

Quality Education News

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Issue 27

August 2013



A quarterly publication issued by the South African Quality Institute in the interest of promoting educational excellence.



Dear Supporter of Quality Education

It's seldom that when a soccer manager retires, the news makes world headlines. Yet that's what happened when Sir Alex Ferguson did so in May this year. In his twenty seven years as the Manchester United manager, he turned the club into the most famous and successful one in the world. When he first arrived at the Old Trafford grounds in 1986, United was a very different team. In the old English First Division league the team was fourth from the bottom. For 19 years the Red Devils hadn't won a single league title. The sharp barb was that United was a 'trophy-free zone'.



Sir Alex Ferguson, often considered the most famous and successful soccer manager in the modern era.

When Ferguson stepped down as manager in 2013, the trophy cabinet was brimful of brightly shining trophies won in the Premier, FA and UEFA competitions. Five years ago, United won the FIFA World Cup. Ferguson himself received many awards. Queen Elizabeth II knighted him. On ten occasions he was Premier League Manager of the Year and once the UEFA Manager of the Year. His fiercest critics had to admit that Man United was now a 'trophy-full zone.'

Does Sir Alex Ferguson have tips for Quality school leaders?

Ferguson's leadership and management style has been studied in business schools across the world. Harvard University has used him as a case study and invited him to lecture to their students. Whether one leads a soccer club, business or school, there are lessons to be learnt from Sir Alex. Obviously, certain of Ferguson's actions might be deserving of a yellow or red card but the big picture is one of leadership excellence.

What can people in education learn from Ferguson? Ten lessons are:

1 Live by values: Sport writers have commented on his 'old-fashioned' or 'traditional' set of values. Ferguson expected hard work from every player and support staff member. He was the first to arrive at match practices. The practices weren't a 'walk in the park'; Ferguson had iron-discipline and the training sessions were tough. He didn't tolerate drugging and alcohol abuse. Offending players were dismissed. A set of core values was the bedrock of how the players were to behave on and off the field.

Sir Alex stressed the need to be humble. No single player was allowed to rise above the needs of the team. The team's success was the first priority; the player's task was to make contributions to that success. The individual superstar cult was discouraged.

In a good school there is a set of values that apply to everyone. Breaches of the value code are dealt with firmly. Ego-trippers are put in their place as everyone works together to reach the vision and mission of the school.

2 Make courageous decisions: Carlos Quieroz, a former assistant United coach, made this remark about Ferguson:

You see the best out of Sir Alex not when United are winning but in our worst nightmares.

When certain players were moving towards their 'sell-by' date because of repeated mediocre match performances, Ferguson released them from the

club. There was anger from players and supporters. Yet he knew where he wanted to take the club. Strong leadership entails focussing on one's goals and bravely facing brutal negative criticism.

Not a day goes by in a school without the need to make tough decisions based on ethics and values. The challenge is to carry them out whether they are in the classroom, staffroom, principal's office or wherever there's a need to talk the tough truth.

3 Love what you're doing: If you've ever watched a Man United game, the TV cameras often gave you glimpses of gum-chewing Sir Alex. He would be totally involved with what was happening. His facial expressions told you what he thought of the players' performances as well as the referees' decisions. His enthusiasm and passion for the game were electric.



David Beckham joined the club as a teenager and affectionately saw Ferguson as a father figure.

That love of the game extended to any player who played under the United banner. He would attend practice sessions and games of the teenage teams. Those players were referred to as the, 'Ferguson Fledglings'. Some of those nurtured youngsters made it though to playing in the first team in front of 60,000 screaming supporters and millions of TV fans across the world.

For teachers it's to put into teaching what Sir Alex puts into leading a soccer club: enthusiasm, love and passion.

4 Communicate: In 2001 Ferguson was awarded



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the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award. Not everyone was an admirer of what he had to say on radio and TV. Yet anyone interested in the game wanted to hear his opinion. Sir Alex realised that he was the public face of United. When there were crises in the club, he stepped forward to face the barrage of criticism. He was a very good communicator with sound relations – on the main – with the media. He used interview times to stand his ground and get his point of view across.

