

Collegiality in education: a case study

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There has been much speculation as to why most historically disadvantaged schools (HDS) perform relatively poorly in the end of year external matriculation examinations. This has been attributed to, amongst other things, a lack of physical resources stemming from apartheid. Notwithstanding the ill-effects of apartheid, it has been reported widely in the media that several disadvantaged schools, including those in remote rural areas, have achieved a 100% pass rate. Evidently, the management style accounted for the difference between performing and non-performing schools. This case study therefore investigated the effects of a collegial management style on teaching and learning over a period of three years in a historically disadvantaged secondary school. The semi-structured interviews conducted amongst the staff members, including the principal, clearly indicated that a collegial management style was a major contributory factor in altering the work ethos of both teachers and learners. The findings of this case study further revealed that the exploitation of available resources in HDS coupled with a collegial management structure can improve the matriculation results. This study also connotes that physical resources cannot solely guarantee success at matriculation level. A shared vision espoused in collegiality can alter the landscape from dysfunctionality to efficiency and qualitative education.

Introduction

The various problems in historically disadvantaged schools (HDS) in South Africa have been constantly blamed on apartheid (Steyn & Van Der Westhuizen, 1992:35). A lack of funding and inadequate physical resources at disadvantaged schools are constantly highlighted as the main reasons for poor academic achievement, particularly in the external matriculation examinations (Steyn & Van der Westhuizen, 1992:37). A report tabled in parliament on 1 November 2000 (as heard on Radio 5 news) points out that an amount of R12 b is required to eliminate the backlog in education. The implication of this is that another 67 400 classrooms have to be built in order to ensure normality and stability in education. The report also indicated that sixty two percent of schools, mostly in rural areas, functioned without adequate water supplies.

Without undermining the negative effects that the apartheid system has had on the education system in South Africa, a systemic change in management strategies is required immediately in order to improve the current poor academic performance of learners at disadvantaged schools (Department of Education, 1996:28). Bureaucratic and *laissez faire* management styles currently in vogue need to make room for a management style that encourages inclusion and participation (World Bank Consultancy, 1993:5).

On the basis of the above issues, the key to transformation must not only depend on the acquisition of physical resources alone, but can in fact be found in the effective utilisation of available human and non-human resources and the application of transformational leadership strategies. The Task Team (Department of Education, 1996:29) pointed out that the quality of internal management needs to be accompanied by an internal 'devolution' of power within the school to replace inherited autocratic leadership and management strategies. A climate for effective management and transformational leadership is dependent on the following elements:

- Planning according to a shared vision
- Managing through participation and collaboration
- Developing the school as a learning organisation
- Drawing on support systems

The four suggested elements listed above are all components of collegiality. Despite their very different conditions and levels of resourcing, all schools will have to accept responsibility for developing the capacity to manage themselves. This responsibility is likely to rest heavily on school principals, their management teams and the governing

bodies, which the South African Schools Act of 1996 so boldly envisages.

It needs to be noted that in order for collegiality to have an impact, the school's principal must ensure that certain structures are in place before s/he can introduce collegial management strategies. It is important that teachers are at school and that they are in the classrooms and teaching. Recent research (Lokotsch, 2000; Manser, 1999; Msila, 1999) conducted in the Eastern Cape Province confirms that many schools in disadvantaged communities close school as early as ten o'clock in the morning for no apparent reason. They run on make-shift timetables and have teachers that leave early or do not attend school at all. At the end of a month 'pay-day', some teachers have been known to leave school during the course of the morning to attend to their financial matters.

A sense of professionalism that supports a culture of learning rather than perpetuating a culture of defiance that has been relevant during the era of political struggle in South Africa needs to be introduced at each school. The South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA) has addressed this issue, as has the Employment Equity Act of 1998. Both introduce legislation that is intended to address the imbalances of the past, but it remains the role of school managers to introduce the management strategies needed and the changes necessary to enhance the transformation of schools.

The introduction of collegiality can serve to increase the possibility of professionalism being nurtured and a more effective school being established. Hence, the relevance of this case study which investigated the effects of introducing collegiality at a historically disadvantaged secondary school, Radebe Secondary School (RSS) — a pseudonym being used to protect the school's identity. The investigation at a single site such as RSS over a period of three years paved the way for concrete and substantive deductions to be made. Also, a study of this nature facilitated a better understanding of collegiality and its impact on transformation especially at HDS.

Statement of the problem

It seems that the climate of a new political democracy and the process of transformation that has swept across the country have had minimal impact on the effective functioning of many schools in South Africa. The necessary legislation such as the SASA and the Employment Equity Act are in place, but there is not much evidence of systemic change in disadvantaged schools. Inherited autocratic styles of man-

agement on the one hand and apparent *laissez-faire* styles on the other seem to be as firmly operative as they were previously. Ex model-C schools continue to offer an education that caters for a privileged minority and the HDS offer an education that in the main demonstrate inferiority and inefficiency. It is in the HDS where teachers are reputed to show a lack of commitment, poor professionalism and where learners achieve poor academic results. It is often argued by some stakeholders, albeit with justification, that the improvement of school effectiveness, teacher professionalism and academic results lie in a school's management strategy rather than a dependence solely on the acquisition of resources.

