

## Models of educational management

### Models of educational leadership and management

#### Managerial leadership

Leithwood et al. (1999:14) define this model as:

**Managerial leadership assumes that the focus of leaders ought to be on functions, tasks and behaviors and that if these functions are carried out competently the work of others in the organization will be facilitated.** Most approaches to managerial leadership also assume that the behaviour of organizational members is largely rational. Authority and influence are allocated to formal positions in proportion to the status of those positions in the organizational hierarchy.

This definition is remarkably close to that given for ‘formal models’ in the author’s trilogy of books on this topic (Bush, 1986; 1995; 2003).

Caldwell argues that managers and leaders of self-managing schools must be able to develop and implement a cyclical process involving seven managerial functions:

- goal setting;
- needs identification;
- priority-setting;
- planning;
- budgeting;
- implementing; and
- evaluating.

**It is significant to note that this type of leadership does not include the concept of vision, which is central to most leadership models.** Managerial leadership is focused on managing existing activities successfully rather than visioning a better future for the school. This approach is very suitable for school leaders working in centralized systems as it prioritizes the efficient implementation of external imperatives, notably those prescribed by higher levels within the bureaucratic hierarchy.

Bureaucracy, and by implication managerial leadership, is the preferred model for many education systems, including Apartheid South Africa (Sebakwane, 1997). One example of managerial leadership is ‘scientific management’ (Taylor, 1911). This dated model still ‘predominates in the writing on education management in South Africa’ (McLennan & Thurlow, 2003:7-9). In a review of other literature,

they say that this approach is associated with ‘authoritarian, hierarchical and inaccessible management styles’ and that the principal’s authority is perceived to be ‘god-given’ and ‘juridical’. This model can be regarded as the starting point for the study and practice of educational management, in South Africa, Europe, and North America.

Sebakwane (1997:394), based on research conducted in the 1980s, claims that scientific management was transferred from industrial corporations to South African black schools ‘to bring control over teachers and students at a time when the system of education of blacks was characterized by massive student and teacher protests’. This evidence is consistent with the model described by McLennan & Thurlow (2003).

Despite its association with the previous dispensation, managerial leadership remains important for 21st century South Africa. As noted above, achieving functional schools is an essential requirement if learning is to take place. Effectiveness requires calm and orderly schools and classrooms. **Managerial leadership has certain advantages, notably for bureaucratic systems, but there are difficulties in applying it too enthusiastically to schools and colleges because of the professional role of teachers.** If principals and educators do not ‘own’ innovations but are simply required to implement externally imposed changes, they are likely to do so without enthusiasm, leading to possible failure (Bush, 2003:46).

Transformational leadership

Bush (2003) links three leadership models to his ‘collegial’ management model. The first of these is ‘transformational leadership’. This form of leadership assumes that the central focus of leadership ought to be the commitments and capacities of organisational members. Higher levels of personal commitment to organizational goals and greater capacities for accomplishing those goals are assumed to result in extra effort and greater productivity (Leithwood et al., 1999:9).

Leithwood (1994) conceptualizes transformational leadership along eight dimensions:

- building school vision;
- establishing school goals;
- providing intellectual stimulation;
- offering individualized support;
- modeling best practices and important organizational values;

- demonstrating high performance expectations;
- creating a productive school culture; and
- developing structures to foster participation in school decisions. Caldwell and Spinks (1992:49-50) argue that transformational leadership is essential for autonomous schools:

**Transformational leaders succeed in gaining the commitment of followers to such a degree that ... higher levels of accomplishment become virtually a moral imperative.** In our view a powerful capacity for transformational leadership is required for the successful transition to a system of self-managing schools. The transformational model is comprehensive in that it provides a normative approach to school leadership, which focuses primarily on the process by which leaders seek to influence school outcomes rather than on the nature or direction of those outcomes.

