelings you had when you lost someone close to you, and compare these with feelings you have when you enter into new and strange situations.)
- What lessons does Marris have for those involved in change processes?

The importance of encouraging conflict in change processes

Marris has important warnings for people interested in implementing change **and** for ordinary teachers involved in change processes. He argues – in contrast to much current thinking – that, first, processes of reform must expect **and even encourage** conflict. This, he says, gives people the time and space to confront the change, react to it, articulate their often confused feelings about it, and work out **their own sense** of it. This is a controversial position but one that we believe is enormously important. We all know that when we experience loss – of a loved one, or simply a loss of the routines which made our life or teaching simpler – our **feelings** of sadness, anger, and emptiness cannot simply be resolved by someone telling us that 'life's like that'. We **know** this is true, but we still **feel** sad and angry.

Marris argues that this is why processes of change – which evoke the same feelings of loss – should allow people involved in that change to express their feelings of anger by encouraging conflict (and not trying to resolve it prematurely). Otherwise, change occurs but participants remain filled with unresolved feelings of loss and anger which, in time, will undermine both the change process and the individual.

Second, change processes must respect different feelings and interpretations of change and work with these rather than impose some 'alien conception' on the process. And, third, says Marris, there must be time and patience so that different

people affected by the change can work through their conflicting interests, but also so that individuals can re-establish a 'continuity' – a consistency – in their lives.

Moreover, Marris makes the seemingly uncontroversial statement that, ultimately, change has to be implemented by those who will *resist* change. But, despite the seeming obviousness of this, we know that change agents – who have already worked through their own internal conflicts about change – do get impatient and:

- try to rush through change *by co-opting a couple of people* to take their change message forward (rather than creating processes through which the majority have time to work through the implications of change *for themselves*);
- overlook or prematurely resolve conflicts in groups. This often means that change is implemented with resentment from certain people, and frequently leads to the appearance rather than the reality of change, or heightened tensions in organizations, or change that simply fizzles out after a while.

Harnessing community 'fears' to build new organizations

While Marris focuses strongly on *individual fears* and suggests ways of *overcoming* these, Lovemore Mbigi explores how a clash of interests and beliefs between 'modern' reformers and traditionalists can be harnessed to enrich change processes. Mbigi, a business consultant, writes about how traditional African beliefs – which are often regarded as 'resistance' in modern business organizations – can be used to transform businesses in Africa into more efficient and *humane* organizations. In the next reading, Mbigi tells the story of transformation in a company where he was manager, to demonstrate how the seemingly 'irrational' and 'impractical' beliefs and demands of local communities can be used to strengthen organizations.

ACTIVITY 21: USING COMMUNITY 'FEARS' TO BUILD STRONG AFRICAN ORGANIZATIONS

Turn to Part 7 of your audiotape (side 2; *after* narrator asks you to complete Activity 19). Listen to the excerpt in which Lovemore Mbigi talks about how he has used African ideas and ritual to revitalize organizations he has worked in. When you have completed this, read the article by Mbigi titled 'The Spirit of African Management'. (Readings, Section Two) Then answer the following questions in your workbook:

- Mbigi talks about creating 'psychic communities'. What does he mean by this? How are Mbigi's ideas similar and different from Marris' ideas? And what implications do they have for our ideas about changing schools?
- Mbigi's major argument is that we need to draw on African tradition in order to *energize* people for change, and then synthesize these ideas with Western ideas in order to maximize the impact of organizational change. Can you think of any other 'traditions' that can be drawn on in order to change schools?



Activity 21 develops your understanding of holism a great deal more, and in interesting new ways. Mbigi draws mainly from his experience in a company. Try to link his ideas to schools and, in particular, your own school. Spend about 2 hours on this activity.

Note: The audiotape *incorrectly* refers you to Activity 22. It should be Activity 21.

Mbigi also has important advice for those interested in change: don't judge people's actions too soon or too simplistically. Rather harness the energy that drives these actions by:

- acknowledging the fears that exist as legitimate, and addressing them;
- recognizing that 'ownership' of change is not a matter simply of *understanding*, or vision simply a matter of words on paper. Instead, it is a 'deep psychological' matter. Change agents have to create a situation where people *feel* that they own the process and where vision statements become *actions*.

Mbigi's ideas are interesting in that he *doesn't* reject Western organizational ideas but does argue that they are – on their own – deficient. He suggests ways in which we can integrate traditional African ideas and Western ideas to develop a new locally-appropriate form of organizational change. You might notice that many of these ideas – while expressed in terms of African traditional belief – are similar to those raised by Senge and other writers. Later you will read about the 'school-as-community' approach to school change. The ideas expressed by Schofield – who works in Soshanguve near Pretoria – reflect similar sentiments to those of Mbigi.

4.5

Leading and managing change



Introduction

An interesting dilemma is raised by the need to *manage* fears. Marris (and Fullan and Miles) warn about autocratic leaders rushing change through. Yet highly 'participative' styles of management often ignore the *depth* of fears expressed too. In fact, the lack of direction in many 'participative' processes heightens fears because participants don't know where they are going and thus can't begin to make personal sense of the change. Mbigi is also intriguing. On first reading, it sounds as if the manager takes an enormously directive approach: he decides what will be done. But then he sets in place processes that are extremely participative (although structured), and he *leads* in a manner where *listening* becomes very important and judgements are suspended.

What is becoming increasingly clear is that change towards a more democratic 'learning' organization requires leadership and firm decision-making. So the crucial difference to authoritarian organizations is *not* that leadership must cease. Instead, the *manner* in which people lead must change.

authoritative: to possess *acknowledged* authority, or authority that engages people's trust. It is different from *authoritarian*, which refers to a leadership style that does not consult or respect democracy and individual freedom

Towards democratic and authoritative leadership

For some, 'leadership' and 'management' have become dirty words in a newly democratic South Africa in which 'participation' and 'flat structures' are promoted. Yet the 'Changing management to manage change' report suggests that all teachers need to be leaders and managers. And, as we noticed above, a lack of leadership often results in heightened fears and no change.

The challenge for 'new' organizations is to redefine these two functions as **democratic** functions. We also need to devolve management functions downwards. In other words, we need to create **schools** in which many more people participate in decision-making and, in order to ensure the success of these schools, we need to develop **teacher and learner understandings** of democracy and the **skills** required to manage and lead democratically. Schools, for one, cannot run without strong management skills **at all levels**. Now listen to Christo Nel, who talks about 'new' leadership and management styles, and Lovemore Mbigi, who explains the complexity of a teacher's management function.

What do you think of Mbigi's claim that a teacher's management role is as complex as that of a business manager?