Hence, the main problem that was investigated related to the effects that collegiality had on the professional commitment of teachers at a disadvantaged school and the subsequent influence this had on the learners' academic performance in the external matriculation examination. RSS has a history of poor matriculation results, low teacher morale, poor attendance and has been described by the current principal of the school as 'a school that demonstrated little commitment in the past' (Personal interview, 1999 — name withheld).

At the beginning of 1998, at the request of an Education Development Officer, one of the researchers (PGM) helped introduce collegial management strategies at RSS. At the end of 1998, the school experienced one of its best external examination matriculation pass rates with a pass rate of 53%. This even improved to 56% in 1999 and to 60% in 2000! In contrast, in 1997 it had achieved a 22% pass rate and in 1996, 26%. The improved academic results and the introduction of collegial strategies at the school created an interesting scenario and formed the basis for the problem of the case study.

Hence the research problem for this study was:

What are the effects of collegiality on the management of effective learning at a historically disadvantaged secondary school?

Aims of the study

The principal's decision to introduce a collegial style of management in 1998 at RSS was, according to him, an attempt on his part to improve the professional input of his teaching staff by offering them a more active role in the school's decision-making process and hence making them more effective. His reason is corroborated by Lofthouse (1994:6) who claimed that:

The emphasis of collegiality should be focussed on how to extract the best from people and hence create the most effective and efficient educational climate possible.

In order for academic results to improve, the effects of collegiality should have had an influence on the work ethic of the learners, either as a result of the influence of the teachers, or because of other factors. We investigated whether collegiality had been effectively introduced at RSS and we ascertained to what extent collegiality influenced the learners' attainment of improved academic results in the external matriculation examination. The collegial management techniques investigated were based on the design and introduction of

- a shared vision; and
- shared decision-making strategies.

The leadership team at RSS attempted, in a concerted way, to transform itself from a bureaucratic management style to a collegial management style as it felt that the school would be more successful in achieving its aims and objectives if a collegial management style were to be adopted. This study aimed to determine whether collegiality had a more positive influence on the performance of teachers and learners at RSS than a bureaucratic management style. The concepts of shared involvement, collegial management and ownership of decisions as opposed to top-down decision making and autocratic control were considered.

The main aims of the study were therefore to determine:

- Whether collegiality enhanced the efficiency of RSS, by influencing the work ethic of both the teachers and the Grade 12 learners and the significance of collegiality on the attainment of improved external matriculation results at the school.

- Whether collegiality extracted the best from people and hence created the most effective and efficient educational climate possible in order to improve the Grade 12 external examination results at RSS.

Assumptions and delimitations

Many parents, learners and teachers interpret the end of year matriculation results as a straightforward measure of a school's performance or effectiveness. This view was also echoed by the Minister of Education, Kader Asmal who pointed out that whether "we like it or not, school results in the National Senior Certificate are seen by parents and politicians (and by newspaper editors) as the most important indicator of school performance" (Sunday Times, 2001:2). Public evaluation of a school's external matriculation results may be conducted at too simplistic a level and inappropriate conclusions about a school's effectiveness in relation to examination results could be made. The use of examination results to compare one school's effectiveness with another may also be inappropriate (Gray, Lesson & Sime, 1993:99). We believe that it is more appropriate to investigate school effectiveness by comparing the enrolment of learners and their potential with outcomes achieved. In this study, we did not make comparisons of matriculation results with the intention of comparing one school with another. Rather we worked on the hypothesis that a school's matriculation results can be used as a barometer of that school's effectiveness and as a measure to determine whether effective learning had taken place or not. Gray, Lesson and Sime, (1993:27) suggested that:

Studies of school effectiveness are primarily concerned with establishing the effect schools have in improving or diminishing pupils' performance.

Whilst it may be true to say that the external matriculation examination is a flawed and outdated system, it is the only benchmark currently available for assessing academic achievement and progress across a national and provincial spectrum. As the only form of external assessment available to State schools in South Africa, the results are widely used by tertiary institutions to assess the thousands of applications they receive each year.

What is collegiality?

Definition

Collegial management suggests that teachers should play a participatory role in the management of a school. Sergiovanni (1991:26) defined collegiality as the responsibility given to teachers to become an integral part of the management and leadership processes of the school that are guided by that school's shared vision. It is a process of assimilation that involves encouraging personal visions to establish a vision built on synergy. It is a vision that is both personal and congenial:

It is my vision and our vision (Senge, 1990:214).

Rather than supporting a responsive reaction (transactional) form of leadership, collegiality places emphasis on being value driven and change directed (transformational). In other words it encourages all teachers to actively participate in their school's development and transformation.

According to the SASA, schools will need to change their management strategies and adopt management styles that encourage innovation, transformational leadership and self-governance. Collegiality can be perceived as a style of management which is collaborative, transformational and based on shared objectives (Davies, 1983:20). A collegial management style therefore meets the requirements expressed in the SASA. This case study ascertained whether HDS should be encouraged to adapt their management strategies to a more collegial approach (encompassing collaborative decision-making and transformational leadership) in order to achieve improved academic results.

