COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND
PARENTS IN URBAN SETTINGS

Gender-based differences in School Management Style

By

Bheki Milford Majozi

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the

Requirements for the degree of

MA in Communication Science

University of Zululand

DURBAN CAMPUS

2003

Promoter: Prof. R M Klopper
Department of Communication Science
University of Zululand (Durban Campus)

External Examiner: Dr. SP Zulu
Durban Institute of Technology

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that the contents in this

Thesis

Constitutes my own original work, which has not

Previously been presented to another institution,

Either in part or whole for the purposes of

Obtaining a degree.

SIGNATURE

10/05/2004

DATE

University of Zululand

Abstract

Communication between Schools And
Parents In Urban Settings

Gender-based differences in School Management Style

By

Bheki Milford Majozi

This thesis entails a literature survey of the forms of communication required for the successful management of primary schools and high schools by principals and their management teams, followed by an empirical survey of the management team communication practices of 367 principals in the northern section of the eThekwini Region (the area that until 2003 was known as the North Durban Region) in the KwaZulu-Natal Province, on the eastern seaboard of South Africa.

In brief, my research shows that female principals predominate in primary schools and male principals in high schools. My research further shows a number of significant differences in the way that female and male principals communicate with parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the end of my study I wish to extend my gratitude to the following persons:

- God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit for giving me strength to complete this study.

- My promoter, Prof. Rembrandt Klopper, for being my pillar of strength and source of knowledge from the beginning up to the end of this project.

- His two sons, Rijn & Brandt Klopper for their sacrifice.

- The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education & Culture for giving me unimpeded access to principal's workshops in order to give them questionnaires to complete.

- My wife, Petronella Tholakele Majozi for being close and for inspiring me every time.

- Tusokwakhe Milton (My late Daddy) & Delisile Phyllis (Mommy) for their love, support and encouragement.

- My kids, Nhlanhla and Nosipho for their sacrifice and moral support.

- Not forgetting my best friend Siphiwe Mthiyane for support and encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES

ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I shall briefly present a preview of what the reader will encounter in each chapter of my thesis, and explain the referencing conventions that I use in the chapters, as well as in my bibliography. It can be seen as a roadmap through my thesis.

THE ORGANISATION OF MY THESIS

Chapter 1 will deal with the referencing conventions that I use to acknowledge reference works.

Chapter 2 focuses on the statement of problems, the hypothesis to be tested, aims, research methodology and value of the research that I will present.

Chapter 3 will explain the key concepts so that the reader can obtain a clear understanding of the definitions that are used.

Chapter 4 deals with the literature survey. Information about the National Education's view, the KZN education department, and communication models by those involved in communication science will be expounded here.

Chapter 5 will be based on the fieldwork. The questionnaire that was designed by me will be shown. I will also give a detailed account of the difficulties that I had to endure in the fieldwork.

Chapter 6 explains the SPSS 11 database and I will do an empirical study of the results obtained from the information recorded in the questionnaires.

Chapter 7 will report on the empirical part of my research and will deal with an in-depth analysis of the responses from the principals of public secondary schools in the greater Durban area.

Chapter 8 will focus on the conclusion of my research and the recommendations that were made. The references will also follow chapter 8.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM & RESEARCH PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

With the introduction of the new democratic dispensation in South Africa in 1994, came the announcement that our education would be comprehensively renewed in order to undo the systemic deficiencies of Apartheid education that was generally perceived to have entrenched forms of learning that had been designed to create an African underclass that were only fit for menial labour. The new education system, known as Outcomes-based Education (OBE) was designed to promote independent learning, to promote cooperative existence in multicultural social settings, and to provide real-world skills to learners at the end of their learning programmes. In order to successfully introduce such a sophisticated education system, there had to be proper planning and implementation, particularly the planning and implementation of a range of sophisticated forms of communication, between educators and learners in the classroom, among learners, among educators, between educators and school management teams (SMTs), between schools and parents, and finally between schools and the various agents of the Department of National Education & Culture. In this thesis I will constructively assess the state of communication between schools and parents in urban settings.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are to:

- Utilise the principles of Organisational Communication, as set out in Mersham and Skinner's New Insights into Business & Organisational Communication

(2001) to analyse the forms of communication and possible miscommunication between schools and parents in urban settings;

- Evaluate the methods of Communication at present being used by educators while communicating with parents at selected primary and secondary schools in Inanda, Kwa-Mashu and Phoenix Circuits, situated in the then North Durban Region.

- Develop an effective model of Communication for primary and secondary school educators, based on the findings of my research.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS TO BE ANALYSED

In order to meet the above-mentioned objectives I have identified the following four problems:

1. Although effective Communication between educators and parents plays an important role in involving parents in the education of their children, anecdotal reports from educators indicate that there is Miscommunication as well as a comprehensive breakdown in Communication between educators and parents.

2. The main focus of my study will be to document the forms of communication that principals report using with parents, and to look for differences in communication style between female principals and male principals on the one hand, and between experienced and less experienced principals on the other hand.

3. I would like to emphasise that I will be doing a comprehensive survey of principals' communication practices of which I will only report some in my masters degree, intending to ultimately make a comprehensive analysis of principals' communication practices as a doctoral study.

4. As part of my doctoral study I intend to recommend a comprehensive model for effective communication between educators and parents.

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Hypothesis to be tested

The following two hypotheses will be tested in this study to help resolve the above-mentioned problems:

1. Principals report effective communication between themselves and parents.

2. Principals report that they are in command of the communication skills required for effective communication with parents.

Brief characterisation of my research methodology

My research will begin with a literature survey, followed by empirical survey research among systematically selected public schools in the then Inanda, Kwa-Mashu and Phoenix Circuits.

I will use a quantitative research methodology to analyse the responses from the principals of various public schools in the then North Durban region. The quantitative research will be conducted in the following phases:

- An appropriate questionnaire will be constructed.

- Permission will be sought from the relevant educational authorities in the then North Durban region of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education & Culture for a voluntary, anonymous survey to be conducted among primary and secondary school educators in its Inanda, Kwa-Mashu and Phoenix Circuits.

- The permission of particular S.E.M in the Inanda, Kwa-Mashu and Phoenix Circuits will be sought for the survey to be conducted among educators in their schools.

- Questionnaire will be personally disseminated and retrieved at each school selected for the survey.

- The responses on the questionnaires will be encoded and analysed in the statistical program SPSS 11.

VALUE OF RESEARCH

It is my intention that my research should document of the various forms of Communication being used between parents and schools at present, also that my research should outline how the application of Organisational Communication could improve Communication between educators and parents.

CONCLUSION

In the first section of chapter I stated the objectives of my study, namely (a) to utilise the principles of Organisational Communication, as set out in Mersham and Skinner's New Insights determine whether there is Miscommunication between schools and parents in the Durban metropolitan region, (b) to evaluate the self-reported methods of Communication at that educators use while communicating with parents at selected primary and secondary schools in the Inanda, Phoenix and Kwa-Mashu Circuits of the eThekwini Region of the KZN Department of Education & Culture.

In this chapter I also formulated specific statement of problems that need to be resolved in the course of my research. The main focus of my study is to document the forms of communication that principals use to communicate with parents, to be determined by means of an empirical survey among a representative sample of principals in the eThekwini Region.

KEY CONCEPTS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will define the key concepts relating to my research regarding the nature of Communication between schools and parents in the then North Durban region. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the main concepts that I will be working with, and which I will analyse in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

COMMUNICATION

Mersham & Skinner (1999:1) define Communication as the exchange of thoughts, feelings and information. It is to make it common; to present something that somebody else understands. According to Barker and Gout 1996:5 the Communication process is the process in which two or more elements of system intent in order to achieve a desired goal or outcome. Graphical representation of the Communication process found in standard textbooks (e.g. Mersham & Skinner 1997:7-10) identify the main elements involved in a Communication event, namely the originating\sending communicator, the receiving communicator, the message, the Communication codes and the medium through which the message is transmitted. According to my point of view, this may mean the presentation of information in a correct way. Communication means "share"- an act of imparting (esp. news) information given. Communication means a sharing of elements of behaviour or modes of life, by existing sets of rules. Communication involves the exchange of meaning through the use of the language and images that compose the shared culture of participants. The receiver of the Communication plays an active role, filtering messages through the lens of his or her own culture and personal

experience. Communication is the process of creating meaning between two or more people through the expression and interpretation of messages.