He seems to suggest that the work of teachers has **always** required advanced management skills. These, he says, are of two kinds:

- **people management:** so that teachers can manage learners, organize their classrooms effectively **and** participate in new decision-making structures at schools;
- **knowledge management:** so that teachers can access, select and organize the information they need to teach learners. This, suggests both Nel and Mbigi, will become an increasingly important function for teachers as we move into the **information age**.

Davidoff and Lazarus provide a particularly interesting explanation of leadership and management. They take a strongly humanistic, rather than a technical, approach to these functions. While most management literature suggests that good leadership and management is a matter of implementing efficient rules and procedures, these writers argue that, while it is important to have rules and procedures in schools, good leadership is ultimately an **art**. This is so because it relies on intuition and personal judgement rather than following established procedures. As such, good leaders must explore and develop their own personal dispositions, not simply learn new skills.

This kind of thinking – as you may recognize – fits closely with the kinds of ideas raised by new management writers, like Peter Senge, and is at the heart of building 'learning organizations'. Let's read Davidoff and Lazarus ...

ACTIVITY 22: THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN CHANGE

Turn to the reading by Davidoff and Lazarus (Readings, Section Three). Then answer the following questions in your workbook:

- a What are the qualities of good leaders and managers? Why does Davidoff call leadership an 'art'?
- b The authors distinguish between leadership and management. What are the main differences they mention? Do you think this distinction is useful?
- c Having a flatter hierarchy in schools means that leadership and management capacity need to be built throughout the whole school. What suggestions do the authors make about building leadership and management capacity?



Rewind your audiotape to Part 1. Listen to the way speakers talk about the managerial and leadership roles of teachers today. Do you perform in this kind of way? Do other teachers in your school? Why or why not?



Read this article carefully. Note down how the writers' views differ from your ideas of leadership and management. Spend about 3 hours on this activity.

Conclusion: developing a humane leadership style

Clearly, then, leadership and management are crucial both for:

- **change** to occur;
- building **democratic** schools.

But, we **do** need to rethink our old assumptions about leadership and management in at least three ways:

- First, we need to **widen participation in decision-making**. For this, we need to

develop *new structures* as well as a *democratic culture*, and to teach the *skills required to operate democratically* among all stakeholders.

- Second, we need to balance *innovation* (leadership) and *maintenance* (management). While it is important for schools to *change* the way they operate – and constantly be prepared to think of new ways of doing things – it is also important that schools have some stability, that they *maintain and manage processes efficiently*.
- Third, we need to think of management as a human function, an art, rather than as a technical procedure. This requires that we develop the ability to *listen*, to tolerate irrational fears, rather than being set on rushing ahead with ideas that people have not fully internalized.

In the next two sub-sections, we explore a number of case studies of change that illustrate some of these ideas more concretely.

4.6

Changing schools: the school-as-organization approach



These strategies are mostly inspired by the school improvement research you read about in Section Three. You will remember that school improvement researchers were particularly interested in what kinds of internal processes gave schools the capacity to improve. The *strategies* which follow are some of the ways in which they believe these 'improved' schools can be created.

Introduction: two approaches to school change

There are many different strategies for school change. Some strategies provide very specific steps that a school should follow, while others are more flexible: they provide only general principles. The point in this and the next sub-section is *not* to learn *about* and be able to describe different strategies of school change. Instead, we would like you to:

- read through the case studies in order to *add to your understanding* of change, so that you feel more *able to actually begin changing* – or contributing to change in – your school;
- understand that different strategies pay more attention to certain aspects of school change (and thus have particular strengths), but they also neglect other aspects.

For the purposes of this module, we have chosen to classify the case studies into two broad approaches to school change and improvement. We have called these:

- the *school-as-organization approach* which emphasizes the internal processes of change, in particular, the importance of teaching and learning (sub-section 4.6);
- the *school-as-community approach* which emphasizes the *context* within which the school is located, and how these external factors impact on the school (sub-section 4.7).

While we have classified school change approaches into two 'families' or 'clusters' of strategies, we need to provide important warnings:

- First, different change agents operating *within* an *approach* will develop school

change *strategies* that aren't identical. While they will share many characteristics, they will also differ in their emphases and the way in which they do things. We will introduce you to two different strategies (case studies) within each approach in order to demonstrate how practitioners adapt the approach to their particular needs.

- Second, while the two approaches (the two 'clusters' of strategies) *do* have different emphases – the school-as-organization approach focuses on the *internal dynamics* of schools, and the school-as-community approach gives more emphasis to external (*out-of-school*) dynamics – they *aren't* mutually exclusive. They 'borrow' from each other quite freely, as you will notice when you read through the different case studies.

In other words, these two clusters of strategies are not necessarily in conflict; their differences lie more in the *emphasis* they place on different factors than in substance. In effect, they probably represent positions on a *continuum* of approaches to school change, ranging from the IQEA's *school development planning* strategy (page 122) through TIP's *organizational development strategy* (page 128) to SBRI's (page 135) and the Soshanguve schools (page 132) different *school-as-community* strategies. One could represent these two approaches in this way – as *emphases* on a *continuum* with the different strategies located at different points on the continuum. The approaches should not be thought of as being in different boxes!

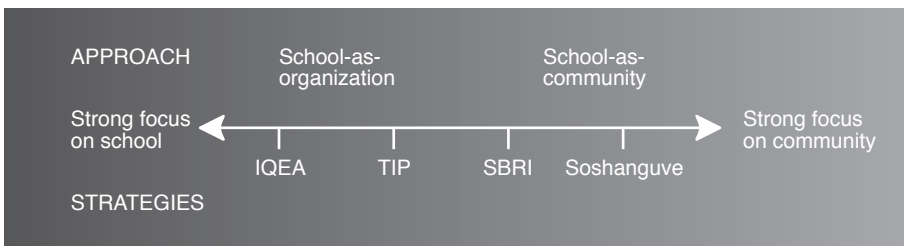


Figure 4.4 A continuum of approaches to school change

But let's listen to two school change experts explain the similarities and differences ...

ACTIVITY 23: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCHOOL-AS-ORGANIZATION AND SCHOOL-AS-COMMUNITY APPROACHES

- Listen to two South African school change practitioners – Mark Potterton and Andrew Schofield – explain what they believe are the key differences between the school-as-organization and school-as-community approaches to school change (Part 8 of your audiotape; directly *after* narrator asks you to complete Activity 22). Note down in your workbook the key differences mentioned, but also the similarities.
- Watch and listen to teachers at schools who are using school-as-organization strategies to improve their schools. If you have a video, fast forward to counter number 4 and the title 'Creating people-centred schools'. Watch the video until the next title – 'The school-as-community approach' – appears at counter number 24. Note down in your workbook *how* school-as-organization facilitators work in schools, *why* they work in this way, and what the strengths and weaknesses of the approach are.



This activity should take no longer than 90 minutes.