Transformational leadership and collegiality

Transformational leadership entails the participation of all teachers as

an interdependent group that forms an integral part of creating transformation in the school rather than the maintenance of control and power (Sergiovanni, 1992:43). It further entails the need to identify the motives that are inherent in teachers, responding to their needs and utilising the skills or knowledge that the teacher may have (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1993:142). Transformational leadership occurs when purposes that at one time were perceived as separate become fused and the leadership function is driven by the need to attain a common goal (Sergiovanni, 1990:5). The various stages of attaining a transformational leadership ethos as described by Sergiovanni (1990: 8) are:

- Leadership by bartering
- Leadership by building
- Leadership by bonding
- Leadership by banking

The emphasis should therefore shift from the transactional leadership model where rewards and mutual advantage may be encouraged, to a transformational approach that advocates a value based, vision driven approach (Coleman, 1994:69). The four stages of transformational leadership may not follow a set sequence for all staff at the same time. It may be necessary to employ the notion of building with a new member of staff while banking is taking place with more experienced staff members. The skill attached to the selection of an appropriate stage and when to introduce it, is largely dependent upon the ability of the leader to recognise the state of maturity of each individual on the teaching staff.

Strategies for achieving collegiality

Achieving collegiality in a school can be regarded as a process rather than a happening. If this is so, then various strategies need to be put into place to enhance the process of collegiality. Bush (1993:37), and Bailey and Adams (1990:22), offer similar strategies that can be employed in order to achieve collegiality.

The participation of the teaching staff in strategic planning must be encouraged in order to identify goals and objectives for the school through shared goal setting activities. The creation of a shared vision is one of these activities. A sense of belonging, mutual respect and self evaluation should be encouraged as this may remove the belief that the principal is the expert in such matters (Bailey & Adams, 1990:24). Members of the teaching staff should be treated as partners rather than as subordinates as this will encourage co-operative decision-making. The professional development of the teaching staff has to be fostered as this will enhance the opportunities for teachers to become leaders and will also increase their sense of autonomy and interdependence.

Managing the school as a community

The school selected for this case study (RSS) is situated in an extremely poor community in a Port Elizabeth township that serves as an immediate feeder area to the school. On the one hand the school serves the community in which it is situated, but its physical presence is very different to the surrounding houses it serves. Most of the houses in the area of the school are built out of zinc and tin. In sharp contrast, the school is a brick and mortar structure. It boasts the only green lawn and flowers in the area. It looks special and different and it represents a ray of hope for the community it serves. The school should, according to Royal and Rossi (1997:4), foster a sense of community within the school, while at the same time serving a community outside of the school. They advocate the idea that in order for a school to be effective it must foster a sense of community.

A strong sense of community at RSS creates benefits for both teachers and learners and provides a foundation for school improvement. Bryk and Driscoll (1988:3) describe a communally organised school as a school that demonstrates a system of shared values that is related to the school and to education in general. They identify common activities that link members of the school together in an ethos of caring in interpersonal relationships. These are enhanced by collegial interactions among the teaching staff. Raywid (1993:23-44) identified

six common characteristics for successful school communities which can now be identified within this community:

1. Respect
2. Caring
3. Inclusiveness
4. Trust
5. Empowerment
6. Commitment

This is supported further by studies conducted by Royal and Rossi (1997:2) who confirm the characteristics of collegiality as follows:

- Open communication
- Overall and varied participation in the life of the school
- A prevalence of teamwork
- Learners and teachers share a vision for the future of the school.
- There is a common sense of purpose and a common set of values.
- All members of the school care about each other.
- All efforts and accomplishments are recognised.

Royal and Rossi also reveal that in communally organised schools, staff morale is higher, teacher absenteeism is lower and teachers and learners are more satisfied with their work. Teachers who have a strong sense of community at school tend to be more supportive of innovation, change and reform programmes (Royal & Rossi, 1997:4). It is also suggested that a sense of community is an important factor in a school where learners are at a high risk of academic failure.

Wehlage (1989:35) found that effective schools provide learners with a sense of community support. Similar observations have been made with respect to a collaborative school climate. Smith, James and Scott (in Royal & Rossi, 1997:3) suggest that collaboration amongst teachers is characterised by collaboration amongst learners. A sense of community that has its roots in a management structure that is collegially and collaboratively based has a dramatic effect on the way that learners and teachers view their school. This in turn has a direct influence on the teachers' sense of commitment and the learners' academic improvement. As observed, this has been one of the key reasons for the improvement in RSS's end of year matriculation results in 1998 and 1999 and 2000.

Holonomy and community

The concepts of holonomy and community have definite implications for school managers. It is imperative for school managers to foster a sense of belonging amongst all members of the school community. Teachers must be made to feel that they are able to make a difference to the policy of a school both as members of a team and as individual experts. A collegial management style that supports a notion of participation in the decision-making process is far more suited to creating a sense of community and holonomy than an autocratic style. Other members of the school community need to be made to feel that they are an integral part of a school's development plans. Learners in particular need to know that they are the focal point of all that transpires at a school. They therefore also need to be heard and listened to. The teachers and the learners need to maintain their own identity while at the same time helping to shape the identity of the school.

Individual teachers must be able to act autonomously in the school while at the same time being part of the school's staff that is working interdependently (Garmston & Wellman, 1995:4). Autonomous interdependence may seem like an oxymoron, but the aim is to transcend these terms by being an individual that acts as a participant within the school. Garmston and Wellman described this concept as holonomy. An integral part of holonomy is that individuals are encouraged to take risks rather than have a fear of failure. The experiences learned are regarded as being more important than the mistakes made, as long as the errors are instrumental in achieving an ultimate improvement in quality. This state is impossible in a school that is largely bureaucratic in its decision-making processes, particularly if the feeling exists that those in positions of power view failure from a negative perspective (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994:2).