By expression is meant a public demonstration of the idea or feeling initially within the mind of the communicator. By interpretation is meant the meaning the receiver gives to his message. Communication is therefore an endeavour to reach the minds of others.

Human beings are so accustomed to communicating with people around them that they tend to take the process for granted. Yet Communication is a complex process, and needs to be understood, its meaning is to be successfully shared.

ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Sender
This is the person who initiates the Communication by thinking of an idea to communicate to the receiver. The sender is sometimes referred to as the source, the conic communication.

Message

The message is the meaning content or subject matter, for example, when a student is asked to close the door, the message is: "Please close the door". It is an oral or written Communication sent by the person to another. This is the second element of the Communication process. Communication is a two-way process that involves both sending and receiving the message. The source encodes an idea determining whether or not he or she wants to inform, persuade and entertain.

Medium

Medium refers to the means used to transmit the message. There is very often no best medium, and depending upon circumstances and skills, the sender may vary or combine the media used to convey the message.

17

Channels

Four basic channels or media can be employed:

The spoken word

The written word

Graphic, pictorial or diagrammatic representation

Physical gestures or other forms of non-verbal communication.

Each of the above-mentioned four media use their own particular complex set of Communication codes.

Communication codes

Mersham & Skinner 1997: 17 refer to Communication codes as the collection of related signs, symbols and rules regulating their usage in Communication. These codes are of vital importance. This is because the sending communicator uses such codes to encode the message and because the receiving communicator uses them to decode the message.

Humans use a variety of multi-sensory Communication codes to encode and decode their messages to one another. If fellow communicators interpret Communication codes differently by ascribing different meanings to them Miscommunication and Communication breakdown result.

According to Mersham and Skinner 1997:18 encoding is the activity required to transform ideas into observable sensory signs. In order to understand the complex ways in which humans employ Communication codes, one has to take the general Communication, model shown in Figure 1, as point of departure.

Communication Context

System

Noise
distorts

Communicator
(Encoder)

**Medium (carries
encoded Message)**

Communicator
(Decoder)

a   **Feedback**   a

Adapted from Barker & Gaut 1996
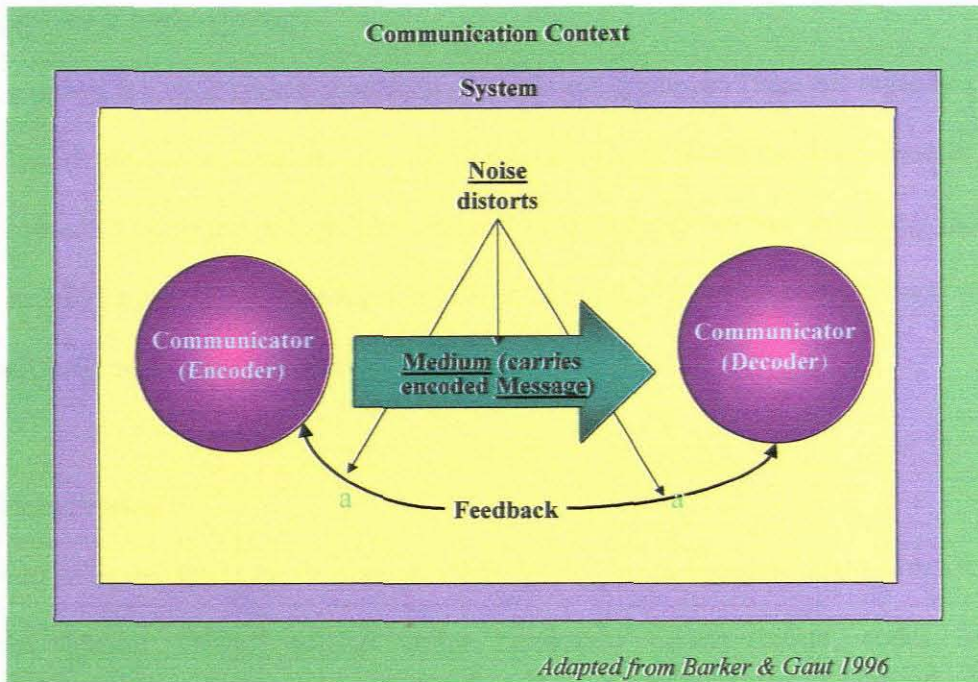
Figure 1: The general communication model

From above-mentioned model one can deduce that the sending Communicator has to encode her/his message by using a combination of codes that can be decoded by the various human senses. Because encoded messages have to be decoded by the senses of the receiving communicator, they must be of visual, auditory nature, olfactory, gustatory or tactile nature. Words, for example, are signs or symbols and grammar is the set of rules, which regulate their use. Together they form a language, that is, a complex hierarchical code system. It is a "code system" because all code elements semiotic ally first refer to one another before they can form semantic labels that refer to entities in our physical environment (like a real dog running around), or to abstract concepts (such as "wisdom" or "evil") in the human mind. According to Mersham and Skinner a code may be even more restricted or difficult to recognise. A restricted code (such as the covert slang used by gang members) is understood only by a restricted set of people.

Language as a code system

Language is a code system consisting of words and grammar. These are organised into a whole, which we call a *linguistic code*. A linguistic code is by far the most versatile and frequently used of all codes. A linguistic code can be used for the expression of any thought and will usually be one of the codes used in Communication. Non-verbal codes include visual, sound and tactile codes, and chronemics.

Visual codes

According to Mersham & Skinner 1999: 19-37, in its broadest sense visual codes encompass kinesic codes, graphic codes, proxemic codes; colour codes layout interrelationships, three-dimensional models and objects in the real world.

Kinesics

Kinesics is the systematic study of the communicational aspects of body motion. It is concerned with all perceivable body movements that play a role in communication. Commonly referred to, as "body language" Kinesics is important for communicators since body motion often accompanies spoken forms of Communication. Codes, which accompany spoken Communication, are called *paralinguistic codes;* 'Para' means 'besides' or in addition to.

Kinesics can be divided into separate areas of study. These include:

Facial expressions;

Gaze behaviour;

Gestures;

Posture;

Locomotion.

Facial Expressions

The variety to be found in facial expressions is significant in communication. A smile may indicate friendliness, amusement, and understanding-but also nervousness or self-justification, depending on the situation.

Gaze Behaviour

Eye contact is particularly important in Communication. Throughout history people have been preoccupied with the eye and its role in human Communication. The eyes may well give the most revealing and accurate of all human Communication signals because the pupils will dilate or contract as the person's attitude and mood change. When someone becomes excited, his or her pupils can dilate up to four times their normal size. Conversely, an angry, negative mood causes the pupils to contract to what is commonly known as *'beady little eyes'* or *snake eyes*.

The eyes play an important role in courtship. For this reason, women use eye make up to emphasise their eye display. If a woman is attracted to a man, she will decode this signal correctly without knowing she does so.

Some research indicates that when a person is being dishonest or holding back information, his or her eyes meet ours for less than one third of the time. Continuous eye contact between people who are conversing with each other is thus an important part of the communication process. Lack of eye contact can indicate lack of consensus or disagreement. Dark tinted glasses should be avoided at all times as they make others feel you are staring at them and they are unable to 'read' your feelings.

But codes are often 'secret' in the sense that they are culturally bound. In Western culture, eye contact is considered both normal and important for effective communication. But other cultures are different, e.g. rural black South African culture has different norms. Eye contact between junior and senior people may be limited, and it is accepted that it should be

21

unobtrusive. Avoidance of eye contact is seen as a sign of respect in certain contexts of black culture. Some black people will look away or look down, especially if a delicate matter is being discussed.