Note: The audiotape *incorrectly* refers you to Activity 24. It should be Activity 23.

Now let's get practical! Let's read about the different ways in which these approach-

es have been used to change schools. We will begin with an example of an important school-as-organization strategy – school development planning.

The school-as-organization approach

School-as-organization change strategies focus strongly on improving the *internal functioning* of the school. In particular, their interest lies in schools improving the way they perform their key function, namely *teaching and learning*. They believe this will probably best be achieved by getting all stakeholders within schools to think more carefully about *what* they have to achieve and *how* they are (or aren't) achieving it.

The IQEA and school development planning

What do projects using school development planning (SDP) aim to achieve?

School development planning (SDP) is a strategy for change which has been used in British and American schools for many years. SDP aims to improve the capacity of the school, particularly the quality of its teaching and learning. Hopkins argues that if one cannot understand what creates a school's capacity for quality, then any school change strategy is severely limited in its ability to make real changes. SDP's *strategy* is to bring together key stakeholders *within the school* to identify problem areas, agree where improvements can be made, and then decide how to make change happen with the people and resources they have available.

A good example of this approach is the 'Improving the Quality of Education for All' (IQEA) Project, based at Cambridge University's Institute of Education, but implemented worldwide – including South Africa. IQEA focuses on student achievement *and* the school's ability to cope with change. The Project often uses the metaphor of 'the journey' to describe the work that it does with schools. It 'travels' with schools in a direction which may not always be well signposted, but that is informed by its vision and principles. IQEA believes that the goal of school improvement is the transformation of the *culture* of the school: school members need to change the *way they think about education* in order for change in the school to be sustainable.

How do projects using SDP suggest that schools should implement change?

SDP suggests that school change agents ask four key questions to get the change process going:

1 Where is the school now?

This process aims to get internal stakeholders to review the school's *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities* and potential *threats*. They often use what is called a SWOT analysis: identifying **S**trengths and **W**eaknesses, but then also identifying new **O**pportunities and potential **T**hreats to those opportunities and the school as a whole.

2 Where would we like our school to be?

This process aims to get all stakeholders to define a vision for the school. But it must go further than a mission statement or vision document: it must also set *priorities* for development (from among the many different things it could do to realize its vision), and then turn these priorities into *specific targets* (so the school can assess its progress continuously).

3 How will we manage these changes over time?

The school must decide *how* to get where it wants to be. This means setting in place *structures and processes* that will make it possible to implement changes



David Hopkins has written widely about SDP and about the IQEA. The information in this summary has been taken from a paper – titled 'Strategies for school development' – which Hopkins delivered to the Second International Conference on School Management at the University of Deusto in Spain in 1996.

and meet the planned targets. This is the vital step if schools want to turn their vision, plans and ideas into reality.

4 How will we know if we've been successful in our changes?

It is important to keep the momentum going and to *check regularly on progress*. The school shouldn't wait until the end to ask questions such as: Have we done what we hoped? If things do not work out as we hoped, will we be able to see why? What will we do differently next time?

SDP is not a simple step-by-step approach to change. Rather, it assumes that change is a complex and dynamic process: it is cyclical. You will have noticed that the practitioners you listened to on audiotape and video spoke of something called the 'planning cycle' or 'action-reflection cycle'. This is strongly associated with SDP but, as you will notice later, is widely used in other school change strategies too.

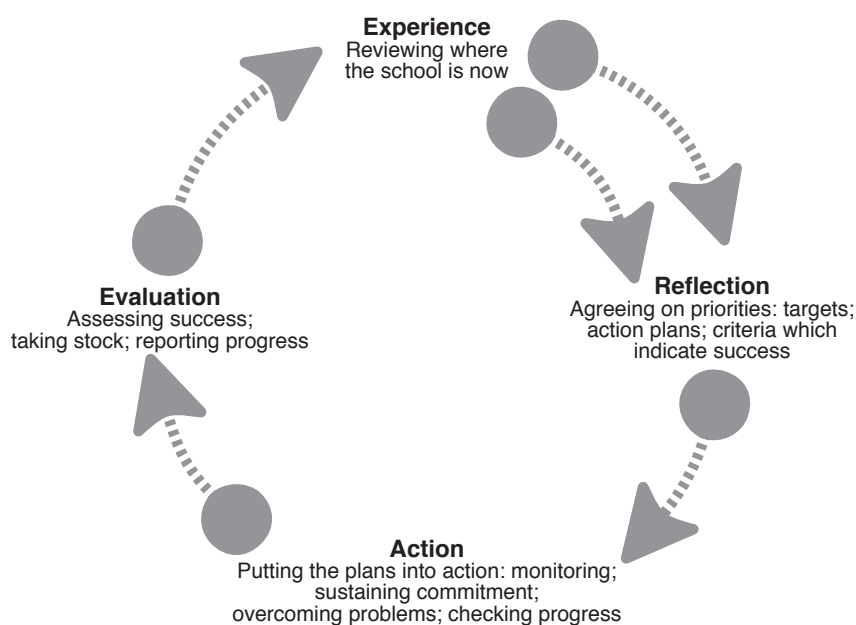


Figure 4.5 Planning cycle or 'action-reflection' cycle

You will notice that the cycle begins from **Experience** (step 1 or the first key question in the plan mentioned earlier), and then proceeds through **Reflection** (step 2 of SDP planning), **Action** (step 3), **Evaluation** (step 4) and then returns to the beginning of the cycle again. It is important to note that school development planning does not move through these steps in a linear way. In other words, evaluation occurs continuously (in the action phase too) and not only at the end of each year, for instance.

The strengths and weaknesses of SDP

According to Hargreaves and Hopkins, SDP offers schools a number of important benefits if well implemented. Among these are:

- It focuses attention on *teaching* and, in particular, the *learning* achievement of learners. (This prevents schools from sliding into simply handling everyday administrative affairs, with little attention being paid to the quality of its most important function – learning.)
- It helps to relieve the stress felt by teachers in change processes because they have greater control over change, rather than being controlled by it. This increas-

es the possibility that teachers will feel a sense of ownership.

- It offers the possibility of improving the quality of staff development. Because of the analysis of strengths and weaknesses, and the clear outline of the plan that needs to be carried out, it is likely that staff development will become a priority in order to build internal capacity.

But Hargreaves and Hopkins also warn that if SDP is badly implemented, it can cause problems. They argue that it:

- should not be 'added on' to the existing work of a school, but should change the fundamental way in which the school manages itself;
- needs careful management;
- must not end with the production of a plan, but must pay attention to the *process* of development;
- must involve as many stakeholders as possible: if key people are not included in planning from the beginning, they could stop the process by not co-operating;
- should limit the number of priorities or goals to be focused on at the same time: if this isn't done, people may become over-burdened and lose heart because they are doing too much.



