

Quality Education News

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The Editor has the first word ...

Dear Supporter of Quality Education

By now the last election posters for the 2009 general election should have been taken down. Teachers have commented about the enormous interest shown by learners about the elections. Many classrooms across the country have had lively discussions. These debates have even spilled over into break time on the school grounds. Our young democracy is vibrant. Young people know that in not that many years from now, they'll be taking on the leadership roles in society.

When does one make learners aware of leadership issues? A few weeks ago I was at a caring and forward-thinking school where I noticed that in a Grade Three class, there was a wall display of the main political parties. The class had just had its very own election campaign. Before a single vote was cast for a classmate, these eight and nine-year olds grappled with this question, "What are the qualities of a good leader?"

Traditional schools see leadership residing solely in the hallowed and very quiet corridors of the administration block. The principal and the senior management team run the place. This small group tightly controls the entire school. All leadership decisions are made by them. There's virtually no input from anyone else.

In contrast, the quality school sees leadership quite differently. Input is

welcomed from everyone. Situational leadership encourages the 'best person for the task' to take centre stage. The person is not only given the task. That person is also given the authority and responsibility to ensure that the task is completed properly.

A legendary South African principal once had a meeting with new teachers to the staff. They were not only new to the school but also to the profession. He told them that one of his most important duties was to train them to be principals themselves one day. You might not agree with the principal's words to these young teachers in their very first week in the classroom. Yet he understood a core characteristic of a quality school. Leadership training is for everyone ... even if you're waiting to get your first salary cheque at the end of January!

All learners need to be given opportunities to take on leadership roles. In the process of acquiring the needed skills, they further develop those character traits of good leaders.

How do you define leadership? Definitions abound. There are hundreds of interpretations. This newsletter contains the definition of a North American writer. Read on to see his one-word definition.

The School Governing Body (SGB) elections for the 28000 public schools are

presently taking place. May our SGBs heed the words of our new President. The incoming administration wants to make quality education a top priority. Leadership that is selfless, hard-working and imbued with moral values will make it happen. You can vote on that!

Sincerely

Richard Hayward



This newsletter is edited by SAQI and distributed to those schools benefiting from their participation in the MySchool programme. MySchool acts as a conduit which raises and delivers essential funding for education and social development on a sustainable basis. This enables members of the community to participate in the future development of our nation.



WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

No matter what anybody else may tell you, remember that leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less.
John C Maxwell in The 21 irrefutable laws of leadership

You might not agree with Maxwell's one-word definition of leadership. Surely, one might argue, that the person with the title is the leader. Therefore in a school situation the leaders are those with the formal titles ... the principal, the deputies ... and so on. Yes, they do have the authority and the power. They are the formally appointed leaders. Yet these same people are not always able to influence as effectively as others.

Sometimes the most influential leaders in a school have no 'official' leadership title. These leaders have the ability to inspire learners to excel in their school work or on the sports field. Every formal leader knows that for new projects to be fully accepted in a staffroom, there also has to be 'buy in' from the informal leaders. Get these people on board and success is guaranteed; they're able to influence everyone else including the fence-sitters.