There was often a cheeky sense of humour. When Manchester City started to become a threat to Manchester United in recent years, he quipped:

Sometimes you have a noisy neighbour. You cannot do anything about that. They will always be noisy. You just have to get on with your life, put your television on and turn it up a bit louder.



Hard work at practices leads to stunning soccer successes

Correct and timeous communication is a huge challenge in a school – the more families, the bigger the challenge. Not everyone will agree with decisions taken by school leaders. Good leaders speak up and speak out on issues. They use as many means of communication as possible such as circulars, interviews, meetings, newsletters, SMS messaging, website and the like. The whole school community is kept informed.

5 Be emotionally intelligent: Yes, Ferguson was a hard task master. Yet he was also a caring person. He was sensitive to the personal problems of players. Without any publicity, Ferguson would step in to help players cope with crises in their young lives. Visits to players in hospital and constant telephone contact were part of his routine. David Beckham affectionately described him as a father figure.

Most of the time, Ferguson was able to keep his emotions under control. He was an astute observer of body language. There was much more to every player than a number of football skills; there was a human being with a range of emotions. When players stepped out of line, he knew how to manage them. Some needed a quiet word on a one-to-one basis. Others needed a verbal blast and for it to be done in front of others too.

Critics have referred to his infamous tradition of the 'hairdryer treatment' given to players not pulling their weight. He would get nose-to-nose with a player and shout at them. This close unpleasant encounter seemed to make the players' hair fly back. As one sports writer wrote with dry humour: He could put the 'rant' into 'tyrant'.

Is there any skill more important for a teacher than to be emotionally intelligent?! Fortunately it's a skill that can be grown through the experience of interacting with others, staff development training and the

accumulated wisdom through the years!

6 Delegate: Today Manchester United isn't simply a famous football brand; it's a global brand. Hundreds of people are directly involved with the day-to-day management of the club. It's impossible for one person to manage this huge organisation.

Sir Alex's approach was one of 'macro-' rather than 'micro-' managing. He employed the right people and trusted them to get on with the job. That trust had been rewarded over the past 27 years. When that trust had occasionally been broken, Ferguson acted decisively and removed those who had let him down.

Even in coaching sessions, Sir Alex seldom intervened. His trusted assistant coaches ran the sessions with the occasional input from him.

Quality schools delegate responsibilities and tasks fairly across the whole learner, staff and parent community. Everyone has a valued part to play in the ongoing betterment of the school.

7 Build your support base: Who are the Manchester United supporters? They're the fans (millions of them, worldwide), the players and the shareholders of the club. There's no doubt that currently they are very satisfied customers. Why? Through the years the club has produced brilliant results for the fans; the players have been hugely rewarded both emotionally and financially for their efforts while shareholders have made sound profits from their investments.

For a club to be really successful it needs supporters. Sir Alex and his marketing department had created a massive loyalty base. You might like to Google the club website and be swept up in the hype! The team played friendly matches across the world so that fans could see their heroes in action.

Ferguson was appreciative of the support given to the club from everyone. Whether you were a ten-year old girl or the chairman of the Board, there was one common bonding factor ... you were a Man United fan. Both wore the supporters' jerseys and scarves; both watched their heroes live at Old Trafford or on TV.

A challenge for many schools today – especially high schools – is parental involvement. Quality schools have many functions that bring the whole into the school. If they can afford it, they have school memorabilia such as hats, kitbags, mugs, scarves and tracksuits. If the school has a website, it's a weekly 'must-read'.

8 Motivate: Not every game that the Red Devils played ended in victory. There were defeats and it was Ferguson's task to keep every player's commitment and gutsy efforts at top level. When the fickle fans were baying for a player's head, Sir Alex was the calming influence. If a player's performance needed to be criticised, he criticised in the dressing room and not in front of the world media. Ferguson showed respect for the player and guided him through the poor playing performance patch.