Using the SDP approach to begin changing Thuthuka

Back at Thuthuka, the small group of teachers who started to ask questions about their school has grown to a much larger group. In fact, the presence of the group has been formally recognized as the Interim Development Committee. As yet, they do not have parents and community members 'on board'; but they are working towards this. The principal has not yet attended any of the meetings because he is so busy, but he has expressed his support for the process.

The Interim Development Committee decides to invite an outside facilitator to run the school development workshop for them. They feel an outsider will get more respect from other teachers, as well as having more ability to deal with sensitive issues that might arise. They invite Poppie Ndhlovu, a respected local educationist who was a principal for 16 years before joining an educational publishing company.

All but four of Thuthuka's teachers gather in the library for the first meeting. There is a general air of expectation, although one group of teachers sitting at a table at the back is clearly not all that keen to be involved in the process. They would much rather be at home. Poppie introduces herself to the staff and says she is glad that they have asked her to accompany them on their journey of school change. She then introduces the four important SDP stages in the form of questions: Where is Thuthuka now?, Where do we want to be?, How will we manage the change?, and How will we know if we are being successful?

Stage 1: Where is Thuthuka now?

'A good way to start is to do a brainstorm of Thuthuka's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (a SWOT analysis),' Poppie suggests to the staff. 'This will help us identify what we can build on and what our priorities should be. Let's split into small groups with each group looking at a different aspect of the school: staff and teaching, learners and learning, resources, and links with the community and parents.' 'What about looking at the management team?' a teacher asks, to loud laughter from the rest of the staff. This doesn't please the HoDs who are all sitting at a table together.

The Rake intervenes before things turn nasty. 'Every one of us needs to think about the role we can play to make Thuthuka a better school. But your comment highlights the big gap between teachers and management. We need to think about how we can start working together better.' As a consequence, Poppie suggests that a fifth

group should look at the relationship between management and teachers.

The teachers settle down to the task. They write down all their ideas first, and then analyse these into main points (where there is large agreement in the group) and minor points. The main points are written up on large pieces of newsprint which they stick on the wall when Poppie asks them to close their discussion after about half an hour. Everybody then walks around, reading the points made by the groups. This is what the group who looked at staff and teaching has written down:

- Strengths: well-qualified teachers, good subject knowledge, many teachers studying further, reasonable teaching facilities, relatively good matric results
- Weaknesses: demotivation among teachers and learners, class sizes too large for individual attention, teachers not supporting one another, a discipline problem, no educational direction from management
- Opportunities: much greater teaching involvement by local community, opening up an adult education centre, exciting new learning areas and teaching methods through Curriculum 2005
- Threats: down-sizing, budget cuts, education department not replacing teachers, uncertainty about the new curriculum, best learners going to former Model C schools

Discussion follows in a large plenary group, and new ideas are added to the points on the wall. Poppie notes how certain points appear on a number of charts, which probably means that these are pressing issues which Thuthuka must address in the near future. But she also emphasizes that this first phase only suggests **where** Thuthuka is at this point: it does not explain **why**.

It is 3:15 p.m. and many of the teachers are now anxious to get home. They have already given up an hour of their own time for the workshop. 'One of the best things about this hour,' says one teacher, 'is that I can see that other teachers are facing similar problems and have similar fears to me. That's been really helpful.'

'Yes,' Jabu agrees. 'But there's one problem. We haven't got any people from the community or even any learners to give us their opinions. We really need to know what they want to change at Thuthuka.' The teachers agree that it is important to get other stakeholders on board. The Rake says he will address this issue at the next governing body meeting. Thulani says he will bring it up at the next SRC meeting, where he is the staff representative.

Poppie agrees that the workshop has gone well. 'But it's a real pity that the principal was not here. We must see if he can come the next time we all meet.'

Stage 2: Where do we want to be?

A week later the staff again gathers in the library. The Rake reports that the governing body meeting was cancelled, so he still has not spoken to them. Thulani says that the SRC was sceptical about the process. 'They still think that the teachers are out to get them.'

Poppie says the challenge for the day is to think about Thuthuka's vision. She explains that the process of discussing, debating and jointly agreeing on a vision is at least as important as producing the final written document. The Rake agrees. 'Zizamele went on and on about their mission statement, but I can't see how a piece of paper stuck on the wall of every classroom and put into peoples' pigeonholes will change peoples' attitudes,' he says. Poppie answers, 'Yes, that is true if no action follows the production of the mission statement. But that doesn't mean a vision document isn't useful.'

'The staff need to talk about what we want for Thuthuka. It would be great if we could get learners and parents thinking about their vision as well. Once we have a broad vision, then we can write a mission statement which describes what we stand for and what we are aiming for. It will also help us to be sure that all stakeholders are committed to working to ensure that we achieve our commonly agreed upon goals

(vision). It has to change the culture of the school, and this can only be done through a careful and joint process,' says Poppie.

Poppie divides teachers into groups again and asks that they describe the school they'd like to work in. She urges them to think about relationships and attitudes, as well as physical resources. She also urges them to think of practical things that can be done, as well as ways of giving expression to their vision. Here are some of the ideas that emerge:

- We want to work in a school where teachers work together and where we feel affirmed.
- We want a school where learners want to learn and also feel affirmed.
- We would like to improve our learning resources.
- We want a school that the community is proud of and wants to send their children to.
- The school should be vibrant all day, it shouldn't die at 2 p.m. I want a school with some extramural activities.
- We want the school to be a place where parents are involved.

There is a very fruitful discussion and teachers are excited about the potential which lies in their school. They are glad to be talking about positive things, rather than always focusing on what is wrong with the school. But they realize that they have only begun the process of building a vision. Poppie continues, 'You have some good ideas about where you want to be. You now need to continue to work on your vision but, most importantly, you need to **be more precise** about what these things mean and **how you would achieve** them. You need to prioritize – you can't achieve all of these things! – set targets, and work out criteria for judging the success of your efforts. So, for instance, tell me how you would know whether you have achieved your desire that "learners want to learn and also feel affirmed"?'

Thulani makes a suggestion: 'I'd divide this into stages. I'd first ask **why** they aren't keen on learning. I think one of the reasons is that they struggle to understand English, yet we teach in English. So, my first criterion would be: "To run regular communicative lessons in English conversation with, let's say, matric learners, and have a good turnout." Obviously, in later stages we would add more activities and measurable criteria ...'

Poppie knows that the staff will have to spend a great deal more time on Stage 2 of the process. She suggests that the teachers brainstorm around things that the school might do to give expression to the vision, and then choose one activity – possibly Thulani's suggestion of improving the language skills of matric learners – to take the school planning process forward. She concludes by saying: 'I can't travel the whole way with you, but what I would like to do in the time that I have left is work with a group of staff to develop an action plan for this small part of your final school development plan.'

