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

Saide
South African Institute for Distance Education

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

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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.

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Preface

The SAIDE Teacher Education Series

Creating People-centred Schools is one of the modules in the SAIDE Teacher Education Series developed between 1998 and 2002.

This comprehensive multi-media series comprises:

- Learning Guides, which operate much as a teacher does in structuring learning, explaining concepts, exploring debates in the field, and direct readers to other parts of the module at appropriate times;
- Readings which function as a 'mini-library' of edited readings for further exploration of concepts, issues and debates raised in the Learning Guide;
- An audiotape which use interviews and classroom events to develop the issues raised in each of the modules (not for all modules)
- A video which bring issues and debates from the modules to life (not for all modules).

Although designed to support the learning guides, the readings, as well as the audio and video resources could also be used independently of the learning guides. Used creatively, they provide valuable resources to support existing teacher education programmes.

This set of learning guides with accompanying readers develop teachers' abilities to use theory in practice; and to understand, intervene in and improve their practice as teachers. The diagram below shows the inter-relationships of the modules in terms of curriculum coverage.

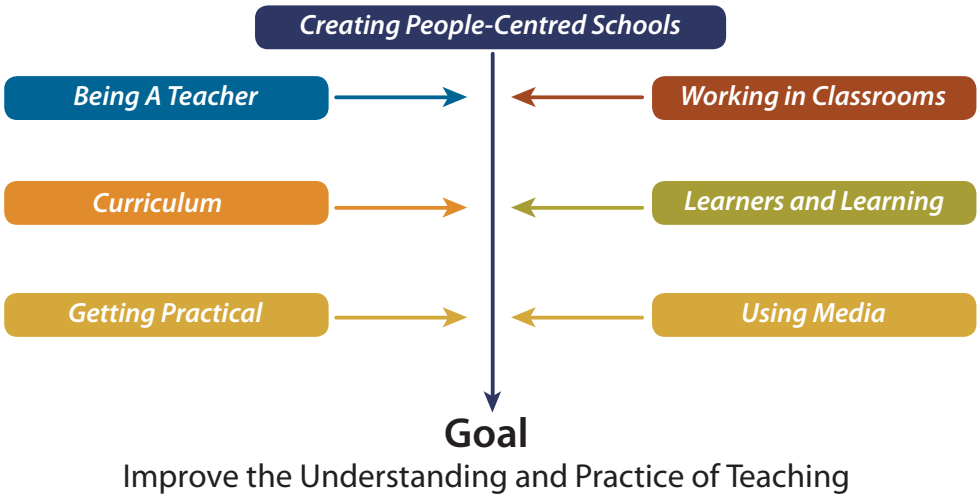
From within a framing context generated by Creating People-centred Schools

- ***Being a Teacher*** and ***Working in Classrooms*** cover the professional and classroom contexts within which teachers practise
- ***Curriculum*** and ***Learners and Learning*** provide a theoretical understanding of resources or tools teachers may draw on
- ***Getting Practical*** and ***Using Media*** draw on the above in guiding practice.

Curriculum and ***Getting Practical*** are available in second editions from Oxford University Press.

The other titles are available on ***www.oerafrica.org.***

Inter-Relationship of SAIDE Teacher Education Modules



Components of the Creating people-centred Schools module

This module deals with school organizational change and development to provide the context in which systematic learning takes place, particularly in developing countries. It is designed for practising classroom teachers as well for those who play a role in school management.

The module is likely to be most appropriate for practising teachers, and is potentially useful but probably not essential for introducing teachers-to-be to different kinds of organizational contexts. The focus on South Africa is easily adaptable to other contexts as the use of ideas and issues from the literature provide a common thread across all schools.

The four sections of ***Creating People-centred Schools*** present a coherent progression. However, each section is downloadable as an individual unit.

Learning Guide

1. Section One: Introducing the module
   This introduction provides a rationale for the module, as well as its structure and content. We read how the writers intended the module to be used.
2. Section Two: School organization: a brief history
   This provides an overview of organizational styles and the importance of cultures as well as structures in organizational models and change.
3. Section Three: New contexts, new policies: new schools?
   Beginning with a focus on South Africa, this section provides valuable coverage of approaches to school 'effectiveness' and school 'improvement'. We learn more about schools as learning organizations.
4. Section Four: Changing schools
   Ideas on understanding change are taken forward into approaches to leading and managing change. School-as-organization approaches are compared with the school-as-community approach.

Readings

→ Section One: South Africa: New plans for new contexts
→ Section Two: Organizations: The impact of global change
→ Section Three: Schools: The processes and constraints of change
→ Section Four: Strategies for school change

Not all the copyright holders of these readings have given permission to release them digitally, and so, although notes on all the readings are included, the full text is in some cases omitted.

The available readings can be downloaded from the ***Creating People-centred Schools*** module page on ***www.oerafrica.org*** .

Audiotape

The audiotape is linked to sections of the learning guide, but carries debates which could also be used in a free-standing way by anyone interested in school organization and change.

Downloadable sections, varying in length from 3½ to 11½ minutes, are:

1. The learning organization
2. Cultures and hierarchies in schools: changing school cultures as well as structures
3. Changing management to manage change: a government report
4. School effectiveness and school improvement
5. What is a learning organization?
6. Managing change
7. Taking account of traditional ways of learning in Africa
8. 'Schools as organization' and 'Schools as community' approaches
9. Experiences of a school-based reform initiative.

Videotape

Like the audiotape, the video is linked to sections of the learning guide, but also offers much scope for creative use in free-standing ways. Downloadable sections are:

1. Visuals of how historical and social problems have impacted on schools. The fact that schools may also be badly managed leads to the question of how they might be better managed.
2. By visiting schools we learn more about two approaches to school change and improvement: the school-as-organization model based on internal reflection and action; and the schools-as-community approach based on networking.
3. We learn more about the organizational approach during the course of a visit to a school that has successfully implemented this model. Participants are also interviewed.
4. We visit a community which has developed a successful schools-as-community approach through a network of schools managed by a coordinating body.
5. Reflection on the schools-as-community approach leads to some conclusions on lessons learnt, and there is useful discussion on commonalities, differences – and relative strengths – of the two models of organizational development and change.

Acknowledgements

Creating People-centred Schools was developed through the Study of Education project managed by the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) and funded by the WK Kellogg Foundation. The series editor was John Gultig who facilitated the lengthy process of curriculum and materials development that enabled the module to benefit from the contributions of critical readers. In varying ways, Dawn Butler, Pam Christie, Andrew Schofield, Mark Potterton, Willem Steenkamp, Annemarie Odendaal and Basil May all made significant contributions to the character, form, and final shape of the module.

The first edition was published by SAIDE/Oxford in 1999 under conventional 'All rights reserved'. This (slightly adapted) 2010 version is available digitally on ***www.oerafrica.org*** under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 licence to facilitate updating and adaptation by users. The processes involved in making the 2010 version available were managed by Ken Harley and Tessa Welch, with funding through the International Association for Digital Publications.