Gestures

Gestures refer to movements of the head, of the shoulders, arms, legs and other parts of the body. The entire body may be used to communicate. For example, rubbing the palms of the hands together is a way in which people communicate a positive expectation in a non-verbal way. Gestures are more culture-bound than facial expressions. Malays cast their eyes down if they wish to indicate 'no'. In the Punjab area of India, 'yes' is indicated by a relatively rapid movement of the head from right front to back left.

A brief, single but strong grip is the norm for the handshake in Western culture. In black cultures around the world, the handshake often incorporates a triple grip. White business people sometimes purposefully employ the triple grip handshake with black colleagues to demonstrate that they are comfortable in the 'new South Africa'.

Posture

By posture I mean the general attitude of a person when sitting, lying down and moving. It is possible to deduce from these postures whether a person is tense, relaxed, rushed, weary or injured. There are many postures that can help us to evaluate communication. For example, when a listener begins to use his or her hand to support his or her head, it's a signal that boredom has set in. The degree of the listener's boredom is shown by the extent to which his or her arm and hand is supporting the head. Extreme boredom and lack of interest are shown when the head is fully supported by the hand.

Locomotion

Locomotion is the movement of the body from one geographical position to another. Locomotion may be a code that reveals a particular state of mind membership of a particular culture or subculture. A person's walk reveals whether he or she is tired, happy, ill, hurried or angry and many more emotional and physical states.

Proxemics

Proxemics can be defined as the individual's structuring of the space around him or her. Our communication with others is affected by the way we regard the space around us. According to Mersham and Skinner (1999:27) there are four zones within which a person normally acts:

The intimate zone

The Intimate Zone can be regarded as a zone where the space around us is regarded as a friendly quite atmosphere where only private and personal relationships are entertained. It is a zone where protection and security are high on the list. Communication is with people who are regarded as intimate.

The personal zone

The Personal Zone can be regarded as a zone where a person's individual needs and privacy are very important. A person communicates with himself/herself about his or her physical and emotional needs. This zone is a very tight zone.

The social zone

The Social zone is a free zone where an individual who belongs to a society feels a need of belonging and gives himself/herself openly to that particular social group he/she belongs or he/she chooses to socialise with. This zone is where people know each other and have something in common in their social interaction.

23

The public zone

The Public Zone can be regarded as a zone where there is no limited space. Communication flows freely. There is no sense of belonging. It is a very uncomfortable zone for others whilst others can regard this space as a battle zone.

Graphics

Graphics or pictorial codes; are also visual communication codes. They include visual media such as text, artwork, everyday objects such as sculptures and other models

Photographs

A picture is worth a thousand words and seeing believes. News found in newspapers and television, for example, relies heavily on photographs or pictorial images such as videotape. Reading plain text can easily become monotonous. This monotony may be relieved by the inclusion of photos and other images. The information that a photograph or image contains is important.

Colour

According to Mersham and Skinner (1999:31) many of our daily experiences become meaningful only through the use of colour. So colour is one of the more important communication codes. Colour as code has three main functions:

An informal function

Colour code as a way of communicating informally plays a very important role because the way that a person uses different colours tells others about the kind of person he/she is. Some females tend to wear bright colours as a sign of drawing attention to themselves. Some females will tend to use natural colours showing how down to earth and simple they want to be. In our changing society some males are using very bright colours, which make us associate them with a need for attention. Bright colours are mostly associated with being loud and being

a social butterfly whereas dark colours show dignity and reservation. Other people use dark and bright together. The blending of colours informally tells a lot about a particular.

An aesthetic function

Artistic people have a particular way of showing their passion and love for art through their use of colour. Aesthetic and informal function of colour code go together because different colours used by artists show and highlight something important about that particular artist. Dark colours blended together show an artist's love of natural things. Different colours symbolise different things. Bright colours are associated with love. Aesthetically, colours communicate an artist's personality e.g. romantic, loves nature, realistic, dreamer etc.

A culturally symbolic function

In diverse cultures around the world, we learn to associate certain things with different cultures. Zulu is communicated well by using colours because they did not know how to read and write. Messages were sent by using different colours in their beadwork. Other cultures use colours in decorating their houses so as to show recognition of their cultural groups. Different colours with different occasions e.g. white colour for peace, red/pink for love, blue as a regal colour etc.

Colour plays an aesthetic role, especially in marketing and advertising.

Sound or Acoustic Codes

Sound codes, or acoustic codes, refer to the significance of sound in communication. *Most of the sounds produced by human vocal cords are linguistic that is, they are the words* that make up spoken languages, or speech; normally referred to as 'verbal communication'.

Tactile Codes

Tactile codes have to do with the sense of touch. We orientate ourselves in an *environment by depending largely on our tactile sense. We often need to feel and touch an*

object to evaluate it. Lovers are fond of touching each other, old friends are more readily inclined to touch one another than relative strangers and people sometimes touch one another to gain their attention. Upon meeting, people shake hands. All these actions may be described as ritual tactile habits when they are institutionalised and used habitually by members of a society.

Chronemics

The field of study that is concerned with the use of time is known chronemics. Time influences the way we interpret many messages and forms of behaviour. Time is often a reflection of status: the higher our status, the more control we have over time. In South Africa, as in most industrialised societies, time is money and high productivity features prominently as a desired goal. People are intolerant of those who are consistently late for work or for appointments. Students are expected to attend lectures regularly and punctually. If they do not do so, they are seen as lacking diligence and commitment.

Code systems (encoding)

The source or encoder makes the decision to communicate. The source also determines what the purpose of the message will be; to inform, persuade, or entertain. One may ask how the message gets from the source to the receiver. First, the source must encode or create a message. That is, the information that the source wishes to convey must be put into a form that can be sent to the receiver. The source generates a message through his or her past experiences, perceptions, thoughts and feelings. Every ounce of one's being may tell one that one is in love, but until one encode those feelings into a form that can be sent to the person one loves, communication cannot take place.

26

The coding system

The coding system itself plays a vital role in the communication process. By system, I mean that unique entity, bond, or relationship that is created, defined, and ultimately maintained through the process of communication. As system grows, disintegrates, or changes every time a message is exchanged. (At times, the system may be altered even if a message is not exchange) In turn, the nature and state of the system have an impact on the messages that are sent at a given time, bringing the process full circle. If a system, or relationship, is experiencing growth, messages may be exchanged and interpreted in one way. However, if the system is in a state of disintegration, messages may be exchanged and possibly interpreted in another way.

What is encoding?

Encoding is the activity required to transform the message and ideas into observable sensory signs.

Let me take this as an example, my intention is to communicate to my wife who is talking to a third party, that we are going to be late. The idea in my mind and no doubt, it is correct. However, my wife cannot read my mind and, in any case, is unaware of the urgency because she is engrossed in talking, I have to put the idea which is in my mind into sensory signs. (I create stimuli) which must be observable (I must send impulses strong enough to exceed her sensory threshold) so that she will receive these stimuli in her brain. I will (probably unconsciously) make a choice: Should I hold up my arm in her line of vision and tap on my watch? Or should I use words, which represent my idea?

In the first case, my physical movement will be observed by her auditory sense. Whichever I choose, that will be the way I have encoded my message. I will have transformed my message ideas into sensory signs, which will stimulate the appropriate sense organ of my

wife. Encoding is an external process for it is expressive. It is thus the transmission of inner thoughts, beliefs and feelings into external, material signs (Van Schoor, 1979; 15-16) as cited in Lowe 1995: 10)

When we encode a message, we must have some awareness of the receiver if we want to be understood.

Receiver

The receiver is the person to whom the sender directs the message and who thus has to understand the message. Each receiver has a unique frame of reference and accordingly decodes or interprets the message in a unique way.