Stage 3: How will we manage the change?

'Yes, but we must be careful. One action plan is not a school development plan,' warns The Rake. 'We need to develop plans in other priority areas too, and then see how the different individual projects come together to form an integrated school development plan.'

Poppie agrees, but says that this small bit of planning would be good 'practice' in school development planning.

It takes many hours of work for a small committee comprised of Poppie, teachers and a few parents and learners to finalize the action plan. The plan is shown at the top of page 127.

The small committee discuss this action plan at the next SDP meeting and then make some changes to the plan. The staff also decide on how the process should be monitored and assessed in an ongoing way to ensure that it is sustained and doesn't

Table 4.2 Thuthuka's action plan to improve learners' ability to communicate in English

What objective do we want to achieve?

To improve learners' ability to learn through the medium of English

What steps will we implement to achieve the objective?	What specific tasks need to be done?	Who will do the task?	Resources needed	When will it be done?	Progress check by whom?
STEP 1: To run communicative English lessons after school Success criterion Learners who attend these lessons show an improvement in spoken English after one term (How will we check this?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform all learners and staff about the English lessons • Get feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teachers • Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operation from staff and learners • Time during class • Time before school 	Before May 4	Ms Zondi
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a meeting with all interested learners and teachers to gain commitment; organize times, etc. 	Ms Zondi English HoD	—	Meeting at 2 p.m., May 4	Mr Nxumalo
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report back to a staff meeting 	Ms Zondi	—	May 6	All staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw up a schedule of lesson times, teachers' names, etc. 	Whole team	—	May 12	Principal Ms Zondi
STEP 2: To develop teachers' skills in teaching communicative English Success criterion Teachers use these interactive teaching methods and learners' learning improves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out what INSET courses are available for teachers and report back to team and staff 	Mr Nxumalo	List of contact numbers	May 6	All staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out if funds are available for teachers to attend the course 	Ms Mkhize	Check school budget	May 8	Ms Zondi
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a date for the INSET course 	Mr Nxumalo	—	May 8	Ms Zondi
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure teachers attend the course 	Ms Zondi	—	On the day	

Team members: Mr Nxumalo, Ms Mkhize, Ms Zondi

die. A number of other small teams begin working on other action plans, while a team led by Sindi and The Rake are given the task of pulling all the different ideas together into a school mission statement and development plan. The staff also vote that The Rake be charged with driving the school development process.

There is one worry, though: neither learners nor parents are involved yet. The Rake asks Thulani to take charge of this important aspect of school development.

Stage 4: How will we know if we are being successful?

The next few months are very busy at Thuthuka. Staff meet formally almost every Thursday afternoon for an hour to discuss the progress that has been made. When a few parents and learners are brought 'on board', the time of the meeting has to be changed to a time that is more convenient to parents. At these meetings the different task teams report on and discuss their progress.

After about six months, The Rake says a school development plan has been completed. (In the meantime, a number of smaller projects – like the English lessons – have been running anyway.) ‘What is important now,’ says The Rake, ‘is to develop workable structures and processes to make this plan a reality. A meeting every week is simply not feasible.’

And, although the work has just begun, an important milestone in Thuthuka’s continuing journey of school development has been reached. The informal study group that initiated this feel proud, but realize that they still have a role to play in sustaining the process of school change.

TIP’s organizational development strategy

Organizational development (OD) is another strategy that could be classified as being within the school-as-organization family. It shares many features with the SDP approach.

The Teachers In-service Project (TIP), based at the University of the Western Cape, is one organization which uses such a strategy. TIP takes a strongly holistic view of schools, and argues that they are organizations made up of a number of *interrelated* elements. Each element, they argue, needs to function healthily for the whole to be healthy. TIP’s focus is on developing the different elements or parts of the organization as a strategy for school change. The diagram on page 129 outlines TIP’s understanding of the relationship between the different elements which make up organizational life.

The elements of organizational life

You will notice that CULTURE is at the centre of the TIP diagram. This indicates that it is the foundation of school life and thus needs to change if organizational change is to be implemented. The five essential components of an organization – identity, strategy, structures/procedures, technical support, and human resources – radiate out from CULTURE (and support it), and are linked to one another. You will also notice that LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT is shown at the top *and* the bottom – they *surround* the essential components, indicating their importance to organizational change and the ongoing life of the organization. But the entire organization is encapsulated in three CONTEXT rings – micro, macro, and global. This suggests that organizational life (and its elements) exist in, and are influenced by, different kinds of contexts. Let’s look at each element in more detail:

- **Culture:** According to TIP, culture is the central element to work with in a process of whole school development.
- **Identity:** Members of the school community should ask: ‘Who are we? And where are we going?’ It is important for the school to know what its central purpose – its identity – is, if it wants to change itself.
- **Strategy:** This refers to setting goals, planning to achieve them, and evaluating whether they have been achieved. According to TIP, goals should relate to all dimensions of the school, in particular, teaching and learning.
- **Structures and procedures:** Structures are the formal relationships within the organization – the lines of responsibility and authority. Procedures are the rules, regulations and ‘ways of doing things’ that operate within the school. These have an important influence in shaping the culture of the organization.
- **Technical support:** This aspect of school life is often overlooked, but is very important. It refers to administration, finances and allocation of resources, and it controls and often constrains attempts to change a school.
- **Human resources:** This refers to the staff of the school (teachers, non-teaching staff, and the principal), as well as the interpersonal relationships among staff and stakeholders generally. Staff development and conditions of employment are also part of human resources.

