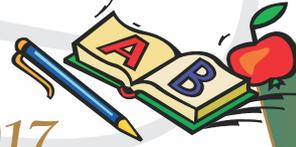


Quality Education News

Tel: 012-349-5006 ♦ Fax: 012-349-1232 ♦ www.saqi.co.za

Issue 41

February 2017



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



Dear Supporter of Quality Education

If you're a teacher don't downplay the truth of the above title! Think about it. When you walk into a classroom you have the power. It's what can be called 'positional power'. As a teacher you have been given authority over children. You have the legal right to expect children to obey reasonable requests. When your instructions aren't obeyed, you're entitled to take corrective disciplinary action.

If you're in a senior management position at your school or anywhere in the education system, even more positional power is vested in you. The more power one has, the more one is likely to have influence over others. The classroom teacher might inform the children of a rule that has to be obeyed. Thirty or forty children hopefully comply. Compare that to the principal talking to a school of 800 learners. The instructions given from the stage lectern should have an impact on expected behaviour on a much larger audience.

Unfortunately, not all power is used for the common good. History is awash with those who've swept into power and abused their power. Those leaders use their positions to fill their egotistical wants. Evil leaders such as Idi Amin, Muammar al-Gaddafi, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin are deceased. Yet there are leaders today who copy them. Their faces are seen daily on our TV screens.

In the midst of such negative leadership, there is a Chinese proverb that gives hope:

Those who seek power for personal ends eventually run afoul of popular opinion.

Power shows itself in two major ways: for the good of others or for the meeting of selfish personal needs. The two ways display different social behaviours by the leaders.

Using power for greater good of others	Using power for selfish reasons
Enthusiasm: reach out to others	Avoid contact with others
Kindness: cooperate, give, share	Exploit others for personal gain
Focus: Focus on shared goals, principles	Neglect shared goals and principles
Calmness: Instil calm, perspective	Be complaining, be defensive
Openness: Open to ideas and feelings of others	Disregard feelings and ideas of others

Power behaviour: greater good vs selfish personal reasons

(Adapted acknowledgement: Keltner D 2016: *The power paradox*, London: Allen Lane, page 48.)

In your own childhood, you might have seen both types of power being used by teachers. There were the affirming teachers who brought out the best in you and others. Such teachers helped to make school days – at least in their particular classes – happy experiences.

Contrast that with the teachers who abused power. They bullied learners emotionally with their verbal put-downs and public humiliations. Sometimes that abusive power was physical in the form of beatings and to state it simply – assault. Their victims recoil from those memories and some have even carried the scars into adult life.

Perhaps the most famous quote about the use of power is Lord Acton's pithy observation, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." As educators, we should be mindful of our immense power over young people. Jean de la Fontaine has these wise words for the powerful:

Any one entrusted with power will abuse it if not also animated with the love of truth and virtue, no matter whether he be a prince, or one of the people.

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.



Headmasters have powers at their disposal with which Prime Ministers have never yet been invested.
Winston Churchill



Using your power

Last year saw many election and referendum campaigns across the world. The UK voted on Brexit; the USA chose Donald Trump as their new president. Here in South Africa we had our provincial and national elections. All those election hopefuls were vying for our votes. Their level of influence – or lack of it – determined the eventual winners and 'also rans'.

Which of these eight types of power outlined below do you personally use?

1 Association

Power grows through our association with significant others. There's truth in the importance of 'name-dropping' for those seeking to get more power. Get others to know that you know folk who are powerful. Those already in powerful positions might be inclined to look twice at someone they might know from school or student days.

2 Coercion

There are those schools and societies where power is maintained through fear. Everyone obeys because of the threat of bullying. That bullying may be physical such as being hit. Yet it can be verbal in manner; those in power might use ridicule and humiliation. Occasionally, however, coercion can be good. The learner who swears might benefit from knowing the consequences of carrying on using such language.

3 Expertise

When a computer goes down, not everyone knows what needs to be done to reboot it. The expert is called in. That person has specialised knowledge and we defer to their recommendations. In a school there are a number of specialists in different areas of the curriculum. Being recognised as experts give those persons power in their fields.

4 Information

Linked to expertise power is informational power. This is the power that a person has because of their role in the school. An example would be the guidance teacher or school psychologist. That staff member would normally know more about the home background of an individual child than the school principal. By contrast, the principal might have a greater grasp of labour legislation regarding employment than the teacher.