There was no doubt that when needed, he could motivate to the players to heroic efforts. Before one European Cup final, he motivated the team with these stirring but threatening words:

At the end of this game, the European Cup will only be six feet away from you ... and you'll

not be even able to touch it if we lose. Don't you dare come back in here without giving your all.

Excellent schools use a wide range of motivation techniques to bring out the best in everyone. However, they seldom use Sir Alex's 'hairdryer treatment' technique!

9 Adapt: As the one-liner goes, 'The only thing that is constant is change.' Ferguson accepted this reality. One example was his realisation in the early 2000s of the arrival of many non-English speaking foreigners into the team. He employed Carlos Quieroz as a coach realising that besides being an excellent coach, Quieroz could speak six languages. Sir Alex was always a student of the game ... trying new tactics and learning from what other great soccer coaches were doing.

Some of the changes weren't to his liking but he learnt that one needs to 'go with the flow'. Ferguson made these wry observations about certain changes in the game:

When somebody scored, everyone used to celebrate together. Today they run across to the crowd ... I don't know whether it's self-adulation or what. Tattoos, earrings – it's not my world – but I have to adjust to it!

'Continuous improvement' characterises every quality school. They're always adapting to better teaching methodologies and changes in society.

10 Know when to go: When Ferguson announced his retirement, there was grief (yes, grief!) amongst many fans across the world. They wondered what would happen to their beloved Manchester United. However, there was no protracted, dilly-dallying by him. He announced it in May and a few weeks later, he was gone. Ferguson intuitively realised that it was time to go even though the club was at the height of success.

No leader's performance graph goes forever upwards. New blood, new enthusiasm and new ideas are needed in any organisation. To put a South African spin on Ferguson's decision to retire, it was a case of, 'Go while they fondly say Farewell rather than Voertsak!'

For every teacher there are those times to consider whether or not to apply for a promotion appointment, move on to another school or as the delightful African idiom goes, 'time to eat your pension money!'

Like Ferguson, every quality teacher and senior management team member is a leader. A major difference between any two leaders is their level of influence. So, for example, one leader might positively influence a single class or sports team, the other a whole staffroom and school community. Sir Alex Ferguson's leadership and management style has relevance to everyone committed to Quality Education.

Sincerely

Richard Hayward

In the last issue of QEN there was a discussion on how to deal with school indiscipline. Often indiscipline is dealt with using retributive justice (that is, make the culprit 'suffer'). Another way is using restorative justice. The process aims to restore relationships to the right level between the culprit and those adversely affected. This article deals with an actual school bullying incident.

Finding justice

Mark Potterton

The parents were just arriving with their children to write the scholarship exams. The next thing a matric boy had a junior boy in a headlock and was shouting: "I'll kill you, I'll kill you!" Some spectators were gathering and the school secretary stepped in to stop the fight. The matric boy immediately came to me to tell me that he had been in a fight. He explained that the other boy had called him names and that in the fight had threatened him with a gang.

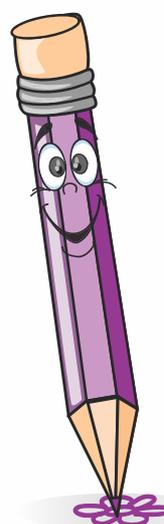
Disciplinary hearings were convened and the stories were told again. Both boys admitted being in a fight and both boys showed remorse. Both boys had had disciplinary taken against them earlier in the year; both had briefly been suspended and were given detentions.

During the hearings I had realised that both boys had similar family circumstances. Each was an orphan and had lost both parents. Before the altercation in the quad they had not really met. As part of the sanction in the hearing, I had stated that they would have to meet and talk. I was keen to talk through the violent incident with them and for them to understand what it meant for the school community. In the meeting I also explained how similar their personal circumstances were, and tried to highlight the consequences of their actions. During the hearing I was also keen to explain how prevalent violence was in South Africa and how many people are injured or killed because of this.