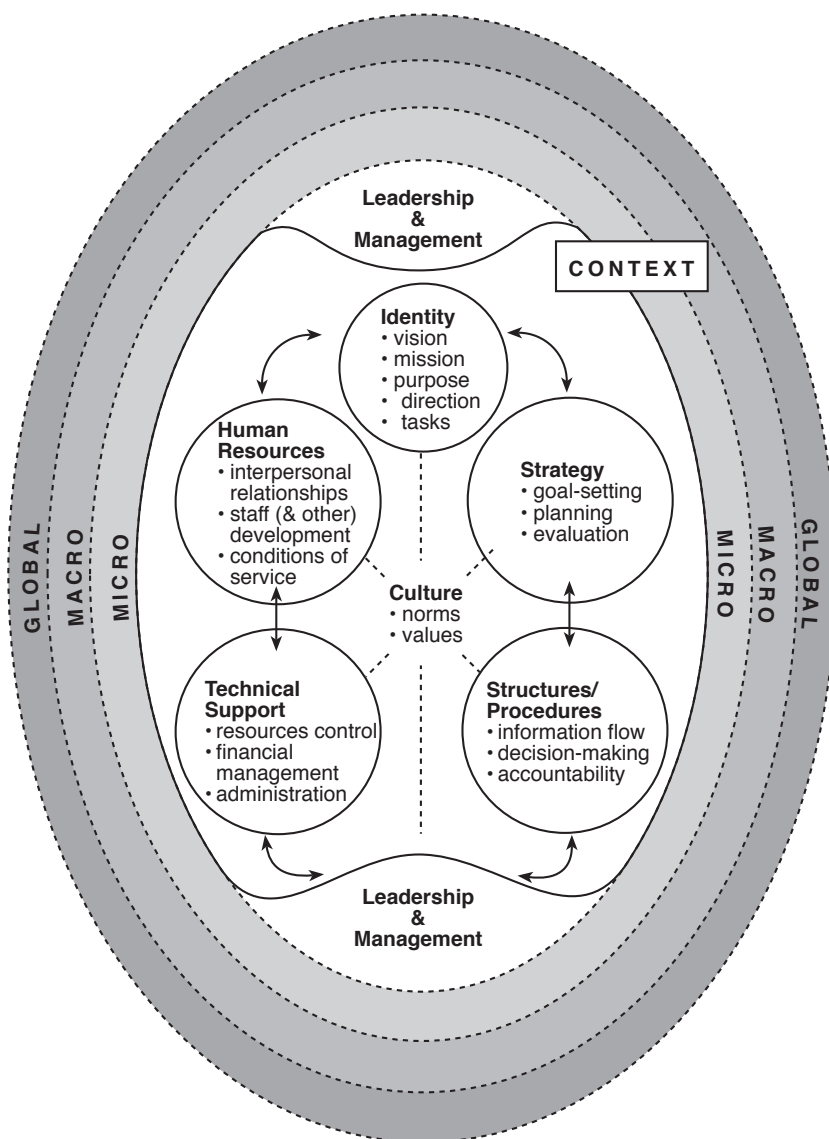


Figure 4.6 Elements of organizational life (from Davidoff and Lazarus. 1997. *The Learning School*, page 18. Cape Town: Juta)

- **Leadership and management:** Davidoff and Lazarus suggest that these ‘have a leading, guiding role (leadership), as well as a containing and holding role (management) ... these aspects ensure that all other aspects are held together and developed’.
- **The context:** This includes everything from a school’s physical location in its immediate community, through the local educational situation, to broader national trends and global trends in society, economy and education. The problems that schools face, and the solutions they may choose, are strongly influenced by these various contexts.

But if you are faced with having to change a school, how do you work with these elements? In other words, how do change agents committed to an organizational development change strategy work with schools? The next reading – by Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus – describes a change process undertaken by TIP in a Cape Town school.



This activity should take you about 2 hours. Try to apply Davidoff et al.'s experiences to your own school.

ACTIVITY 24: USING ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO CHANGE A SCHOOL

Read the extract from a paper by Davidoff et al (Readings, Section Three, 'Leadership and management in building 'learning' schools'). Write your answers to the questions below in your workbook:

- a Read the first section entitled 'The story begins'. Why do the authors see the situation as 'a case of what Fullan refers to as "false clarity" – that is, an oversimplified understanding of what the issues or problems are?
- b Read the section entitled 'The introductory workshop'. What were the purposes of the workshop? What did the school developers hope to achieve? Do you notice similarities between the SDP and OD strategies?
- c Read the section entitled 'A framework for understanding'. Also look back at Figure 4.6. Now write two to three lines on each of the elements of organizational life, and provide an example of each from your own experience.
- d Read the last section entitled 'The next workshop'. What spin-off effects did the writers notice in their next visit?

Davidoff et al. provide a fascinating insight into *how* a group of external facilitators work *with* teachers to identify where a school improvement process should begin. They argue:

There is no one entry point which holds for each school, for each situation. There is no one element of organizational life that is intrinsically more important than another. Each school is different. Each situation is unique. There is no set order of where one might begin a process of change with a school.

They then demonstrate how they use their particular framework to *organize and understand* the long lists of problems which emerge in all schools faced with change.

School development planning and organizational development – as well as Senge's and Fullan's understandings of organization and change – seem to share a number of beliefs and practices. They all:

- understand the different elements that make up a school to be *interdependent* and part of a *system*;
- emphasize the importance of 'digging beneath' the symptom (what Davidoff et al. call the '*presenting* problem') in order to uncover the real, deeper cause of the problem;
- emphasize the need to work with all stakeholders – however slow and difficult the process – so that the change which does emerge is sustained.

What does organizational development add to our understanding of school change?

First, we'd argue that TIP's version of organizational development highlights the impact of *context* on the organizational life of schools far more than SDP does. Davidoff suggests that we cannot simply implement a technical process – like a SWOT analysis and SDP's four stages – without understanding how contextual/political issues will impact on this process. For instance, the micro-context of the school may well be characterized by an imbalance in power which makes it almost impossible for the opinions of women teachers to be heard. If this is not taken seriously, the entire success of the change process might be impeded.

Second, it seems that TIP pursues a more *actively* holistic approach to change.

While SDP does mention the importance of considering the relationships between the different parts of an organization in the processes of change, TIP's version of organizational development regards the different elements as integrally linked. In addition, Davidoff emphasizes the importance of constantly exploring how participants understand and feel about the relationships between the different elements.

But, third, Davidoff offers a very useful framework for sorting out the often long lists of weaknesses that are generated in SWOT analyses. By organizing these under the various elements of organizational life, Davidoff suggests that we can be more precise about where we must prioritize and direct our change efforts.

Interestingly, TIP's use of system thinking and organizational development is far more politically committed and community-sensitive than versions used elsewhere in the world, and than school change strategies like SDP.

Changing schools: the school-as-community approach

4.7

Introduction

The school-as-community approach takes a far more political approach to school change than the school-as-organization approach. While advocates of the school-as-community approach accept that many of the internal change processes used by *school development planning* or *organizational development* strategies are useful, they add to our understanding by demonstrating that the internal changes that emerge as a result of this work might be undermined by external community factors. They suggest that school change agents pay a lot more attention to three issues:

- First, they suggest that all school development projects, especially if they are to be sustained over time, **must** understand and take into account the community dynamics in which that school finds itself. For instance, projects cannot simply focus on improving teaching and learning processes, or management skills.
- Second, they warn against rigid planning because of the 'chaotic' and rapidly changing environments that schools are, and in which schools are located. Instead, they suggest that projects be guided by the (often changing) needs of communities, as long as the central function of education is occurring.
- Thirdly, their call is explicitly political (or ethical). They suggest school change is ultimately driven by moral imperatives and not by technical efficiency imperatives. An implication of this is that schools must **give** to the community because they are often nodes of relative privilege in developing country communities.



imperatives: urgent needs, considerations that must be acted on

The Soshanguve School Project's 'sustainable school community' strategy



Activity 25 introduces you to a particular interpretation of the school-as-community approach. You will watch and listen to teachers at schools in Soshanguve and then read an article by a leading advocate of this approach. Spend about 3 hours on this activity.