5 Legitimacy

All organisations have a hierarchy. There are those in higher positions than others. Subordinates are expected to carry out lawful instructions from those in authority. As the teacher expects the children in the class to comply with reasonable instructions, the same in turn is expected of the teacher by senior management. Chaos follows if legitimate power is defied.

6 Politics

No organisation is politics-free. A strong leader works hard at ensuring that there isn't an 'in-crowd' versus an 'out-crowd' on the staff. Everyone deserves a fair deal. In the real world, by being competent doesn't always mean that you will be treated with fairness. The best candidate doesn't always get the job. Those seeking power need to understand this tough political reality. Take action to assert your rights.

7 Respect

Nelson Mandela was an excellent example of this type of power. Children and adults of all cultures across the world were drawn to his charismatic personality. His natural warmth, honesty and integrity were of universal appeal. Noble character is at the core.

8 Reward

Teachers often use this form of power. They motivate children to do their best by dangling carrots such as awards, certificates, high marks and leadership positions. Sports coaches also entice youngster to perform with promises of visits to places like KFC or McDonalds if games are won. At staff level the carrots take the form of promotions and nominations for teaching awards.

If we want to improve our influence and power, we need to accept that it's a DIY exercise. You have to develop your own influence and power. Seldom do others publicly acknowledge and give you the due reward for your abilities.





Stopping power abuse

The teacher who uses power well, creates a happy and high-achieving class – getting on well with the learners who themselves get on well with each other. The converse applies when the power is abusive. Yes, the children might do well in tests and exams but a climate of fear is in the air.

Effective and ethical leaders are guided by Power Principles such as:

- **Have a set of values**

Maureen Duffy in *Improve organisational well-being and prevent work place abuse* regards values as the first guiding principle. It should be at the centre of the workplace. According to her, the three core values are: empathy, respect and ethical communication.

Empathy is the lens through which the person views others with insight and sensitivity. Empathy helps identify what needs to be done to have meaningful and – if needed – mutually successful resolution of conflict. Respect is simply the way that we treat each other, acknowledge their presence and recognise the contributions of others.

Ethical communication is the bringing together of empathy and respect. It's the way that we talk to them when they're present and very significantly, when they're absent. There's no place for backstabbing, gossiping and ignoring.

- **Be a 'continuous improvement' school**

Power can be used in a most negative way in dealing with change management. There are those on the one extreme who are, 'raring to go right now' to bring about change and there those on the other extreme. These reactionaries stonewall any change defiantly proclaiming, 'only over my dead body'. Those in positions of power need to adroitly bring about what needs to be changed for improvement but in a manner that avoids verbal and even occasionally, physical bloodbaths.

If a school accepts that every quality school is in a process of ever-evolving continuous improvement, there would be a greater willingness to listen to the viewpoints of others. Such a mind frame will help the school to be 'action-oriented' and not frozen in the past.

- **End conflict aversion**

Too often we're reluctant to bring up a topic that is contentious. We want to have eternal peace in the classroom and the staffroom. Everyone steps carefully around the tough issues – the elephants in the room. By avoiding the issues, we encourage character assassination and rumour mongering.

Rather bring out into the open the tough issue. Yes, there could be strong disagreements but it can still be civil (remember ethical communication) and professional.

- **Loosen the reins of control**

Those in powerful positions display their real power by giving it away. It's a sign of personal confidence as well as faith in the ability of those that they lead. They distribute their power. Yet those same leaders keep a gentle hand on the tiller to guide others gently back on course if need be.

- **Set a fair workload**

A few months ago a young Japanese businessman committed suicide by jumping off the building where he worked. In the inquest it was found that he had worked intolerably long hours. The chief executive of the company accordingly resigned.

The powerful need to be sensitive to the work load given to subordinates. This applies not only amongst staff members but also in the teacher-learner relationship. There should be a reasonable expectation of the amount of work expected but also that the work is fairly allocated.

- **Intervene and discipline**

No classroom or staffroom is totally free of the possibility of abuse.

There's a need to be sensitive to the first signs of abusive power. Intervene promptly and decisively. Let the power abuser know that such behaviour is alien to the school culture. Disciplinary action taken could be a verbal or written warning. In extreme cases there could be suspension, termination and legal follow-through.

It's often quoted that evil happens when good people do nothing. The same applies to abuse. If we do nothing when we see abusive power, it grows. Should we speak out against the first signs of abuse, this malignant weed can be almost (but never entirely!) rooted out.

