

Quality Education News

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

A word or two from the Editor

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Dear Supporter of Quality Education

Nearly every decent bookshop has magazines and books on Leadership. People are fascinated by the topic. Many school senior management team members will have their favourite authors. A smaller number of these leaders are able to turn what they read into reality in their schools.

This issue of QEN will touch on the second of the five pillars of a Quality school... Leadership. No two schools are alike. Yet every quality school has similar Leadership styles.

Quality leadership theory questions the traditional hierarchy of power and leadership of a school. School leadership does not reside only in the principal's office. Authority and responsibility are spread throughout the school. Leadership roles are given in different situations to colleagues, parents and learners. Different situations require different leaders.

Stress levels for staff at South African schools are huge. Senior management often have added demands made on their time and skills. They can get on to a 'treadmill addiction' where school issues are all-absorbing and time-consuming. Effective leadership involves a healthy balance between a life inside and outside the school. Leaders believe that using the word 'no' to unreasonable demands of their time is part of the management of an outstanding school.

Enjoy this issue of QEN. Your comments and observations around Quality issues are warmly welcome.

Sincerely

Richard Hayward

You must be the change that you want to see in the world.

It is the quality of our work which will please God and not the quantity.

The future depends on what we do in the present.

*Mahatma Gandhi
1869-1948*

Spreading Quality

SAQI conducts school presentations and workshops. These programmes are designed to the specific requirements of a school. Recently the education team visited Kasturba Gandhi Primary School in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The school is situated in an informal settlement and named after Mahatma Gandhi's wife. School fees for those families that can afford them are R50 per child per year. The staff and SAQI shared ideas on Quality principles and how they could be used in a school. There was awareness that much good quality can be achieved with little financial resources.

Schools that are interested in details about the workshops can contact Kgaugelo Taukobong (Tel: 012-394-3411) or Richard Hayward (011-888-3262) Their email addresses are kgaugelo@saqi.co.za and rpdhayward@yahoo.com



This newsletter is edited by SAQI and distributed by Woolworths to schools nominated to benefit from their unique MY SCHOOL project. The project aims at improving the quality of learning in South Africa through a network of partners and supporters.



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What is the ideal leadership style?

There is no single ideal leadership style. Rather, the quality-focused school uses a range of styles. Most good schools use a mixture of authoritative (not authoritarian!) and democratic leadership styles. They also allow for a degree of *laissez-faire* or *free-rein*. School management leaves the staff members to do things their way. They even welcome a little bit of idiosyncrasy in their vibrant schools!

Yet there are a number of distinctive leadership styles to be found in the quality school. Eight of the more familiar styles are briefly outlined.

1 Assertive leadership

Learners and teachers are focussed on the learning process. Is meaningful teaching and learning happening in all areas of the school? Assertive leadership insists on hard work in a happy working environment so as to achieve goals.

The quality school gives 'value for money'. Parents pay taxes and school fees. They want a good return on their money. Their children are to be given a sound education and guided towards achieving full personal potential.

2 Breakthrough/maverick leadership

This leadership style does not unquestioningly accept everything that happens in a school. When needed, the person raises concerns and makes suggestions. Issues are raised at Governing Body, Principals' and Teacher Union meetings. A breakthrough leader knows that true leadership is not a popularity contest. Such a leader manages criticism and cynicism from people who disagree.

There is a maverick element to this leadership style. The leader has an entrepreneurial spirit. New challenges and uncharted waters excite the leader. The school goes on voyages of dynamic new educational experiences.

3 Distributed/shared leadership

Too often in a school, tasks are loaded on to the shoulders of a few willing staff members. 'The willing horse flogged to death' scenario is avoided in a quality school. Tasks are shared fairly amongst the staff. Team-work helps ensure that there is a distribution of duties and responsibilities.

4 Emotionally intelligent leadership

Teachers interact with emotionally immature people...of all ages! Yet teachers are expected to be emotionally mature in their interactions with others. The emotionally intelligent leader displays empathy, cheerfulness, tact, resilience, perseverance and kindness.

Inter-personal conflict happens in every school. Parents have differences with teachers on discipline issues; learners and teachers clash over what is a reasonable workload. The areas of possible negative conflict are huge. Quality schools have effective conflict-resolution strategies to deal with such realities. Emotional fallout is reduced to a minimum.

5 Ethical leadership

This leadership style is linked to the first pillar of the quality school. It is the pillar of Values. All actions and decisions are guided by a moral code. The school reflects values such as compassion, equality, honesty, peace and respect.

6 Invitational leadership

There are two aspects to invitational leadership. Firstly, whether the school happens to be a state or a private one, it is part of the community. Therefore, it welcomes the local community. Visitors sense the invitational spirit. Where the school can make contributions to the betterment of society, it does so.

Secondly, invitational leadership invites new ideas and viewpoints. The school is in a state of never-ending improvement. Suggestions and recommendations are most welcome. No ideas are rejected for consideration because they are deemed too zany or 'off the wall'.

7 Servant leadership

Mother Teresa of Calcutta epitomises servant leadership. Even at the height of her fame as the leader of the Missionaries of Charity, she carried on being a servant every day to the 'poorest of the poor'.