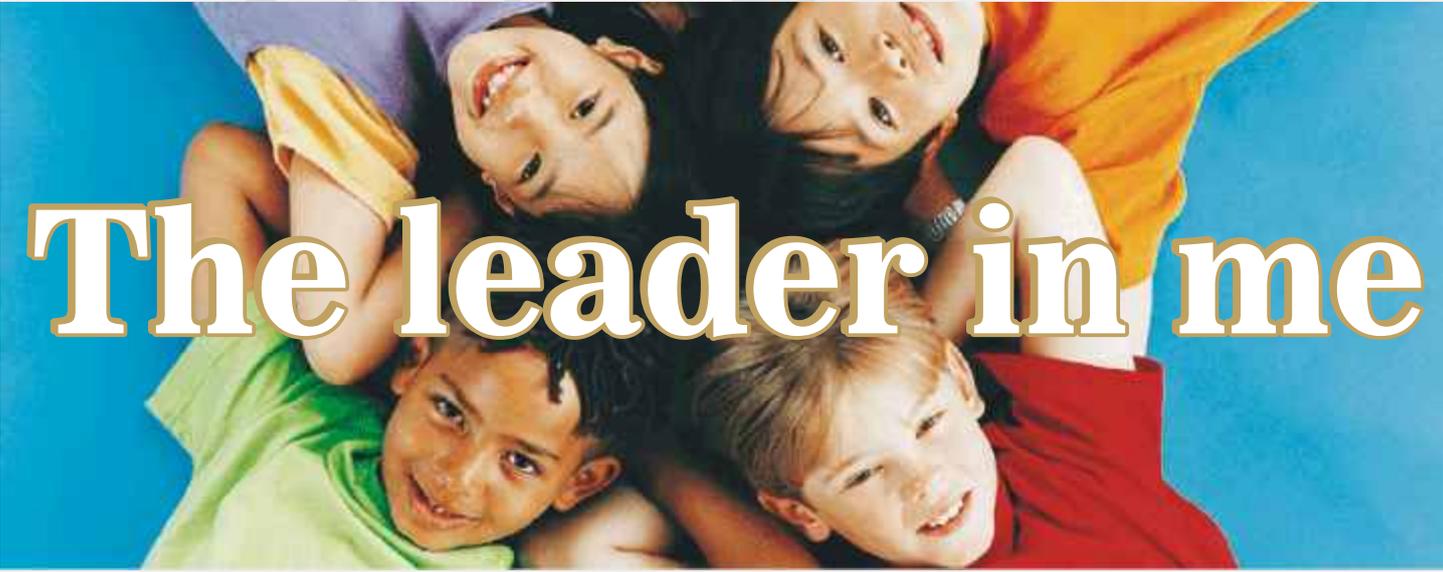
Not everyone can be in a position of formal leadership but everyone can be influential. Whatever one's position in the school, one is able to influence and thereby display leadership. Maxwell describes it as 360° leadership. He states that you are able to influence and therefore lead irrespective of your official title in the organisation.

Imagine a teacher in a non-promotion post (Post Level 1 in a public school). In the diagram below, the teacher influences her peers who are also in non-promotion posts. She can, for example, persuade them to try a new method for teaching a particular topic. Her subordinates are the learners in her classroom. She inspires and motivates them. 'Your boss' and 'Your boss's peers' in the diagram are the senior management team.

In Quality schools, formal leaders aren't threatened by subordinates who wish to influence them. In fact, they're open to being persuaded to see things differently. Influencers, whether learners, parents and staff members, are welcome to try and persuade others with their new ideas. Solid schools become splendid schools when they're willing to be influenced by great ideas ... from whatever source.



THE 360° LEADER
(Acknowledgement: John C Maxwell: The 360° Leader)



The leader in me

This is the title of a book that has recently arrived in South African bookshops. The book was written by the internationally known leadership authority, Steven Covey. If one were to ask someone to find the title in a bookstore, the person might be inclined to go the Business section. They would then look amongst shelves dealing with Leadership. It's not a bad guess as to where to find the book. An astute staff member at a local bookstore decided to read a bit more than the title. She read a few pages and put it somewhere completely different. The book was put in the child care section.

In *The leader in me* (published by Simon&Schuster, R224) Covey is looking very closely at what is happening to children in schools. He's challenging his readers and especially teachers to bring out the leadership potential of every child. He believes that within every child and every teacher in every school, true leadership qualities are to be found.

To back up his belief that every child can be taught leadership skills, Covey describes what is already being done in certain schools. AB Combs Elementary School in North Carolina, America was one such school. Covey makes the obvious point that not every student is going to be the CEO of a company or a prominent leader. Yet leadership principles taught at this American primary school helped the learners, "to take responsibility for their lives, to work with others more effectively, and to do the right things even when no one is looking."

True leadership is imbued with ethics and good character. However, do schools focus regrettably on what Covey describes as 'secondary greatness'? This is when there is a focus on positions or titles, scholastic or sporting achievements, awards and inter-school rankings. This form of greatness is achieved by a small group of achievers. The rest are reduced to be willing or reluctant followers.