The mediation meeting took place over a lunch. Conversation was stilted at first. But slowly the ice was broken. Many of the arguments raised during the hearing surfaced again. I had to purposely steer the conversation in the way I wanted it to go. I had to say: "Do you realise that Kagiso's parents are deceased ... Perhaps you could act as a mentor for Siphon ..." I admit that I struggled a little for each of them to reach some kind of attitude of conciliation. However, through the process I was able to explore the feelings of hurt, shame and anger. I realised that these two boys carried a lot of baggage that a conversation over a hamburger would never put right quickly.

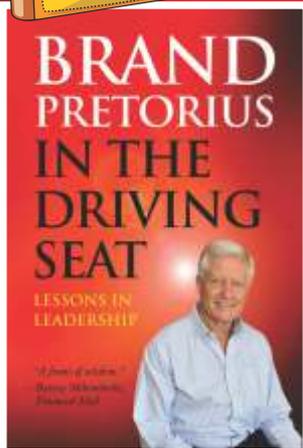
Restorative justice is a process of putting things right – restoring a relationship that has broken down. It takes time to tell your story, to listen, to find a solution. Like other approaches to dealing with disciplinary issues in a school, it can be successful yet it can fail. But I am convinced that it can work.

Mark Potterton is principal of Holy Family College, Johannesburg. Presently he is putting the finishing touches to his doctoral thesis which has researched school bullying and how to create caring organisational climates.





Riding the talk of leadership



Brand Pretorius:
**In the driving seat:
lessons in leadership.**
Tafelberg: Cape Town
CNA price: R195
ISBN 9 7806224 053415

You might remember the radio and television advertisements with the catchy jingle: 'Everything keeps going right ... Toyota'. Brand Pretorius was marketing manager at Toyota and he helped make the jingle stick in the minds of millions of South Africans. Toyota became the best known and top car selling brand in the country. In 2011 he retired after a distinguished career in executive leadership positions in companies such as Bidvest, McCarthy and Toyota. The book is a reflective memoir of what leadership entails.

The book has two sections. In the first section, Brand describes his career in the business world. The back-stabbing, blood-letting and

politics are recounted. It makes for interesting reading but isn't really relevant reading for the teaching world.

It's the second section titled, 'A roadmap for leadership' which is really relevant to the teaching profession. Whether we are a first year teacher or holding a top position in the 222 Struben Street, Pretoria head office of the Department of Basic Education, the characteristics for effective leadership are identical. There should be no argument with Brand's assertion of the need for attributes such as basic, emotional and moral intelligences. Brand adds in continuous learning, discipline, hardiness, humility, integrity and a positive attitude as 'must-haves' too.

There are chapters dealing with leadership in action and what Brand has learnt from his failures and successes. He also explains why he believes in Servant Leadership and its daily application. For anyone wanting to grow leadership attitudes and skills, this book is a very sound buy. It's an easy read but with a firm grasp of leadership theory. Brand has ridden the leadership road with great success and has mapped out the route for leaders of today.



Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD)

Next year sees the start of the CPTD programme initiated by the South African Council for Educators (SACE). The first group that will be involved in the programme to accumulate Professional Development points are principals and deputies. SAQI has one accredited programme titled **Introduction to Total Quality Education**. It carries 10 professional development points.

For details of the SACE range of education leadership and management programmes, please contact the presenter, Richard Hayward. Poor schools are sponsored and courses are done across South Africa. His contact details are rpdhayward@yahoo.com or 011-888-3262.

The second edition



Five years ago Caxton and CTP Printers very generously sponsored the first edition of Richard Hayward's, **Making Quality Education happen: a 'how-to' guide for every teacher**. They've done it again for the 2013 expanded second edition.

Doomsayers wail that South African education in the early 21st century is in shambles. Yes, there are appalling schools but there are excellent ones too. The book discusses the five core pillars found in every Quality school. It shows how any school – whether poor or rich, private or public, rural or urban – can be a place of educational excellence. Outstanding schools use the practices and principles described in the book.

If you would like a copy, please contact the author (rpdhayward@yahoo.com or 011-888-3262). The fully inclusive cost is R40 which includes packaging and registered posting.

Making Quality Education happen:
a 'how-to' guide for every teacher
(Second edition)



Richard Hayward