However, it may also be criticized as being a vehicle for control over teachers and more likely to be accepted by the leader than the led (Chirichello 1999). Allix (2000) goes further and alleges that transformational leadership has the potential to become 'despotic' because of its strong, heroic and charismatic features. He believes that the leader's power ought to raise 'moral qualms' and serious doubts about its appropriateness for democratic organizations.

As we noted earlier, politicians and bureaucrats are inclined to use the language of 'transformation' to achieve their own policy objectives. The English system, for example, increasingly requires school leaders to adhere to government prescriptions, which affect aims, curriculum content and pedagogy as well as values. There is "a more centralized, more directed, and more controlled educational system [that] has dramatically reduced the possibility of realizing a genuinely transformational education and leadership" (Bottery, 2001:215). In South Africa, 'transformation' has a special meaning linked to the need to convert the previous stratified system into a new framework stressing equity and redress.

It was a case of a new government having to take on restructuring and redefining a whole system, to achieve the major aim of quality education for all ... the initial way the task was addressed was positive, holistic and put up-front the values of equity, access, transparency and democracy (Department of Education, 2007). However, there is a chasm between the rhetoric and the reality of transformation. Lemon (2004:269) is one of several writers who claim that national policies have

been rich in the political symbolism of equity and redress but with ‘very limited implementation of change on the ground’.

**The Task Team on Education Management Development (Department of Education, 1996:29) observes that ‘real transformation will depend on the nature and quality of internal management.** Self-management must be accompanied by an internal devolution of power within the school and by transformational leadership’.

**A transformational leadership approach has the potential to engage all stakeholders in the achievement of educational objectives.** The aims of leaders and followers coalesce to such an extent that it may be realistic to assume a harmonious relationship and a genuine convergence leading to agreed decisions. In the South African context, ‘transformation’ requires action at all levels and there are limits to what principals can achieve in the absence of appropriate physical, human, and financial resources.

#### Participative leadership

“Participative leadership ... assumes that the decision-making processes of the group ought to be the central focus of the group” (Leithwood et al., 1999:12). This model is underpinned by three assumptions:

- participation will increase school effectiveness;
- participation is justified by democratic principles; and
- in the context of site-based management, leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder (Leithwood et al., 1999:12).

Sergiovanni (1984:13) points to the importance of a participative approach. This will succeed in ‘bonding’ staff together and in easing the pressures on school principals. “The burdens of leadership will be less if leadership functions and roles are shared and if the concept of leadership density were to emerge as a viable replacement for principal leadership”.

The participative model is consistent with the democratic values of the new South Africa. The introduction of SGBs for all schools, and the greater prominence given to SMTs, suggests a firm commitment to participative decision making. McLennan and Thurlow (2003:6) refer to an emerging paradigm, ‘a growing emphasis on building relationships in education’. The development of SMTs in South African schools provides the potential for participative leadership but there is little empirical evidence to suggest that it is supplanting, or even supplementing, the principal’s singular leadership.

Bush and Heystek (2003), Karlsson (2002) and Harber and Trafford (1999) point to the need for co-operation between principals and SGBs if governance is to be effective. Maile (2004) notes the importance of setting up democratic structures, but this requires thoughtful planning and parents need to be supported and informed. Karlsson (2002:332), in a study of six schools, states that principals are dominant in all meetings because of: “their power position within the school, level of education in contrast to other members, first access to information taken from education authorities, and because it is the principal who executes the decisions taken”.

**The Ministerial Committee’s (2004:85) Review of School Governance shows that SGBs experience difficulties with SMTs in respect of lack of communication, failure to implement decisions taken at SGB meetings, and conflicts over spending priorities.** However, SMTs report problems with the SGBs about members’ availability, a lack of implementation of decisions taken at SGB meetings, a blurring of the distinction between SGB and SMT, and spending priorities. This authoritative report suggests that the ideal of participative decision-making is not yet a reality in many South African schools. The new ACE: School Leadership program for aspiring principals (Department of Education, 2007) stresses participative leadership but it will take many years before such attitudes permeate the whole system.