Schools have leadership pyramids. In the traditional school, the principal is at the top. Immediately below are the deputies and heads of department. Below them are the Post Level 1 teachers and finally the learners. Certain schools treat people according to their place in the pyramid 'pecking order'.

In the quality-driven school, the pyramid is inverted. The principal is at the bottom. The formally appointed leader and staff are of service to the children. They know that, "A real leader shows true greatness by bending down to help the smallest child".

8 Situational leadership

Different situations require different leaders. It is incorrect to expect the senior management team to be totally knowledgeable about every aspect of the school. The first-year teacher with her initial degree often is more up-to-date on the latest teaching methodologies. How many schools turn to that person for advice?!

School mission statements talk of developing the whole child. Different staff members are best suited to lead the staff in developing the various dimensions (for example: academic, cultural, emotional, sporting and spiritual) of every learner. With the leadership role, the leader needs to be given two things. The leader needs to be given the authority which might include telling the principal what to do (very politely!). Also, the leader takes on the responsibility of seeing a project through to successful completion.

Whatever styles of leadership are used, Dunford's comment in *School leadership* rings true:

ultimately, style is less important than impact, effectiveness and fitness for purpose...All effective leaders use a range of styles on a regular basis, seeking to fit each to the purpose of the activity.

World Quality Day ~ Thursday, 8 November 2007

Organisations world-wide and a growing number of schools celebrate World Quality Day. In a school it's a chance to focus on the Quality message. Young people intuitively know the meaning of Quality. They prefer certain cellphones, clothes and sports gear over others. Learners also have a sense of the traits of a quality person...whether it be a classmate, teacher or a role model in their personal lives.

A school could celebrate the day with entrance foyer and classroom displays. Green and white balloons (the official SAQI colours) could be put alongside posters that spread the Quality message. The learners might like to choose a Quality Kid of the Class. Individual learners might like to design an A4-sized poster which includes a photo of themselves. The poster contains the incomplete sentence, 'I'm a Quality Kid because...' A poster activity that helps build the school 'brand' and enhances loyalty is 'Our school is a Quality school because...'

A bit of brainstorming by learners and staff will get wonderful ideas to celebrate World Quality Day. One most positive side-effect of this celebration is a growing awareness of core values that are crucial to the Quality person and school.

How to join SAQI

School membership of the South African Quality Institute is open to registered nursery, primary and secondary institutions. Members may use the SAQI logo on school documents. A membership certificate suitable for framing is issued to schools. SAQI has school leadership and management material available on its website. The Institute does presentations and facilitative workshops.

The current membership fee is R425 per year. Further information can be obtained at www.saqi.co.za. Alternatively, speak to Mr Kgaugelo Taukobong at SAQI on 012-394-3400.

Young leaders for our world

Katherine Harding of Pretoria High School for Girls was privileged to attend a summer youth leadership conference in the USA. The conference opened up a refreshing new perspective on global leadership that embraces the youth of today for our world of tomorrow.



Katherine Harding

The concept of leadership, particularly global leadership, is one that I have come to find, must be experienced to be fully understood. I do not, by any means, profess to be fundi on the subject, but a recent journey to an American leadership course in South Carolina, has definitely given me a little more insight into the concept that I thought I knew so well. The trip came about through my school linking up to a videoconference network with a high school in the USA.

In June of this year, I was fortunate enough to be selected as one of two students from Pretoria High School for Girls to be accompanied by one of our teachers to the 2007 Youth Leadership Summer Institute in South Carolina, USA. This idea evoked within me images of children sitting eagerly around a table solving world hunger and human rights violations. When a group of 50 high school students gathered at the University of South Carolina Upstate, however, I expected

something remarkably different. The crowd I saw before me was not an assembly of formidable intellectuals, which I had imagined, but a group of ordinary teens. I was not sure, at that moment, whether we would be solving any problems at all in the following week.

During that week, however, I was soon to discover that it was the fact that we were all different, that encouraged global leadership. Each of the students, because of their different backgrounds, had a different solution to the problems with which we were confronted. I have come to find that as a 17-year-old girl, I am exactly the right age to become involved in global leadership, as we all were. It is the kind of leadership, which requires youth and inexperience as its chief qualities, because only with those two, can it be fully experienced. Global leadership requires more than a basic knowledge of your own country or some fairly good people skills; it requires a genuine interest in the global community, in politics, in diplomacy. We did not come bringing preconceived ideas about economics, politics and trade to the table. We simply brought our open minds and a genuine interest in the world and the problems that it faces. I believe that our naivety in regard to global politics aided everyone in getting the job done and the problem solved.

After a week of combating HIV/AIDS, hunger and poverty, I was filled with new hope for the future of international politics. I believe that a new breed of leaders is emerging; leaders who lead not only their own people, but also the people of the world. When young adults of different backgrounds, cultures and opinions come together to find a solution, we can see true leadership. It is leadership of a global kind, because it involves the global community. It requires reaching further than your own borders by leading the global community, as is the duty of the youth to do.

As a young leader, Katherine's insightful article gives us hope for the future of our world.