The goal of any leader must be to create situations throughout the

school that allow for individuals to develop leadership and management skills in all aspects of school life. The principal at RSS set his sight on this goal when he assumed his position. Although initially he may not have been aware of the concept of holonomy, he nevertheless introduced a management system that encouraged all the teachers to take risks by participating in the management of the school. He introduced this system by formulating a shared vision statement. He encouraged all the teachers at the school to participate in the process of creating a shared vision for the school. In taking part in this exercise, the teachers seemed to follow what Costa and Garmston (1994: 32) refer to as the five passions. The five passions listed by Costa and Garmston (1994:32) are:

1. Efficacy
2. Flexibility
3. Craftsmanship
4. Consciousness
5. Interdependence

The continuous development of the five passions assisted RSS to achieve holonomy.

Meaningful application can only be possible if collegiality has been introduced into the school. At RSS the process of creating a shared vision statement relied on a collegial management style. In this way the teachers' participation allowed them to see that they were able to make a difference to the school's current direction (or lack of it). They needed to be flexible in their thinking in order to take other teachers' views into consideration. The skills of craftsmanship were put to the test when they drew up the shared vision statement. A level of consciousness was achieved when the teachers realised that their collective input resulted in their matriculants receiving improved end of year examination results. Consequently, interdependence was also evident.

Collegiality and the role of the principal

It is the principal who sets the tone for the rest of the school in terms of how leadership and management practices are utilised. It is the principal who provides the vehicle, climate and motivation that can enhance a shared management and shared leadership style.

Effective leadership by the principal does not only concern skills, rules and procedures, but also focuses on the quality of the relationships with the members of the teaching staff (Murgatroyd & Gray, 1984:39). The development of trust through the practice of shared responsibility and collegiality assists the principal in this regard.

The first kind of power that may be identified, relates to the role of the office where power may be the result of status and legal authority (Bailey & Adams, 1990:28). This kind of power may be considered to be inherent with the position and is often accompanied by an autocratic leadership style. The second kind of power is the power that is entrusted to the role of principal. It seems that this kind of power should be earned and may be regarded as prestige or influence. Bailey and Adams (1990:25) indicated that principals who have little prestige may resort to their status and authority to influence others. Likewise those principals who have influence seldom need to utilise their position of power and will of course demonstrate a collegial management style.

Principals who demonstrate non-bureaucratic leadership styles support teacher innovation, promote staff co-operation, initiate staff development programmes, encourage innovation and experimentation and are not bound by rules and regulations that hamper development and change.

Research design

This investigation took place over a period of three years, from 1998 to 2000. Whilst the semi-structured interviews were conducted during 1999 over a period of three months, pending the availability of the teachers and the principal, frequent visits were made to RSS to evaluate the progress, if any pertaining to teaching, learning and management. A qualitative research design was therefore deemed to

be the ideal research methodology to aptly cover the three phases of this study:

- Pre-interview phase: 1998
- Interview phase: 1999
- Post-interview phase: 2000

Hence, semi-structured interviews with the principal and all the teachers at the school were held during 1999. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to ensure that similar core questions were asked of all respondents during the interviews. The buffet of questions covered most of the required areas asked during the frequent visits identified for the case study. Participant observation was also used to gather relevant information about how the school functions.

There are three main reasons for choosing RSS as the school for this case study:

- PGM, one of the researchers of this article and being a principal of an ex-model C school, successfully twinned his school with RSS and further assisted the management of the school in its change to a collegial approach to management at the beginning of 1998.
- The school is classified as an historically disadvantaged school, even though it has an adequate infrastructure and access to modern resources.
- RSS has a record of poor academic results, but showed a remarkable improvement in the external matriculation results from the end of 1998.

Discussion of findings

The school's vision statement was the centre of many of the questions asked as it linked up well with collegiality; hence many of the responses refer to the school's shared vision statement.

Question: Has the style of management changed at your school?

The teachers felt that the most noticeable change in management style took place because of a change in principal. The previous principal was described as being very strict and extremely well organised. He made all the decisions. The teachers described him as being autocratic. It seems that the notion of his being organised was directly related to his making the decisions. The teachers appeared to be afraid of the previous principal but there were times when they demanded that certain unilateral decisions be discussed with the staff. One teacher made the following comment:

The participation of the teachers was not as spontaneous nor as often as is experienced now.

Now the atmosphere at the school is described as being less tense, as teachers are not simply expected to obey the principal. Self-discipline is evident amongst learners and teachers. This is growing at a commendable pace.

The main difference that is noticed currently is that the teaching load is more equitable and that teachers have been prepared to take on additional responsibilities. The teachers are now more involved in the school. All agreed that this was a positive development. Many of the teachers believed that the advice received from their support school had a significant effect on the change of management style. They felt that the style of management was more collegial with greater focus on their professional needs. Their descriptions of increased involvement, shared accountability and shared decision-making encapsulated important aspects of collegiality. It was therefore gratifying to note that the principal's goal to introduce a collegial management style at the school was being realised with adequate support from his staff.