Decoding

Decoding refers to the process of receiving, interpreting and understanding the encoded message by the receiver. There is far more to decoding than just receiving the message. If the receiver is unable to interpret and understand the message, there will be no shared meaning, no communication, for example, if a monolingual English speaker receives a message in isi Xhosa, that person is unable to interpret the code and understand the message.

Feedback

Feedback is the receiver's response to the message. It is essential for effective communication, as it provides for a two-way flow of the message. The message can be adjusted should misunderstandings occur. Feedback thus provides the sender with a way of ensuring that the message has been received, interpreted and understood as was intended.

THE COMMUNICATION SITUATION

The process of communication takes place within a particular situation, which also influences the other elements. This situation refers to the time, place and circumstance in which the communication transaction occurs.

The meanings of words are directly affected by the situation in which they are used. Just think of how the word 'necklace' took on a new and terrible meaning in South Africa in the eighties.

According to Mersham etymologically the term "communication" stems from the Latin word "communicatio" which has two major significances: "making common; imparting" and "taking one's audience into one's confidence with the attendant sense of authentic self-disclosure."

In its simplest, idealistic and reduced form, communication means the process of the expression and interpretation of messages, the process of sharing meaning between a communicator and a recipient, with the aim of arriving at mutual understanding.

COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

Mersham & Skinner (1999:50) define "communication network" as the structure created to send and receive messages between team members. In my opinion this may mean a group of radio or television stations that broadcast the same programs at the same time. Radio uKhozi and Ilanga laseNatal are being used by schools to relate information to parents and pupils e.g. information on parents' meetings. These are interconnected channels or lines of communication used in organizations to pass information from one person to another. The flow of communications operates in *downward, upward, lateral* and *informal* network. When people communicate in organisations, they need a system for managing the flow of information. These systems are called *communication networks*, which is a regular pattern of person to-person

relationships through which information flows in an organisation. Two kinds of networks exist, *formal* and *informal*.

Formal communication networks

Formal communication networks are systems designed by management to dictate who should talk to whom to get a job done. In a small organization, networks are so simple that they may hardly be noticeable; in a larger organisation, they become more intricate.

Informal communication networks

Alongside the formal networks, every organisation also has informal communication networks-which patterns of interaction are based on friendships, shared personal or career interests, and proximity between workers.

The most popular classification is the grapevine. The grapevine was once thought to be characterized by disorganised, poorly defined lines of communication, when actually evidence reveals that grapevines "operate quickly; selectively, and in a well-defined manner, and can possess high accuracy and low distortion." Grapevine communication is one way that cohesion is developed in organizations.

Downward communication networks

Downward networks direct information messages to subordinates. Messages include job instructions, individual evaluation (feedback), and organizational procedures, training, and in-service company-directed propaganda. Downward communication is solicited from employees who want feedback about their job performance, similar to the ways students seek results from test, papers and project.

30

Upward communication networks

Upward communication is another network used in organisation. Managers need to encourage subordinates to send upward communication freely because it is an important indication of how effective downward communication has been.

CONTENT

Content will vary from message to message, and even within messages. The purpose and medium of the message, and the direction and nature of the receiver will influence it. The content could be, for example, factual and referential, emotional, instructional, or a combination of these. It could also be an opinion.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

According to Mersham and Skinner: 2001:4 Organisational communications is the necessary communication-taking place to achieve the common purpose of an organisation. They further explain that an organisation is a stable system of individuals working together to achieve the common purpose through a hierarchy of ranks and division of labour. It is in the organisation where the importance of communication is clearly noticeable, this I say because there will be no flow of information if there is no communication. Organisational ·communication relies upon the skills found in intra-personal and face-to face communication.

Hicks (1967:130), as cited in Agarwala & Agarwala-Rogers 1976: 7, states that most of one's daily life is spent in organizations: schools, businesses, factories, hospitals, the military services, churches and social clubs. We live in an organizational society. Hicks (1967: 7) say that communication is the lifeblood of an organization. If we could somehow remove communication flows from an organization, there would be no organization. When communication stops, organized activity ceases to exist. An organization is a stable system of

individuals who work together to achieve, through a hierarchy of ranks, division of labour and common goals.

Hicks says that communication pervades all activities in an organization, represents an important work-tool through which individuals understand their organizational role. Communication is the metaphoric thread that holds the various interdependent parts of an organization together.

Not only is communication an essential ingredient in the internal functioning of an organization, but also, as we noted, it is also vital in the organization's information exchange with its environment. According to Guetzkow (1965: 534) the communication system serves as the vehicle by which organizations are embedded in their environment.

Deutsch (1952: 7) says, if we can map the pathways by which communication is communicated between different parts of an organization and by which it is applied to the behaviour of the organization in relation to the outside world, we will have gone far towards understanding that organization.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

This is a special type of communication in which people from different cultures have to communicate with another. These people from different cultures may have different ways of seeing the world. This type of communication can make people very anxious and tense. They find it very difficult to understand other people's ways of thinking. Tomasellio (1987: 54-55) director of the Co temporal Cultural Studies Unit at University of Natal as cited in Lowe defined culture in the following, inter alia: Culture is the ensemble, or ''bundle' of meaningful practises through which self-defined groups within or across social classes express themselves in unique way, or locate themselves within an identifiable web of significations. Further on, he

32

points out cultures are distinguished in terms of differing responses to the same social, economic and environmental conditions.

Groenewald (1986:50-57) as cited in Lowe stresses the importance of communication rules, not only in any interpersonal interaction, but also particularly where such interaction is intercultural. Observance of the rules, which relates to content and procedure of transaction, will contribute greatly to the outcome of the communication.

Knowledge of the rules of a specific culture also implies some knowledge of that particular culture and this is a very necessary component for effective intercultural communication. The area in which knowledge of the other culture is particularly important includes: beliefs, values and attitude systems (ethnocentrism) also social organisations such as family, school and communication networks. Patterns of thought such as verbal and nonverbal language. No human lives in isolation. We live in a world filled with people, animals, plants and objects. We constantly interact with and relate to others and the world around us. We therefore live in a world where we are constantly communicating, whether we are aware of it or not.

Not only does communication take place all the time, everywhere all around us, but its importance in the workplace has also increased. The present working environment calls for group and teamwork, group participation in decision-making and in running the business, all requiring greater skills in communication. Research has shown that people in business need skills to absorb and apply knowledge from a wide variety of subjects. They need to know how to handle interpersonal relationships and to communicate effectively with colleagues. Oral communication is emphasised more strongly at present, but written communication should not be ignored.

Why do we communicate?

Communication is a tool of survival for human society. Without communication early humanity would not have survived, nor would the humane race have developed. As a hunter,

33

for example, early man needed to develop communication skills so that he could interact with his companions and co-ordinate their actions so that they hunted together. They used facial expressions, gestures and vocal signals.

How do we communicate?

People use symbols, signs and gestures to communicate. The way we stand, sit or walk, our facial expressions, our choice of clothes, suburbs, house or car, all communicate some message about the way we think to others. Because it is difficult to transfer thoughts or meanings from one mind to another, man developed symbols or signs to convey these meanings to each other. In other words, we are constantly communicating, either consciously or subconsciously.

With whom do we communicate?

Communication is essential for survival in society today. Just as early humanity needed to communicate in order to survive, we need to communicate effectively to function in a complex human society. We live and interact with other human beings in a social system-starting with the family, then friends, a larger group of acquaintances, then a particular community such as the church, school, college and workplace. These systems overlap and interconnect and we move between them over varying lengths of time.

To communicate effectively in society we must be aware of society as consisting of systems, and we must know something about its social and cultural standards. When we know something about the people around us, we are able to communicate in a way that is acceptable, understandable and effective. To do this we must find a way of communicating which uses the appropriate words, behaviour, time and place, and expresses the right feelings for a particular situation.

34

When and where do we communicate?