Political and transactional leadership

Bush (2003) links transactional leadership to his political model. In political models, there is conflict between stakeholders, with disagreement being resolved in favour of the most powerful protagonists:

Transactional leadership is leadership in which relationships with teachers are based upon an exchange for some valued resource. To the teacher, interaction between administrators and teachers is usually episodic, short-lived and limited to the exchange transaction (Miller & Miller, 2001: 182).

**Miller and Miller’s (2001) definition refers to transactional leadership as an exchange process. Exchange is an established political strategy for members of organizations.** Principals possess authority arising from their positions as the formal leaders of their schools. However, the head requires the co-operation of educators to secure the effective management of the school. An exchange may secure benefits for both parties to the arrangement. The major limitation of such a process is that it does not engage staff beyond the immediate gains arising from the transaction. As Miller and Miller’s definition implies, transactional leadership does

not produce long-term commitment to the values and vision being promoted by school leaders.

### Post-modern leadership

Bush (2003:127) notes that post-modern leadership aligns closely with his subjective model of management. Such theories, promulgated most vigorously by Greenfield (1973), assume that organizations have no ontological reality but are simply the creatures of the people within them, who may hold very different views. Similarly, Keough and Tobin (2001:2) say that “current post- modern culture celebrates the multiplicity of subjective truths as defined by experience and revels in the loss of absolute authority”.

The post-modern model suggests that leaders should respect, and give attention to, the diverse and individual perspectives of stakeholders. They should also avoid reliance on the hierarchy because this concept has little meaning in such a fluid organization. Starratt (2001:348) aligns post- modernity with democracy and advocates a “more consultative, participatory, inclusionary stance”, an approach consistent with participative leadership.

### Moral leadership

This model assumes that the critical focus of leadership ought to be on the values, beliefs, and ethics of leaders themselves. Authority and influence are to be derived from defensible conceptions of what is right or good (Leithwood et al., 1999:10). Sergiovanni (1984:10) says that “excellent schools have central zones composed of values and beliefs that take on sacred or cultural characteristics”. Subsequently, he adds that ‘administering’ is a ‘moral craft’ (Sergiovanni, 1991:322).

West-Burnham (1997:239) discusses two approaches to leadership, which may be categorized as ‘moral’. The first he describes as ‘spiritual’ and relates to “the recognition that many leaders possess what might be called ‘higher order’ perspectives. These may well be ... represented by a particular religious affiliation”. Such leaders have a set of principles, which provide the basis of self-awareness. The second category is ‘moral confidence’, the capacity to act in a way that is consistent with an ethical system and is consistent over time.

Sergiovanni (1991:329) argues that both moral and managerial leadership are required to develop a learning community:

In the principalship the challenge of leadership is to make peace with two competing imperatives, the managerial and the moral. The two imperatives are unavoidable and the neglect of either creates problems. Schools must be run

effectively if they are to survive ... But for the school to transform itself into an institution, a learning community must emerge ... [This] is the moral imperative that principals face.

### Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership differs from the other models because it focuses on the direction of influence, rather than its nature and source. The increasing emphasis on managing teaching and learning as the core activities of educational institutions has led to this approach being endorsed, notably by the English National College for School Leadership, which includes it as one of its ten leadership propositions.

### Contingent leadership

The models of leadership examined earlier in this section are all partial. They provide valid and helpful insights into one particular aspect of leadership. Some focus on the process by which influence is exerted while others emphasize one or more dimensions of leadership. However, none of these models provides a complete picture of school leadership.

The contingent model provides an alternative approach, recognizing the diverse nature of school contexts and the advantages of adapting leadership styles to the particular situation, rather than adopting a 'one size fits all' stance:

This approach assumes that what is important is how leaders respond to the unique organizational circumstances or problems ... there are wide variations in the contexts for leadership and that, to be effective, these contexts require different leadership responses ... individuals providing leadership, typically those in formal positions of authority, are capable of mastering a large repertoire of leadership practices.