In response to the same question, the principal said that he had tried to delegate work evenly across the staff. He said he had tried to involve the staff in decision-making at all levels as he believed that the previous management made a mistake in not doing this. He said he felt that a far stronger bond existed between the teachers and the management at the school than there used to be.

Question: How do you view the participation of teachers in decision-making?

All respondents stressed that participation of teachers in the decision-making process was encouraged as this created a sense of ownership that in turn enhanced the prospects of successful implementation. The process may be more time consuming but if the efficiency of the school is enhanced, then the time spent was well worth the effort.

The teaching staff feel that they are able to make a difference to existing norms and structures in the school (efficacy). All events are perceived as opportunities for learning and input. Theoretical knowledge and previous experience assist the teachers in achieving this state.

Teachers also pointed out that they are encouraged to demonstrate flexibility in their thoughts and actions. This required empathy, respect and the ability to envisage a range of alternatives that can be utilised in the creation of options in problem solving or innovation. Craftsmanship is now also part of their mission seeing that the teachers seek perfection and pride in all that they undertake, but not necessarily at the expense of flexibility. They unanimously agreed that the achievement of holonomy was due to the collegial atmosphere that prevailed in their environment.

The principal unequivocally supported the participation of his staff in all matters pertaining to the effective functioning of the school. According to him, decision-making was not the sole responsibility of persons occupying management positions. He made it known that

Leadership is not a position but a role that contributes to institutional efficiency.

Question: How do you view the principal's response to his role in fostering collegiality?

All agreed that the principal should not simply transfer his or her own beliefs, attitudes and values onto the teaching staff, but s/he should rather create management strategies that encourage meaningful participation in the management and leadership processes that enable shared beliefs, attitudes and values to be created. The teachers strongly believed that the principal needs to be guided by the needs of the school rather than by personal preferences. The principal should not be perceived as being the sole owner of a school's vision, as this may have a negative influence on collaboration and collegiality. Where principals merely encourage others to support their wishes, collaboration and collegiality may be contrived as teacher support may simply mean that collegiality is contrived to suit the needs of the principal (Southworth, 1993:85). The RSS staff agreed that the support from staff is essential when making important decisions that affect everyone. In certain instances they support the notion that parents and learners need to be included when mustering support.

Question: Can the principal be collegial and accountable simultaneously?

The teachers pointed out that the principal, by the nature of his hierarchical position, is regarded as the leader of the school with appropriate managerial, administrative and leadership functions. It is difficult to separate the functions of the principal into clearly defined divisions. What is apparent however, is that the principal may possess professional knowledge, skills and attitudes that could have a direct influence on how the school functions. If the principal follows an autocratic style of leadership it may therefore follow that a collegial management model may be difficult to achieve.

The principal was regarded as being the person accountable to the school's governing body and the education department for all that happens at the school. Teachers shared this sentiment. It is necessary for the principal to ensure that the various pressure groups are informed of the decision-making process of the school. This should not be seen as a way in which the principal may be removed from the role of accountability, but rather as a means to demonstrate that the approach chosen will create a more effective school. The principal should be willing to receive criticism from pressure groups in order to

enhance the effectiveness of the school. Unless the principal supports the process of collegiality by supporting decisions that are made, collegiality will be regarded as contrived as the teaching staff will feel that shared decision-making is merely a reinforcement of what the principal desires. If this is the case then collegiality will serve little purpose, as all decisions will be based on preconceived outcomes. Preconceived notions of power that may have been invested in the principal may further enhance this.

Question: Did the vision and mission statement affect the performance of everyone in the school?

The answer was affirmative. Without a vision, the institution was in a hapless situation without any clearly defined goals. Both the principal and his staff believed that the vision and mission statement was a barometer to measure the school's successes and failures.

Question: Who made all the decisions at the school?

This question was asked in order to substantiate or negate the information we had been given about the school's collegial approach. There were two clear schools of thought amongst the teaching staff. One group felt that they were not empowered to make decisions. They claimed that the senior staff (the principal and HODs) would make a decision and then take it to the staff for ratification. They claimed that if the staff did not support the idea, then it would be discussed and changed if necessary. The majority of staff members believed however, that decisions were not forced onto the staff. They believed that there was a great emphasis on teamwork and that decision-making was inclusive rather than exclusive. What emerges from both groups is that decisions are not made from a top-down perspective. Teachers are consulted and consensus is reached. Most of the teachers believed that they had a management role in that they all helped to make decisions. It was agreed that the principal tended to make certain decisions on his own, but these were normally administrative decisions that did not have major long-term effects on the school. All agreed that it would be a waste of time and very frustrating if all minor decisions were taken to the staff.

They believed that the teachers do have a voice and that it is heard and taken seriously. It had not always been this way. The feeling was that the teaching staff as a whole was accountable and responsible for what happened (or did not happen) at the school.

Question: Do you have a role to play in the management of your school?

This question was aimed at finding specific examples of collegiality. Some teachers felt that they did not have a role to play in the general management of their school as this was the role of the HODs and the principal. The majority believed that they were not totally excluded from management. The principal pointed out that all the teachers had a role to play in the management of the school. The teachers believed that they should be included in most decision-making processes as part of a democratic social order.