As a more meaningful contrast, Covey describes 'primary greatness'. This form of greatness is open to everyone. It refers to a person's honesty, work ethic, treatment of others, creativity and initiative. Primary greatness describes who the person is every day of their lives as

against their passing achievements (for example, being a prefect for a year or the Netball Player of the Tournament on a sports day). Yet it's often through primary greatness that the achievements found in secondary greatness are made possible.

Quality schools believe in the leadership potential of all its people. They create opportunities for leadership roles ... no matter how young the leader.



The mice in council

For many years the mice had been living in constant dread of their enemy, the cat. It was decided to call a meeting to determine the best means of handling the situation. Many plans were discussed and rejected.

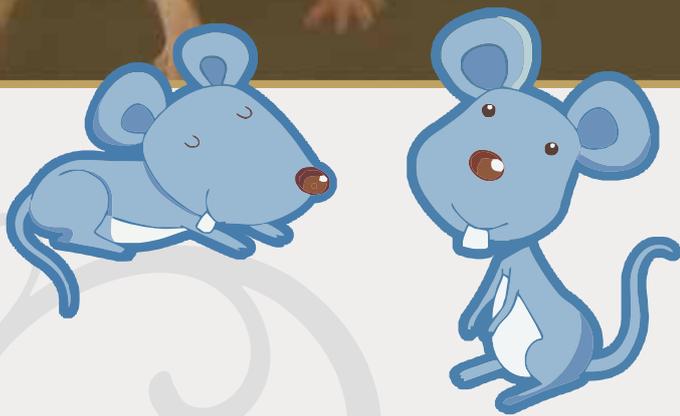
At last a young mouse got up. "I propose," said he, looking very important, "that a bell be hung around the cat's neck. Then whenever the cat approaches, we always shall have notice of her presence and so be able to escape."

The young mouse sat down amidst tremendous applause. The suggestion was put to a motion and passed almost unanimously.

But just then an old mouse, who had sat silent all the while, rose to his feet and said, "My friends, it takes a young mouse to think of a plan so ingenious and yet so simple. With a bell about the cat's neck to warn us, we shall all be safe. I have but one brief question to put to the supporters of the plan – which one of you is going to bell the cat?"

(Acknowledgement : Aesop's Fables Publishers : Grosset & Dunlop)

MORAL: Leaders listen to all the ideas and then use their common sense!



An email to the editor



Thank you again for the wonderful QEN. However, given your comments on teacher recruitment on page 2 (QEN 9), I thought you might be interested in the following:

There has been a steady and now in 2009 dramatic increase in the number of student teachers in South African universities. Universities across SA report that applications for entry into teaching studies this year increased by 50-100% in comparison to last year. Some examples of the situation at different institutions are:

University of Johannesburg	2008: 374	2009: 693
University of Pretoria	Reports a 182% increase	
WITS	Reports a 100% increase	
CUT	Reports that numbers more than doubled	
UKZN	About 3300 applications received in 2008 and 4300 in 2009.	

This increase is in part due to the increase in numbers passing Grade 12 in 2008 with passes that allow degree study and in strong response to the **Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme**. The bursary scheme was launched by the DoE in 2007. It provides full cost bursaries which cover tuition, accommodation, a book allowance and a stipend to successful applicants. The bursary is managed by the DoE and is financially administered by NSFAS and is available at all higher education institutions (HEIs) which offer initial teacher education programmes.

This bursary is awarded for studies in what are referred to as national priority areas where teachers are needed. These include mathematics, the sciences and the languages. In 2009, R400 million will be available for disbursement to initial teacher education students. About 9000 students will receive bursaries and approximately 2000 will graduate and so be ready for placement in teaching posts in 2010.

Penny Vinjevoid

Deputy Director General: Department of National Education

Such teacher training initiatives are significant steps towards improving education quality. Editor.

Visit either www.MySchool.co.za or www.saqi.co.za to download free copies of back numbers of QEN. Caxton and the CTP Group have generously sponsored Richard Hayward's *Making Quality Education happen: a how-to guide for every teacher book*. (There's a R30 packaging and registered posting fee).

SAQI does on school-site leadership and management programmes. Schools are expected to pay the basic costs while poor schools are sponsored. If you'd like more details, please contact: Vanessa du Toit on 012-349-5006 (vanessa@saqi.co.za) or Richard Hayward on 011-888-3262(rpdayward@yahoo.com)