When we communicate, we observe unwritten rules, which tell us what wording or behaviour is appropriate in a given situation. We absorb these ''rules' 'naturally as we grow up and socialise. We will only greet some people, while we may ask others how they are and expect a brief response. We may have a brief conversation with some, whereas we can exchange endlessly with friends and family. If someone you normally only greet tells you his/her marital woes, or a total stranger in a lift makes a personal remark, the rules have been broken. The time, place and message are inappropriate.

Cross-cultural communication

As culture and communication are so closely bound together, and roles and rules differ from culture to culture, cross-cultural communication is a field of special interest to people who have to communicate with other nationalities. Not only do we usually have several cultures within one country, but also business has become increasingly global. Cross-cultural communication is a field of study linked to social and cultural anthropology. It compares the object of study with perspectives from other cultures. Norms, values, roles and rules are usually studied. We learn that, what is acceptable in one culture may be unacceptable in another.

According to Tsungu, radio Personality and roving speaker on cultural differences between white South Africans and black cultures, mention one such difference: when white South Africans call on a business associate, they knock on the door, wait to be invited in and expect an invitation to be seated. A black or African man on the contrary, when visiting an important person, quickly enters his presence and sits down as unobtrusively as possible. He waits for the important man to notice him when he feels inclined to. In this way the caller feels

he is not disturbing the man, and is only attended to when the man is ready to give him attention.

People who have to communicate cross-culturally need to learn more about this aspect to avoid misunderstandings and distortions of messages. This type of communication can make people very anxious and tense. They find it very difficult to understand other people's way of thinking. Cross-cultural communication involves a high risk. This is because we may have to give up strongly held ideas. We may also have to change attitudes, which we regard as very important. People involved in cross-cultural communication may be using different verbal and non-verbal codes. Even if they use the same codes, they may attach different meanings to them. People will, therefore have to negotiate meanings much more carefully. The results of any communication are less predictable. People could also find it much more difficult to plan accurately for other people's response. People tend to trust those with whom they share the same values.

Barriers to effective intercultural communication

''Barriers' 'refer to the ways in which communication is stopped or made difficult. The major barriers to effective cross-cultural communication are: cultural stereotyping (ethnocentrism) and defensiveness. People are not open to new possibilities and are reluctant to listen to new ideas. They refuse to change from past attitudes and style. People do not see the world in the same way. People may, for example, have strong negative beliefs about another culture. They will, however, have no proof to support their prejudices. People assume that certain things are true even though they may not be. People from different cultures may think differently. One culture may, for example, value facts as proof. Another may value intuition as a way of arriving at a solution. If people from different cultures have different levels of power in an organization, they may not communicate very well. A manager from one culture may perceive herself/himself as superior to workers from another. People from one cultural group

36

may view all people from another cultural group as the same. They do not accept that people are different. This attitude is the same as stereotyping.

WORLD VIEW

A worldview is central in any culture. The term refers to culture's philosophical view of God, man, nature and the universe. A man's worldview maybe taken for granted in another culture. It runs through all aspects of cultural life. The African, Asian and European worldviews are different. If good cross-cultural communication is to be achieved, then the worldview of each culture needs to be acknowledged and accepted.

The African worldview may, for example, value the concept Ubuntu. This concept refers to the achievement of personhood through participation in the community. This view stresses that an individual has no value unless s/he has strong connections with other people sharing the same culture. The Western worldview, on the other hand may value individual enterprise. People are expected to take initiative and make their own way in life.

ACCULTURATION

This term refers to a person's ability to adapt to another culture. In a business organization, acculturation means adapting to the corporate culture. The same principle holds for schools since they are public organisations.

WHAT CAN ORGANIZATIONS DO TO IMPROVE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION?

In a multi-cultural country like South Africa organisations should have explicit policies and strategies to foster intercultural Communication. Such strategies should include:

- Organizations should encourage staff to treat Communication as a creation of meaning, or a negotiation.

- Organizations should strive to create an atmosphere of trust. Helping all cultural groups to understand each other's worldview and specific hopes and fears could create trust.

- Organizations should help people to accept differences between cultures in an open and honest way. They should stress that this acceptance will improve relationships and therefore improve the success of the organization.

- Organisations should encourage staff to work at the individual, one-to- one level. People should be considered as individuals, rather than as members of a group.

- Organizations should help people to learn about other cultures through the personal experience of individual relationships.

- Organisations should help people to understand other people's values. People should become aware of the difficulties, hopes and fears that other people have.

- Organisations need to stress that there is a great deal of variation within different cultural groups. People should be made aware of the dangers of making generalisations about other cultures.

- Organizations should, if possible, ensure that there are enough members of cultural group present. In this way, people will begin to understand that there are individual differences within the group.

- Organizations should strive to overcome ethnocentrism. People should be helped to face the challenge of communicating with other cultures. People should be encouraged to interact with other groups.

- Organisations should strive to have a fair language policy. If possible, staff should be encouraged to learn other people's languages. In practice this is not always possible because of the wide variety of languages spoken.

MISCOMMUNICATION

Miscommunication is a very general label that covers a number of facets of unsuccessful communication, including terms such as misrepresentation, misunderstanding, inaccuracy, distortion, misreporting, problematic talk, and communication breakdown.

In broad terms, miscommunication occurs when other than the intended message is understood, in other words, when there is a mismatch between the speaker's intention and the hearer's interpretation (Milroy, 1984: 8)

Miscommunication is divided into two subcategories:

Misunderstanding and

Incomplete understanding.

Misunderstanding is the commonest gloss on the concept of miscommunication. It involves "simple disparity between the speaker's and hearer's semantic analysis of a given utterances.

Miscommunication has usually been applied, very loosely, to any sort of problem that might arise internationally and typically to local processes of misunderstanding. Researchers have looked for the 'good' and ignored the 'bad', communication problems treated as aberrant behaviour, which should be eliminated.

A variety of problems in organizations have been attributed to the "quality" of communication or "communication breakdown" among individuals and groups. Miscommunication is in some cases applied as a moral judgement on the uses and abuses of

language and communication. In others, it designates primarily communication mishaps, or mismatches of mental states, deviations from communicative norms, or the consequences of low levels of communicative competence in specific domains. Others demonstrate that Miscommunication, alternatively, is a status quo of interaction, and even the means by which some desirable ends are communicatively reached.

Cultural beliefs about the functions of talk and silence can be a major source of communication difficulties.

Miscommunication can be a result of the following: noise, gender, power and misunderstanding

Noise

Any stimulus that interferes with the transmission and reception of messages so that the meaning is not clearly understood creates a barrier between the communicator and the recipient. We call such barriers noise. Noise is more than distracting physical sounds, such as traffic noises or the yells of children that could make it difficult to hear the message. It is anything that interferes with the success of the communication by distorting the message so that the meaning received is different from that which is intended. The outcome of your encounter often depends on how you cope with external, internal and semantic noise.

External noise

External noise is a figurative term that refers to any type of stimulus in the environment that distracts one. A bad odour, for instance, a cold room, an uncomfortable chair, the static on a telephone line can interfere with the transmission and reception of messages. You could be attending a lecture in a hot, overcrowded room and become so uncomfortable that you cannot concentrate on what the lecture is saying. Blurred type or creased pages create noise in written communication because they interfere with the clarity of the communicator's message. Think

about the following examples: do you hear the announcements at the stations and airports clearly? If not, why not? What happens to the conversation when you communicate with someone who has a stutter or other speech impediment?

Internal noise

Internal noise is the thoughts and feelings in people that may interfere with communication. Your moods, personal prejudices, as well as the amount of attention you pay to others, are all internal noises that influences the way you interpret messages. For instance, a student doesn't hear the lecture she is attending because she is thinking about the dance she is going to that evening. A man may be so resentful about having a woman appointed as his manager that he does not fully concentrate on what she is saying. If his bias (thoughts) prevents the accurate reception of her messages, then internal noise has occurred.