There was a general feeling that specific portfolios had been delegated to teachers and they were responsible for them. All the teachers cited the example of subject departments. Subject heads and subject teachers were responsible for managing their departments and were empowered to make decisions within their subject areas. The subject departments work in conjunction with HODs and decisions are taken after discussion with all subject teachers.

Question: Since the shared vision was put into place, do you think the school is more effective?

The general opinion was that from 1998 when the vision statement was first created, there has been a great difference at the school. One teacher said:

We now have direction and a common goal. We know where we want to go and how to go there.

Many teachers agreed that the staff began working together as a team

in order to reach the goals that were set. There was a strong desire for the staff to equip the learners. One HOD commented:

Previously the HODs were overloaded. Now the load was spread more evenly and everybody was keen to get involved. It elevated us to a higher level of working. We preached the vision to the learners and they responded by working with greater effort.

The teachers agreed that they felt motivated to accomplish what was contained in the vision. It became the main priority for the school. The general feeling was that the main priority arising out of the vision was to improve the academic achievement of all the students, in particular the matriculants. The staff felt that there was an improvement in the work ethic among both the teachers and the learners. The principal reported that there was a decline in the rate of absenteeism amongst the learners and teachers. He attributed this to an increase in the commitment of both groups brought about by the shared vision.

The teachers felt that there was a sense of ownership that existed. Some of the teachers felt that it was a good idea that an outsider had helped with the drawing up of the vision statement as they believed this strengthened the feeling of ownership. They felt that if the principal had coordinated the seminar, there might have been less participation and less commitment to the vision because they might have been perceived as something that the principal wanted to force onto the staff.

The principal felt that the higher pass rate in 1998 was a direct result of the shared vision because the whole staff began to implement ways to improve their teaching and the learners' learning. He believes that there is a constant need to rekindle the teachers' commitment to the vision so that

They can make the impossible, possible.

Question: What arrangements are in place to ensure improved academic results are achieved by the matriculants?

The teachers indicated that the grade responsibilities are shared. In the past one teacher was assigned to one grade only. The teachers feel that by sharing expertise, they are able to offer improved teaching. There is greater discussion and the subject teams draw up quarterly work plans. There is greater participation in planning and the teachers have become more open to suggestion and change. The teachers feel that they do not have a problem with discipline. They seemed to be very proud about this. As one teacher remarked:

In comparison to other township schools, this one is well disciplined.

Another said:

At this school we don't have pupil violence and the teachers do not feel threatened now. Most of the pupils come to school unlike other schools. Most of the teachers are in their classes. Collegiality is working for everyone!

The teachers believed that there was an element of respect present at the school as teachers were professional and maintained a gap between themselves and the learners. Familiarity and fraternisation were not encouraged. According to the teachers the latter was a problem in many HDS. The researchers were impressed with the teachers' trust in each other and the spirit of teamwork that existed amongst most of them. We found the teachers to be generally positive about their peers, the learners and the school.

Question: Has redeployment negatively influenced a collegial management style?

The principal believed that although re-deployment had a negative influence at the school, the teachers should not use this as an excuse to underperform or be lax. He also believed that the redeployment process had a positive effect on the school, as the management team increased in size. It was thus easier to put the necessary structures, identified in the vision, into place. A deputy principal and two HODs were appointed in 1999. In no way was collegiality compromised as a result of redeployment; actually the need for collegiality increased in the entire institution.

Question: The school's matriculation results improved at the end of 1998. To what do you attribute this success?

There was an overwhelming consensus as to the reasons for the matriculants success. Firstly the teachers felt that the shared vision statement had motivated them and they therefore embarked on a series of actions that they hoped would improve teaching and learning. One teacher's comment was:

I felt excited by the vision and I wanted to share this excitement in the classroom.

Another initiative called 'catch up programmes' was also introduced. These were study periods that were arranged for the grade twelve learners after school hours, on weekends and during the holidays. These were introduced after a decision had been taken by the teachers and were a direct result of the shared vision. They also held discussions with subject teachers from the ex-model C school to which they were twinned. These proved beneficial and new teaching strategies were introduced as a result of these meetings. Furthermore, the matriculants were exposed to three-hour papers prior to the final examinations. This was a tremendous boost to their preparation for the year-end examinations. One teacher actually remarked that

You cannot expect to participate in the Comrades if you do not practice the distance regularly.

Everyone shared the vision and '*there was great excitement*'. Another teacher made the following observation:

The vision really did something. It awakened a dormant spirit.

Question: Does collegiality contribute justly towards gender equity in the management of the school?

Because of cultural constraints, the female teachers felt that their inputs into the management of the school were sidelined during the pre-collegial era. Now that collegiality forms the cornerstone of leadership, gender equity prevails.

A collegial management style

Evidently, the introduction of a collegial management style at RSS had certain implications for the teaching staff and the existing management structure of the school. There were preconceptions until 1998 regarding the roles of those in perceived bureaucratic leadership and management positions. This was largely due to the school having a white principal prior to 1998, with limited professional support forthcoming from the rest of the staff. Management systems at that time were dependent on hierarchical structures and authoritarian decision-making to contain racial conflict at staff level. There was little emphasis on the sharing of responsibility, hence the (white) principal was perceived as being solely accountable and responsible for the management, leadership and administration of the school.