ACTIVITY 25: 'SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY' STRATEGY USED IN SOSHANGUVE SCHOOLS

To begin, we'd like you to listen to South African practitioners who have used the school-as-community approach. If you have a video, fast forward to counter number 24 and the title 'The school-as-community approach'. Listen to practitioners from Soshanguve who are using school-as-community strategies to improve their schools. Note down in your workbook:

- a** *how* these people believe schools change, *why* they work in this way, and what the *strengths and weaknesses* of the approach are.

Next, we'd like you to read an article by Andrew Schofield, who works in the Soshanguve district office of the Gauteng Education Department. He has written an interesting description and analysis of what he calls a sustainable school community approach to school change. The paper – 'It takes a village to educate a child' – focuses on Schofield's experience in the Soshanguve schools featured in the video. We have also included an excerpt from another paper in which Schofield's experiences as a school change facilitator in Sharpeville are described. Read Schofield's article (Readings, Section Four, 'Strategies for school change'), then answer the following questions in your workbook:

- b** What are Schofield's criticisms of traditional school change approaches? Why are these approaches inappropriate to developing nation contexts?
- c** In the three main examples Schofield gives of a community-oriented approach, how do schools contribute to communities, and how can communities contribute to schools?
- d** If Schofield was the facilitator of Thuthuka's school development planning exercise, what do you think he would have done differently? Why do you say this?

As you may have noticed, this school-as-community strategy echoes the kind of thinking you read about in 'The spirit of African management' by Lovemore Mbigi. Both are critical of the over-emphasis on organizational efficiency, and the scientific and rational approaches common to Western thinking about organization and management. They argue for change strategies which recognize the humanity – the feelings and desires – of people who make up organizations. (But, again, this is not unique to school-as-community strategies. As you would have noticed, Davidoff strongly urges that the feelings and desires of the people in organizations be valued.) But Schofield goes further – he describes schools themselves *as* communities rather than as organizations.

These strategies to school change are gaining ground in many developing countries. They view the school as being firmly embedded in its community, and recognize that many of these communities are unstable and fractured, or under other forms of stress. This poses a number of challenges to schools:

- first, how do you design planning strategies that are flexible enough to work effectively, despite constant changes in the school's environment (in other words, how do communities impact on the functioning of schools)?
- second, how can schools be used to develop and stabilize communities rather than only educating children (in other words, how do schools impact on the communities in which they exist)?

Thuthuka explores another school-as-community strategy for school change

Nomusa remembers that her friend, Mabo Juleka, and a small group of teachers at Sakhisizwe Technical School, made both local and national news when they won an award for being 'Community Builders of the Year'. 'There must be something we can learn from them,' she says to the team focusing on school change. After some discussion, they decide that Nomusa should go to Sakhisizwe on their behalf to learn as much as possible about this particular school-as-community strategy.

When Nomusa arrived early at Sakhisizwe, she was surprised to find learners milling around on the premises and walking up and down verandahs. Later, she learned that there was a class boycott and the learners had submitted a list of grievances to the principal. 'How strange – even the nationally-acclaimed Sakhisizwe is out on class boycotts and disruptions. What is all this talk about model schools, if they are just the same as all of us?' Nomusa thought to herself as she made her way to the administration block.

After a short wait Mabo appeared, apologizing that he had to attend to two boys who were fighting, one of whom was apparently drunk. All this visibly surprised Nomusa. Mabo noticed this and reassured her: 'What you see and hear here is the reality of change. People often think that we are a wonderful, well-resourced, highly-organized school with everyone accepting a strong work ethic. That is our ideal. The reality of change is that three steps forward today are often counter-balanced by two steps backward tomorrow. Let us get on with our discussion before something else crops up.'

Here is the record of Nomusa's interview with Mabo at Sakhisizwe:

Interview

Nomusa Mabo, could you please tell me what your school understands by the concept of 'schools as communities'?

Mabo Well, first I must say that the concept of schools as communities is not a new thing. Nor is our school the only one to use it. Last year we had the luck to attend a course on school improvement where we learnt a bit about different approaches to school development. All these approaches make some reference to schools as communities. The difference is in the interpretation, and perhaps the definition, of the concept 'community'. You see, in most cases 'community' is used in a limited way, referring to learners, teachers, non-teaching staff, and the parents (through their representation on the school governing body). In other words, the school fence marks the boundaries of the community.

Nomusa So, by 'community', do you mean all the stakeholders within a school?

Mabo In a way, yes. But I think there is a better way to use the word 'community'. We can use the word to refer to a common purpose and unity. It refers to collegiality and working together. The ideal is for everybody to see themselves as part of the institution, and to pull together to make it work. We strive to strengthen the bonds between the different 'stakeholders' within the school. But there is yet another way of looking at the concept of a school community, which is much broader and deeper. The fences – where schools are fortunate enough to have fences – cease to be the boundary. The school is seen as an integral part of the big community in which it is located. We should not talk about the 'outside community'. The goal is to make every individual member of the community – including those who don't work at the school or attend as learners during the day – proud of the school and to take 'ownership' of it. Education is at the centre of politi-

cal, economic and social transformation. Education institutions need to prepare people to be responsible members of the community, and also to be competent to make a living and to contribute to the economy.

Nomusa All of this sounds impressive, but what about those who see schools as targets - those who prey on schools by vandalizing them, stealing equipment, selling drugs through the fence or even abducting female students?

Mabo That's exactly why the most important aspect of this approach is that schools are seen as part of, and belonging to, local communities - in partnership with the state. In many schools, the school building offers the only venue that is large enough for community meetings and adult education initiatives. It has at least some of the facilities needed, and is available a lot of the time when it isn't being used by the learners. And, if the community really comes to see it as theirs in these ways, the whole effort towards reform and development - both in the school and in the community - becomes more sustainable.

Nomusa Why?

Mabo Because people care about it, and they care about it because they can see that it is helping to answer their needs - for basic education that is relevant to job creation, and so on. In so many schools, wonderful efforts towards improvement have broken down after a while because of demoralization among the teachers. They see themselves as fighting a losing battle without allies - against crime, against parents who don't seem to care, against learners who don't come to school, and so on. When we start to approach the problem more holistically, and see the school as part of the community - and act on that vision - something is generated that can begin to erode the forces that lead to demoralization.

Nomusa What does this mean in practical terms?