Semantic noise

Semantic noise is interferences that occur when people have different meanings for words and when these meanings are not mutually understood. For example, if at the airport you ask your departing friend about his itinerary, and he replies that he hasn't packed one, and then you know that he has not understood your message because he does not know what an itinerary is (Barker & Gaut 1996: 13). Semantic noise also occurs when your doctor uses unfamiliar medical terms to explain why you are feeling ill. The result could be that you will be uncertain of what the problem is because he has created semantic noise by using words you do not understand. Similarly, other people may react in a way that you did not intend to your use of slang, ethnic slurs, foreign words, sexist remarks or profanity, thereby distorting the interaction between communicator and recipient because they may use different words to denote the same object or idea. One way of overcoming noise is by means of feedback.

GENDER, POWER, AND MISCOMMUNICATION

Females and males seem to have frequent problems of miscommunication; most notably in adult heterosexual interaction. Women's reaction to men's street talk is another example that what is ostensibly meant by one sex may not be what is understood by other (Gardner, 1980: 64) An extreme form of miscommunication is sometimes said to occur in cases of date, acquaintance, and marital rape, when a frequently offered explanation is that a male has interpreted a female's "no" as part of sexual play. Problematic heterosexual communication takes place not only in verbal, but in non-verbal interaction also, as facial expressions, gestures, and other bodily expressions may be intended as one kind of signal but received as another.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Mersham & Skinner (1999:148) define interpersonal communication as "good relationships between managers and subordinates and among peers as essential for success."

In the researcher's point of view this may mean good relationships between the headmaster or principal, school management team and the personnel as a whole. This is very crucial for the smooth running of the school. It must go as far as pupils and their parents. Interpersonal communication occurs between two people. A great deal of communication in organisation is interpersonal. This type of communication calls for good control of language, good listening, sensitivity to non-verbal communication and tolerance. It involves a range of spoken and written messages; it is the vehicle through which human relationships are developed or destroyed.

Characteristics of interpersonal levels of communication

Outcomes Based Education requires a co-operative method of teaching that allows for democracy in the classroom. Learners are allowed to contribute freely about their experiences.

If Outcomes Based Education is implemented correctly, it will activate the minds of young people so that they independently learn in order to acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them to earn a living, to contribute to the economic and social well-being of fellow citizens and finally, to equip them with the skills required for life-long learning so that their acquired knowledge and skills will remain relevant.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I defined Outcomes Based Education; I mentioned the fact that it is not only based on knowledge as an abstractum, but on the psychological and social dimensions of how knowledge is constructed. I made mention of the social construction of meaning which relates to how learners acquire knowledge in group contexts, how acquisition is analogically influenced by existing knowledge encountered in printed texts, for instance, or by the verbally communicated knowledge of educators during formal lessons, or by the reasoning of their peers during brainstorming sessions or class debates, for instance.

I also highlighted the fact that within Outcomes Based Education intrapersonal as well as interpersonal communication are therefore crucial components of the learning- process. With the Outcomes Based Education the focus is on the individual rather than on the group. With this in mind, we need to assess accordingly. As educators we also need to find ways of acknowledging that learning has indeed taken place. Also what I mentioned is that Outcomes Based Education requires a co-operative method of teaching that allows for democracy in classroom. Learners are allowed to contribute freely about their experiences.

If Outcomes Based Education is implemented correctly it will activate the minds of young people so that they independently learn in order to acquire the knowledge and skills that

will enable them to earn living, to contribute to the economic and social well being of fellow citizens. In summary, Outcomes Based Education entails a fundamental switch from learning through memorisation to the utilisation of intrapersonal and interpersonal process that lead to understanding of interrelationships and the ability to critically assess the knowledge of one self and of others on the part of a leaner- an approach requires that the educator act as a facilitator to motivate learners to learn independently and socially.

ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

Organisational Communication is important in business and industrial organisations as well as in churches, hospitals, government agencies, military organisations and academic institutions. Members of an organisation communicate as individual and in groups, and can be called upon to deliver oral presentations. The interests of organisational communication include the flow of information within the organisation and between the organisation and society. Organisations are held together by communication. As soon as people gather together to begin organising, they need to make plans, arrive at decisions and settle dispute. Organisations depend on receiving, processing and transmitting information to achieve their goals.

FORMS OF COMMUNICATION REQUIRED IN FOUNDATION PHASE OBE CLASSROOMS

Communication essentially is a meeting of minds-an encounter between at least two participants with the objective of exchanging new information in a meaningful manner. Outcomes-Based Education aims at developing the knowledge, skills and, values and attitudes of individuals to ensure that they can cope with life after they have left school. The skill of being able to communicate appropriately in various forms and environments is essential to a successful and happy life here on earth. Developing the ability to communicate effectively begins at a very early age in ones life. Therefore the educator in the foundation phase classroom plays a very crucial role in assisting learners to learn to communicate effectively by providing the appropriate learning environment that exposes the learners to the various forms

of communication required in life. The main forms of communication required in the teaching and learning situations are the following:

Small group (verbal) Communication: The activities in the classroom will include brainstorming, conversation, consultation, giving instructions, cross-questioning, and judging.

Small group (written and pictorial) Communication: Here the activities in classroom will include writing a story, drawing up a list, writing an invitation, doing a project and completing a written assessment.

Public Communication: Learners and the educator can engage in entertaining a group, miming and role-playing, addressing a group, demonstrating a process or a product, giving a report-back, and submitting to an oral test.

Instruction and using of Internet both by the educators and the learners can increase in knowledge and in developing numerous skills to equip them for a better future. Unfortunately not all schools can afford to provide this form of communication to their educators and learners.

THE PRINCIPAL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH PEOPLE AND BODIES OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

Although communication features strongly as part of the criteria in selection of individuals for a principal's post, the critical area of expertise involving communication is lacking in the interviews for appointments of principals. Very little points are awarded for communication. According to circulars obtained from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education on appointing management staff, nothing is said about the ability to effectively communicate. Most principals are excellent academics but face frustration when dealing with issues emanating from the teaching staff, learners and the parent body. Most of the seasoned principals have taken the voluntary severance package offered by the Department of Education around 1996 and now, most of the principals are young and inexperienced in dealing with areas

where proper communication is required. It is also important to note that in this highly stressful world, educators come from various backgrounds and many are riddled with problems, even when at school. Now that the country has passed a law prohibiting corporal punishment, it becomes increasingly difficult for principals to manage discipline in their schools and experts on this issue recommend forms of communication to deal with deviant behaviour but there are no clear guidelines on how to deal with these learners. Therefore the part of the research will be in it documenting the senior managements' level of understanding of the aspects of organisational communication that need to be employed for primary and secondary schools to function as effective organisations.
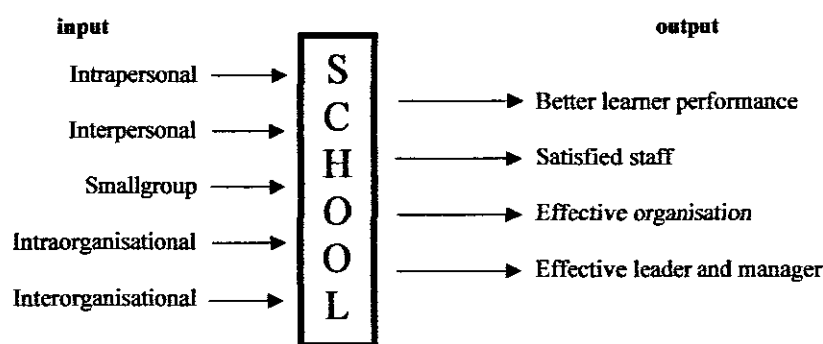
Figure 2: Inputs into an organization will derive the outputs of that organisation

Everard & Morris (1996: preface x) made the following statement, some schools and colleges are effective and successful, partly because they are well managed and organized, which is partly because their heads and senior staff have learned management systematically. This being the case, then communication would form the backbone of all successful structures.