A bureaucratic model suggests that the principal, deputy principal and heads of department, by nature of their position in the hierarchy, were responsible and accountable for all decisions that were made at the school. In contrast, a collegial model suggests that those who are in authority have a role to play in shared decision-making and shared accountability because of the specialist knowledge they ought to possess. Therefore all teachers now have the potential to become authorities/specialists in one area or another. The principal serves as the catalyst for areas in need of specialist management and leadership attention. This began to take root at RSS when a black principal was appointed during 1997.

A collegial management style at the school now advocates that leadership should be collaborative, transformational and based on shared objectives (Davies, 1983:46). The roles of the teaching staff and the principal have undergone a process of transformation in order to facilitate the concepts of shared leadership and decision-making associated with a collegial model (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994:5).

Teachers play participatory roles in the management of the school. The principal provides the support, preparation and guidance for teachers to fulfill such a role (Sergiovanni, 1991:16). Enabling or empowering teachers is an important aspect in establishing collegia-

lity, as the participation of the teaching staff forms the basis of a collegial management style. This did not happen under the former principal.

The empowerment of teachers at RSS to participate in decision-making did not mean that the principal adopted a *laissez-faire* leadership style. The enabling of teachers was directed and linked to the purposes, values and requirements of the school. Participation in decision-making processes by all members of staff was therefore guided by the shared values that formed part of the school's shared vision. At RSS the school's vision now also mirrors the shared values of the staff.

In a collegial management style, the principal does not prescribe what the teachers should be doing and then hold them accountable for their actions. Teachers are held accountable when they are included in the decision-making process in a meaningful and collegial manner. Collegiality therefore can be described as the way in which teachers and principals share common values, common goals, accountability and a sense of trust built on a foundation of congeniality (Sergiovanni, 1991:17). This indicates that collegiality can be associated with the demonstration of professional behaviour towards colleagues, based on attitudes and virtues that are evident in the school's shared vision (Ihara, 1998:89). The interviews conducted at RSS provide ample evidence that supports this belief.

The decisions that are made in a collegial way should embody the direction that the school has chosen. This does not imply that collegiality is a synonym for a directionless future because of an individual's right to choose any direction for the school. Individual rights may have their place in a collegial management model, but they should not be the focus of attention. Rather the emphasis should be on the responsibilities given to teachers to become an integral part of the management processes of the school that are guided by that school's shared vision (Sergiovanni, 1991:13). If there are teachers who have specific talents, they should be afforded the opportunity to manage a portfolio that is within their level of expertise regardless of their position in the hierarchy. In this way the school can broaden the scope of its curriculum and offer both learners and teachers the opportunity to produce optimum levels of performance.

In other words, the shared input at RSS represented what the teachers viewed as their collective thought rather than a collection of individual thoughts. The learners at the school experienced a similar effect. The teachers made absolutely sure that they were part of a team and that they could extract support from their peers and also offer it when the need arose.

A collegial style of management must be regarded as the more encouraged form of management for the new millennium as it is suggested that collegiality can assist in the improvement of school efficiency and effectiveness (Campbell, 1985:153). Decisions are made by following a process of shared discussion and consensus where all the parties involved could share, understand and accept the values of the school. It should be assumed therefore, that teachers possess a power, based on their knowledge and expertise rather than simply because of their position in the hierarchy (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994:3). Decisions that are imposed rather than reached through the process of consensus must be simply regarded as unethical and must therefore not receive the support from those who were not involved in the decision-making process. Imposed decisions may result in a school becoming less efficient and less effective (Williams, 1989:80).

A collegial management approach as a style of management must satisfy certain requirements before it can be termed collegial. Teachers have to work together in small groups as this will ensure that all participants are able to participate in the discussions. The group must have a coordinator or specialist on a rotational basis who leads the group in the proposal-making process and the members of the group must begin to acquire the necessary expertise by gaining experience through the process. The focus should be on improving the efficiency of the school by improving the value of education offered to the

students (Campbell, 1985:153). At RSS there is evidence that the teachers operate in small clusters or teams. The most easy to identify are the subject teams that exist. The principal has little or no role to play in these expert teams. He merely facilitates to ensure that the teams function efficiently.

Post-bureaucratic management thinking therefore encourages leaders to adopt a transformational leadership policy. Individual members of school teams should be encouraged to develop their own potential for expertise rather than simply accepting that they are to be controlled by those in positions of hierarchical power. Lofthouse (1994:6) summarises this rather succinctly:

The dominant principle of organisation has shifted from management in order to control, to leadership in order to bring about the best in people and respond quickly to change.

Recommendations and conclusion

The responses received from the teachers and the principal at RSS support the notion that collegiality does have a positive influence on learning, as demonstrated by the academic achievement of RSS grade twelve learners over the past three years. The numerous responses reflect a similar sentiment, that a collegial management style empowers all teachers and places them in a position of accountability. A far greater sense of ownership than the previous bureaucratic style permitted is created. This sense of ownership is further enhanced by the creation of a shared vision statement for the school. This aspect of a collegial management strategy is vital when creating a sense of shared commitment and common direction. Those teachers interviewed agreed that the vision was central to their sense of purpose and renewed motivation to teach effectively and this was directly linked to a collegial management style.