Mabo I'm pleased you have asked that question. Maybe I should answer this in terms of our experience. Our school is a technical school. Since we opened in 1984, we have had numerous problems of violence, vandalism and crime. For many years, teachers have gone on with their work, becoming increasingly demoralized. Early last year, the school took on the challenge of the Masakhane Campaign. A small group of teachers came together and thought of ways in which they could improve their relations with the community, and contribute to the reconstruction and development process. Within three months, a few projects were on the go. We offered a number of courses - bricklaying, plastering and painting, an evening knitting and sewing class, and a literacy class. We found that these courses transformed educator and learner roles because day-learners assumed the role of educator in the evenings and sometimes over the weekends. The benefits have been immense. Within a few months, the tone of the school has changed dramatically. And, with a bit of luck, it looks as if the momentum created by all this activity and interest will carry on for the foreseeable future. Small things like this can really make a big difference.

Nomusa How have you managed to win over communities?

Mabo I think that local community leaders play an important role in the mobilization of communities to support their schools and to perceive them as their wealth. In South Africa, communities often see schools as government property. If the school is vandalized, the department or the state is responsible for fixing it. You will surely agree with me that this is flawed logic, but we all know that it is a result of years of apartheid. What we need to do is to destroy these harmful attitudes and, in their place, develop new ones of communal ownership, responsibility and accountability.

To conclude sub-section 4.7, we will introduce you to another group of teachers who argue that they are using school-as-community strategies to change their schools. These teachers are from Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal, and are involved in the School-based Reform Initiative (SBRI). The director of this initiative is one of the writers of this module, Themba Ndhlovu. Listen to how he and other teachers from SBRI interpret the school-as-community approach.

The School-based Reform Initiative's school-as-community strategy

ACTIVITY 26: SBRI – ANOTHER SCHOOL-AS-COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Find Part 9 on your audiotape (directly *after* narrator asks you to complete Activity 24). Listen to the interview with Themba Ndhlovu and a number of teachers who have been involved in the School-based Reform Initiative, a school change project in the Pietermaritzburg region. In your workbook, make notes on what they say about:

- how their strategies are similar to, and different from, other school-as-organization and school-as-community strategies for change;
- the strengths and weaknesses of their strategy;
- how they believe they have strengthened their previous understanding of school-as-community strategies for school change.

Then, write about a one-page presentation to a group of teachers in which you draw together what you have learnt about different versions of the school-as-community approach. Your presentation should aim to provide your teachers with a number of practical steps they can embark on to change their schools.

Concluding comment

Those 'voices from the ground' bring this module to an end. We have deliberately concluded by listening to practitioners, and by listening to stories that raise the difficulties of school change. While this module has aimed to give you a theoretical understanding of school organization and change, it has constantly asked that you try to apply these ideas within the 'messiness' of real South African schools – and then develop an ability to reflect on the difficulties that arise and to adapt strategies. At this point we would strongly suggest you page back and re-read parts of the module to see whether you can develop your own strategy for school change, making use of the many ideas offered in this module.

We hope you enjoyed working through this module with us. Good luck in your attempts to develop better schools in South Africa.



Activity 26 is another listening activity. Listen to module co-ordinator Themba Ndhlovu and some teachers talk about their experiences of school change. Spend no longer than 50 minutes on this activity.

4.8

Final tutor-marked assignment



Here is a case study of a school with a problem that you are probably familiar with: absenteeism. Read through the case study, and then answer the questions which follow.

Bytheway Secondary School

The teachers and the management at Bytheway are becoming increasingly frustrated at the high rate of absenteeism at their school. Learners are missing large amounts of work and are doing very badly in tests. Sometimes a third of a class are absent on test days, but they always have excuses which sound legitimate. Teachers then have to schedule another time and set a different test, which is very time-consuming.

The principal, Mr Dlamini, runs the school in a fairly participatory manner. He calls a special staff meeting to look at this issue. About a quarter of the teachers attend the meeting, and they decide that the best way to deal with the issue is to keep a stricter control of class registers and to punish learners who are absent. Teachers agree that none of them will allow learners to write a re-scheduled test. One of the punishments is that learners will have to clean toilets after school.

After a few weeks, it is clear that this is not having much effect on absenteeism. In fact, offenders are even absenting themselves from their punishment: they are not staying after school! The teachers are frustrated as the keeping of registers is time-consuming. And anyway, many teachers are simply not bothering to do it properly because they are often late or absent themselves. Some of them simply tick that learners are present when they aren't. In effect, conscientious teachers are also being punished now because they have to stay after school to supervise the learners who are supposed to be cleaning toilets. These teachers are also coming under attack from parents who say they have no right to keep their children at school to do 'dirty work' when they are required to do work at home.



This is your final assignment. It aims to assess your ability to integrate and apply the ideas you have learnt to an authentic school situation. Remember this as you write the assignment. In other words, merely repeating theory without application cannot be rewarded! We suggest you spend at least 12 hours doing this assignment.

- a Use strategies associated with the school-as-organization approach to work out what the problems are at Bytheway, then suggest a strategy to overcome these problems. Explain *why* you are suggesting that certain action be taken by referring to appropriate literature. (900 words)
- b Use ideas associated with the school-as-community approach to critique the approach you took in (a), and suggest an alternative strategy for dealing with the problem. Again, you need to justify your criticisms and alternative actions by referring to appropriate literature. (900 words)

Selected additional reading

South Africa

Christie, P. and Potterton, M. 1997. 'School development in South Africa: a research project to investigate strategic interventions for quality improvement in South African schools.' Research report, Education Department, University of the Witwatersrand. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

Davidoff, S. and Lazarus, S. 1997. *The Learning School: An Organizational Development Approach*. Cape Town: Juta.

Harber, C. and Davies, L. 1997. *School Management and Effectiveness in Developing Countries – the Post Bureaucratic School*. London: Cassell.

Moonsammy, G. and Hassett, A. 1997. *Reconstructing Schools: Management and Development from Within*. Swaziland: Macmillan.

Potterton, M. 1998. *Quality for All: Improving the Quality of Catholic Schools*. Johannesburg: Catholic Institute for Education.

International

Fullan, M. and Hargreaves, A. 1992. *What's Worth Fighting for in Your School?* London: Open University Press.

Mabey, C. and Iles, P. (Eds.) 1994. *Managing Learning*. London: Routledge and Open University.

Mabey, C. and Mayon-White, B. (Eds.) 1993. *Managing Change*. London: Paul Chapman and Open University.

Reynolds, D., Bollen, R., Creemers, B., Hopkins, D., Stoll, L., and Lagerweij, N. 1996. *Making Good Schools: Linking School Effectiveness and School Improvement*. London: Routledge.

Schwan, C. and Spady, W. 1998. *Total Leaders: Applying the Best Future-focused Change Strategies in Education*. Arlington: American Association of School Administrators.