The book, *Benefits from Theocratic Ministry School Education* (2001: 8) states, the ability to communicate effectively is an art. Not everyone does it well. That is the reason why I decided to explore the forms of effective communication that principals of public secondary schools can implement for effective school management.

48

NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION POLICY REGARDING COMMUNICATION IN SCHOOLS

Understanding the SA Schools Act (1997.8) states that "effective partnerships are generally characterized by:

- Mutual trust and respect

- Shared decision –making

- Shared goals and values

- Common vision

- Good teamwork

- Promotion of the interest of the partnership rather than those of the individual

- Respect for the roles of different partners

From the above list the reader can deduce the importance of effective communication in all schools. Every one of the characteristics is part and parcel of communication.

Part of clear, unambiguous management by the school management team is that all members must enunciate and consistently uphold the same code of conduct to fellow educators and learners. Under section 7 on school discipline, it shows that in order to achieve good discipline, every school must have a written code of conduct. The purpose of the code of conduct is to:

- Create a well-organised school so that effective learning and teaching can take place

- Promote self-discipline

- Encourage good behaviour

- Regulate conduct

The document First Steps: School Governance Starter Pack (1997: 7) mentions "the main job of the governing body is to help the school principal to organize and manage the school's activities in an effective and efficient way. In other words, it must help the principal to govern the school well. The organisation of teaching and learning at the school is also the responsibility of the principal. But the governing body guides the principal about school policy and the direction of the school. The National Department lays down broad guidelines for the effective management of schools and no doubt, effective communication is the golden thread that runs across management of schools.

Figure 3 below, helps us get a clearer picture on the main processes of managing and leading effective schools in S.A. The manual, "Managing and Leading Schools", 2002 discusses aspects of communication that are required for effective schools. If we look at figure 2 clockwise, the forms of communication necessary for effective schools are as follows: staff appraisal and development, staff induction and orientation, staff organization into groups, teams and learning networks, decision –making processes, behaviour, code of conduct, managing diversity and partnerships with the community. The National Department (2000: 12) also encourages management to create "the right school culture." Some of the features that define this are:

- Management support: the degree to which managers provide clear communication, assistance and support to their staff.

- Control: the number of rules and regulations, and the amount of direct supervision that is used to oversee and control staff and learner behaviour.

- Conflict tolerance: the degree to which school community members can talk openly about conflicts and criticisms.

50

- Communication pattern: the degree to which communication in the school is restricted to the formal hierarchy of authority.

- These are just a few examples showing the department's interest in the relevant forms of communication for effective school management.
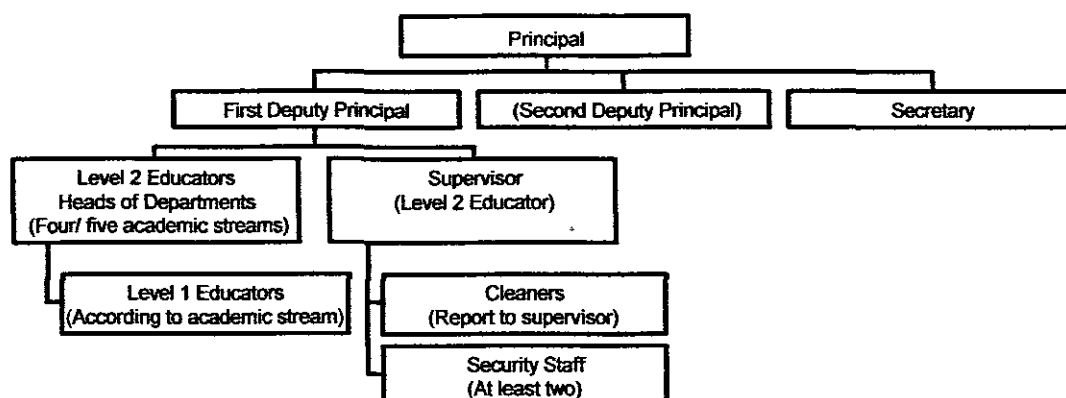
Figure 3: Organogram of a typical school management structure

The above Organogram shows the main processes, which are needed to run an effective school. In my research I would like to deal with these processes. The above Organogram shows the main processes of information flow/distortion of information: Circulars from the Department of Education are handed over to the principal's office and the principal reads them and put official stamp indicating that the circular was received by him/her on the specified date by school stamp. From the principal's office, the circulars will move to the secretary's office for record purposes. The secretary will pass them over to the first deputy to read them and also disseminate the information to the heads of departments concerned. The heads of departments will then pass it to the level one educators concerned then the educators will relate the information to the pupils if there is a need. In one-way or another, this information gets distorted due to miscommunication or misunderstanding thereof. By the time (it) the information reaches parents there is a breakdown in communication.

51

Same thing applies with cleaners and security staff, one may find that the information given to them by the secretary is not exactly one from the principal's office i.e. it is completely distorted.

Leadership is about guiding and inspiring. The members of school management teams (SMTs) are instructional leaders and they are responsible for taking the lead in putting the school curriculum into practice and improving it. At all times they ensure that there is a culture of learning and teaching in their school. Good instructional leadership is the path to good learning and teaching.

Who are the members of a school management team?

People are debating this question throughout the country now, I will say that the senior staff of the school. The principal, deputy principal and heads of department will almost certainly be members of the School Management Team (SMT). Whoever is in the SMT, one of their most important responsibilities is to give instructional leadership in the school.

The school Management Team is responsible for managing issues relating to the whole school curriculum. The heads of departments must manage specific issues relating to their particular learning areas/subjects

The stature of a school organogram

First and foremost, there is the principal on top who is the head of the institution, followed by his deputy who is in charge of the school in the principal's absentia. Depending on the enrolment of the school, some schools especially high or secondary schools have two deputy principals depending on their number of students. Others are allocated one deputy. The first and second deputies share their responsibilities. But most responsibilities are given to the first deputy principal then the rest to the second deputy. Both deputies report to the principal.

After the deputy or deputies, there comes the heads of departments (HODs) who are accountable to the deputy (ies). The number of HODs also depends on the type/size of the school and the streams of subjects they offer. In the case of my school that I used as an example, we have this type of Organogram as I pictured it above:

Firstly, there is the principal who is in charge of the institution. Because we have 1100 enrolment we have two deputy principals i.e. the first and the second deputy with different duties. As I mentioned prior that we are a comprehensive school with five subject streams, each stream has its own HOD who is in charge of the department. Those streams are: Commerce, Humanities, Languages, Literacy and Communication (LLC), Science and Trade. These HODs are divided into two and they report to the deputies in this fashion: Commerce, Humanities and Science report to the first deputy and Languages; Literacy and Communication, and Trade report to the second deputy. Under these HODs are level one educators i.e. under the commerce HOD there are eight level one educators who are teaching subjects from grade 8 up to grade 12. Under Humanities HOD, there are seven educators under Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC) there are ten L1 educators, as trade stream has 4 level educators and Science stream too has 7 level one educators.

We have also a secretary or clerk in our school that reports direct to the principal. She acts as a receptionist. Whoever comes to school is welcomed by her and then ushered to the principal's office. These are people like Department officials, parents, visitors or even sponsors. In the case of a parent wanting to see an educator or a learner it's the principal who sends someone to go and call the educator or learner from class, whilst the visitor is sitting in the principal's office.

We also have two securities in our school for safety reasons. In other schools they keep more than two of them depending on their financial constraints. Due to financial problems, with us we have only one for day (time) and one for night duty. Our motto says, "First things

first is cleanliness since cleanliness is next to Godliness." We have two cleaners who see to it that our school is clean entirely i.e. both the premises and buildings. All these people, the security (ies) and cleaners report to the secretary who acts as their supervisor, in return the supervisor reports to the first deputy principal, then the second deputy principal to the principal.