It is clear that a collegial management style can help extract the best from people and the most effective and efficient educational climate can be created at a school when collegiality is employed (Lofthouse, 1994:6). The collegial style of management shows that even at dysfunctional schools there are endless possibilities to improve teaching and learning through the introduction of the various components cited.

As this research suggests, a collegial management style positively influences academic achievement at matriculation level. The school principal's management skills are vital in terms of maintaining the commitment of teachers and the interest of learners. The principal needs to monitor problems such as overloading, sexism and boredom. S/he needs to rekindle the flame of passion, revisit the vision, listen to complaints and queries, keep ahead of change and develop a strong sense of trust. Shared decision-making strategies need to be reviewed so that the teachers do not feel that they are being left to their own devices. The principal and empowered teachers need to drive the collegial process at all times.

It is evident from the interviews conducted that the teachers at RSS are more comfortable in a collegial management system. They reveal that they feel more important as they are part of the management process and future scenario of the school. The interviews further revealed that a collegial management style gave teachers the incentive to go the extra mile and offer input at the school that was beyond the expected norm. This seemed to be largely due to the fact that the teachers were motivated by the role they played in drawing up the shared vision statement. This is a vital component of collegial management. The sense of involvement needs to be sustained in order for commitment from the teaching staff to be maintained, or as Stephen Covey (1992:143) points out:

Without involvement there is no commitment.

A further revelation is that the efficiency of the school's management is enhanced in a collegial climate. There is a more positive work ethic and teachers indicate that they feel more positive about things. The teachers at RSS openly suggested that the collegial management strategies introduced had a major role to play in their desire to work beyond the expected norm. They also claimed that the improved

matriculation results achieved were as a result of this extra effort because the learners were also motivated to work harder.

Related to the collegial strategies employed is a transformational leadership style. This is clearly indicated in the responses received, as the teachers became responsible and accountable for their actions. The principal motivated them to transform themselves into highly motivated individuals who created their own strategies to overcome the academic hurdles in order to achieve their shared vision.

The positive effect that collegiality has on the improvement of learning and improved teacher participation and commitment suggests that the effectiveness of a school need not be synonymous with privilege, nor should inefficiency be synonymous with disadvantaged. Collegiality allows teachers and school managers to share responsibilities through the development of a common purpose. But the positive influences that collegiality has on the teaching staff can be short lived. The collegial process needs to be sustained and effectively managed through ongoing transformational leadership and collegial management strategies being employed at the school.

The findings may be similar at many dysfunctional schools that demonstrate a negative work ethic, low teacher morale, a lack of professionalism and poor academic results at the end of Grade 12. However, the introduction of a collegial style of management can help transform the school into a more vibrant, happy and successful centre of learning.

Collegiality has a positive effect on learning at a historically disadvantaged secondary school such as RSS but continued influence is dependent upon the sustained effort of the principal and the stakeholders and continued emphasis on collegial strategies. If collegial strategies are not openly stressed, the positive effect on learning may decline. Effectiveness can easily slip if a collegial climate is not sustained. Teachers need to be constantly reminded of their role, their accountability and their shared vision and mission. Motivation needs to be sustained and focus maintained.

Collegiality is not simply a once off activity. New action plans need to be developed when new priorities for the school have been identified. The achievement of goals should not mean that these goals need not be redressed. The process is ongoing and achievements should not be allowed to regress into failures. The momentum needs to be sustained, therefore the principal and stakeholders need to ensure that action plans remain relevant, that the shared vision forms the driving force behind their action plans and that everybody remains focused and motivated in order to meet the challenges they set themselves. The evaluation and assessment of the action plans are essential if the teachers are to remain focussed on constant improvement.

The decline in teacher and learner absenteeism, greater participation in school related issues, the cross pollination of ideas, increased commitment of teachers and learners and ultimately improved matriculation results are indications of the positive effects of collegial management at RSS.

If these trends are to continue at the school, then the shared vision statement needs to maintain its priority. Strategic plans will need to be developed on an ongoing basis and both short and long term goals will need to be set. All goals will need to have action plans that are drawn up by the teachers so that all will know what is expected of each teacher and when deadlines need to be met.

The absence of collective attitudes and virtues and hence the absence of a meaningful shared vision statement could be the reasons for township schools having an apparent lack of direction and commitment at present. The lack of professionalism may be as a result of schools not having a clear sense of direction and a scarcity of commitment to a planned, shared objective. Poor physical resources may have nothing to do with the fact that the school lacks direction. It may have a negative effect on a school being able to achieve desired heights, but lack of funding need not defer the introduction of effective management strategies and shared visions. Once the school has adopted a shared vision statement it should then begin to put structures into place that will help to create a more effective and more efficient sys-

tem for the utilisation of human resources. Further structures will need to be developed that will assist in the transformation process. Structures will need to be developed that help create better discipline amongst staff and learners. Plans need to be implemented that assist learners to achieve their potential and that force learners and teachers to be present at school. Creative ways to fund vital resources need to be found. All these have a better chance of success if the teachers, learners and parents support the direction of the school and all have a role to play in the decision-making processes.

The shift to continuous collegiality requires commitment and hard work. The improvements, developments and achievements need to be maintained so that new heights can be reached and new levels of efficiency and commitment displayed. This study shows that collegiality has a positive effect on learning at a historically disadvantaged school. For the positive effects to be sustained, the collegial strategies need to be evolutionary and emancipatory.

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