References

- Altman, L 2011. *8 Ways to decrease organisational fear*, <https://www.linkedin.com>
- Duffy, M 2014. *Improve organisational well-being and prevent workplace abuse*. <http://blog.oup.com>
- Ferguson, G undated. *How to reduce the misuse of power in a workplace*. smallbusiness.chron.com



“He acts as if he thinks abusing his power is part of his annual bonus.”

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL TEACHER DEVELOPMENT (CPTD)



SACE (South African Council for Educators) has a mandatory CPTD initiative for all registered teachers applicable to every school. Courses endorsed by SACE earn Professional Development (PD) points.

Under the aegis of SAQI, Richard Hayward does SACE-endorsed courses. The SACE-endorsed activities are:

1 An introduction to Total Quality Education (TQE)

Duration: 6 hours PD points: 10

The workshop is an adaptation of the best principles and practices found in the business, industrial and other professional sectors. The TQE model identifies five core pillars that are common to Quality schools. The course shows the application of each pillar within a school.

2 Challenges of leadership in a Quality School

Duration: 3 hours PD points: 10

In this workshop there is a study of different leadership styles as well as major challenges that confront most leaders. The management of change, complaints and maintaining sound relationships with the School Governing Body will also receive attention.

3 Conflicts occur in every school - let's resolve them!

Duration: 2 hours PD points: 15

No school is totally conflict-free. Conflict happens within every group and between groups of children, parents and staff. Yet quality schools manage to deal with conflict in ways that usually have peaceful outcomes. The workshop compares constructive vs destructive behaviour patterns in responding to conflict. Practical guidelines on constructive conflict resolution skills are discussed.

4 Growing Madiba's values in our schools

Duration: 1 hour PD points: 5

Nelson Mandela's core values are timeless. The workshop takes a brief historical and nostalgic look at how he "walked the talk" of true values. There's a sharing of ideas on how we can make such values vibrantly alive every day in our own classroom and school.

5 Influential leadership levels and types

Duration: 2 hours PD points: 5

An ability to adapt leadership styles to influence learner and staff behaviour will be discussed. The programme looks at seven levels of influence. There will be an analysis of the requisite skills and values of effective influencers.

6 Is there a bully on your staff?

Duration: 2 hours PD points: 5

Much attention is rightly given to dealing with bullying amongst learners. However, what about the bullying that occurs amongst staff members? Just as there isn't a school at learner-level that isn't entirely free of bullying, the same applies amongst the staff too. The programme discusses various types of staff bullying and how to resolve them.

7 "Klagtes! Complaints! How may we help you?"

Duration: 2 hours PD points: 10

The very best and the very worst of schools have to deal with complaints and difficult parents! In the Quality school complaints are seen as growth opportunities. The presentation looks at how Quality schools use a range of techniques to reduce complaints to a minimum.

8 "Should I leave teaching? I'm so demotivated?"

Duration: 2 hours PD points: 5

There are teachers who have stayed in the profession for thirty or forty years ... and happily too! Ten self-motivation strategies used by happy and live-wire teachers are shared. The workshop will put the ENO-effervescence back into your teaching!

9 Stop teacher stress completely well almost completely!

Duration: 2 hours PD points: 5

Being a teacher is being a member of the third most stressful profession in the world. Yet there are millions of teachers who survive a lifetime in the profession with a smile. Practical tips learnt from relatively stress-free teachers are shared in the programme.

10 "The kids are hell. What can I do?"

Duration: 2 hours PD points: 5

There's no such thing as the class that is always perfectly well-behaved class unless it's under a reign of terror! However, there thousands of teachers who are able to maintain have happy, hard-working classes. Their simple and most effective discipline strategies are discussed.

11 Why change? Everything looks OK!

Duration: 2 hours PD points: 5

The one-liner states that there are two things that we can be certain of taxation and death. Add a third. That's "change"! The workshop discusses the main reasons why there's often a reluctance to change and what can be done to shift such attitudes. There's also a discussion on the process to follow in bringing about change.

Dr Richard Hayward, the course presenter, has been in leadership positions for 38 years - 21 of them in headship posts.

On completion of any of the above programmes, the names of the attendees are forwarded to SACE. If you would like more details, please contact Richard on rpdhayward@yahoo.com or 011-888-3262. Poor schools are sponsored.



Quality Education News BACK NUMBERS

Free downloads of back numbers of Quality Education News are available at either www.saqi.co.za (on the home page click on Quality Education) or www.MySchool.co.za (click on Beneficiaries).