That is how our line of command goes. If any one of these people may decide to communicate otherwise, then trouble would start, i.e. miscommunication. This does not necessarily prohibit informal communication like greeting and whatever, i.e. the security can greet a parent and chat with him or her, but when it comes to formal conversation, that conversation must take place via the office and the minutes must be taken if necessary. Same thing applies with educators or learner's visitors, they can't just walk or move straight to the respective where the person concerned is, but they go via the office and escorted by security. This is done for security reasons. This was as a result of previous years instances where one would find that gangsters came to a school pretending as if they are part of students and then shot and killed a student or an educator and walk away unnoticed.

As part of my thesis I also looked at the exact responsibilities or duties of the (School Management Team (SMTs) i.e. the principals; deputy principals and heads of departments.

For an organisation of this nature every individual must know his or her role to play. This is done for improving communication and to minimise or do away with communication breakdown or miscommunication.

The information that I summarised here is from the manual called *School management teams Instructional Leadership*

Duties and Responsibilities of principals in public school
The main aim of the job:

To ensure that the scene is managed satisfactory and in compliance with applicable legislation, regulations and personnel administrative measures as prescribed.

To ensure that the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner and in accordance with approved policies.

Core duties and responsibilities of the job:

- General/Administrative

- To be responsible for the professional management of a public school.

- *To give proper instructions and guidelines for timetabling, admission and placement of learners.*

- To have various kinds of school accounts and records properly kept and to make the best use of funds for the benefit of the learners in consultation with the appropriate structures.

- To ensure a School Journal containing a record of all-important events connected with the school is kept.

- To make regular inspections of the schools to ensure that the school premises and equipment are being used properly and that good discipline is being maintained.

- To be responsible for the hostel and all related activities including the staff and learners, if one is attached to the school.

- To ensure that Departmental circulars and other information received, which affect members of the staff, are brought to their notice as soon as possible and are stored in an accessible manner.

- To handle all correspondence received at the school.

Teaching

To engage in class teaching as per workload of the relevant post level and the needs of the school.

To be a class *teacher* if required.

To assess and record the attainment of learners taught.

Personnel

Provide professional leadership within the school.

To guide and supervise the work and performance of all staff in the school and, if necessary, to discuss and write or countersign reports on teaching, support, non-teaching and other staff.

To observe class teaching and offer professional advice to educators where necessary.

To ensure that workloads are equitably distributed among the staff.

To be responsible for the development of staff teaching programmes, both school-based, school-focused and externally directed, and to assist educators, particularly new and inexperienced educators, in developing and achieving educational objectives in accordance with the needs of the school.

To participate in agreed school/educator appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management.

To ensure that all evaluation/forms of assessment conducted in the school are properly and effectively organised.

Interaction with stakeholders:

To serve on the governing body of the school and render all necessary assistance to the governing body in the performance of their functions in terms of the S.A. Schools Act (No.84 of 1996).

To participate in community activities in connection with educational matters and community building.

Extra- and co-curricular:

To serve on recruitment, promotion, advisory and other committees as required.

To play an active role in promoting extra- and co-curricular activities in the school and to plan major school functions and to encourage learners' voluntary participation in sports, educational and cultural activities organised by community bodies.

Communication:

To cooperate with members of the school staff and the School Governing Body in maintaining an efficient and smooth-running school.

To liaise with the Curcuit/Reagonal Office, Supplies Section, Personnel Section, Finance Section, and so on concerning administration, staffing, accounting, purchase of equipment, research and updating of statistics in respect of educators and learners.

To liasie with relevant structures regarding school curricula and curriculum development.

To meet parents concerning learners' progress and conduct.

To cooperate with the School Governing Body with regard to all aspects as specified in the S.A. Schools Act No. 84 of 1996.

To liase with other relevant government departments, for example departments of health and welfare, public work, and so on, as required.

To cooperate with universities, colleges and other agencies in relation to learners' records and performance as well as INSET and management development programmes.

To participate in Departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to and/or update professional views/standards.

To maintain contacts with sports, social, cultural and community organisations.

Duties and responsibilities of a deputy in a public school

Aim of the job:

To assist the principal in managing and promoting the education of learners in a proper manner.

To maintain a total awareness of the administrative procedures across the total range of school activities and functions.

Core duties and responsibilities of the job:

General/Administrative

To assist the principal in his/her duties and to deputise for the principal during his/her absence from school.

To assist the principal, or, if instructed, to be responsible for:

School administration, for example duty roster, arrangements to cover absent staff, internal and external evaluation and assessment, school calendar, admission of new learners, class streaming, school functions; and/or:

School finance and maintenance of services and buildings, for example planning and control of expenditure, allocation of funds/resources, the general cleanliness and state of repair of the school and its furniture and equipment, supervising annual stock-taking exercises.

Teaching

To engage in class teaching as per workload of the relevant post level and the needs of the school.

To participate in agreed school/educator appraisal processes in order to

regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management.

Interaction with stakeholders

To supervise/advise the Representative Council of Learners.

Extra- and co-curricular

To be responsible for school curriculum and pedagogy, for example choice of textbooks, coordinating the work of subject committees and groups, timetabling, INSET and developmental programmes, and arranging teaching practice.

To assist the principal in overseeing learner counselling and guidance, careers, discipline, compulsory attendance and the general welfare of all learners.

To assist the principal to play an active role in promoting extra- and co-curricular activities in school and in participation in sports and cultural activities organised by the community bodies.

To participate in Departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to and/or update one's professional view/standards.

Communication

To meet with parents concerning learners' progress and conduct.

To liase on behalf of the principal with relevant government departments.

To maintain contact with sporting, social, cultural and community organisation.

To assist the principal in liaison work with all organisations, structures, committees, groups, and so on crucial to the school.

Duties and responsibilities of a head of department in a public school

The aim of the job:

To engage in class teaching, be responsible for the effective functioning of the department and to organise relevant/related extra-curricular activities so as to ensure that the subject, learning area or phase and the education of the learners are promoted in a proper manner.

Core duties of the job:

General/Administrative

To assist with the planning and management of:

School stock, textbooks and equipment for the department;

The budget for the department; and

Subject work schemes.

To perform or share one or more non-teaching administrative duties such as:

Secretary to general staff meeting and/or others;

Fire drill and first aid;

Timetabling;

Fee collection;

Staff welfare; and

Accidents.

To act on behalf of the principal during his/her absence from school if the school does not qualify for a deputy principal or in the event both of them are absent.

Teaching

To engage in class teaching as per workload of the relevant post level and the needs of the school.

To be a class teacher if required.

To assess and to record the attainment of learners taught.

Personnel

To advise the principal regarding the division of work among the staff in that department.

To participate in agreed school/educator appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management.

Extra- and co-curricular

To be in charge of a subject, learning area or phase.

To jointly develop the policy for that department.

To coordinate evaluation/assessment, homework, written assignments, and so on, of all the subjects in that department.

To provide and coordinate guidance:

On the latest ideas on approaches to the subject, method, techniques, evaluations, aids, and so on in their field, and effectively convey these to the staff members concerned;

On syllabuses, schemes of work, homework, remedial work, and so on;

To inexperienced staff members; and

On the educational welfare of learners in the department.

To control:

The work of educators and learners in the department;

Reports submitted to the principal as required;

Mark sheets;

Test and examination papers as well as memoranda; and

The administrative responsibilities of staff members.

To share in the responsibilities of organising and conducting extra- and co-curricular activities.

Communication:

To cooperate with colleagues in order to maintain a good teaching standard and progress among the learners and to foster administrative efficiency within the department and the school.

To collaborate with educators of the other schools in developing the department and conducting extra- and co-curricular activities.

To meet parents and discuss with them the progress and conduct of their children.

To participate in Departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to and/or update one's professional views/standards.

To cooperate with further and higher education institutions in relation to learners' records and performance and career opportunities.

To maintain contact with sporting, social, cultural and community organisations.

To have contact with the public on behalf of the principal.

Kzn Department Of Education And Culture: Views On Communication

The KZN department of Education also stresses effective communication in schools. Circulars have been sent out to schools where workshops were conducted.

62

HRM circular No. 75 of 2000 mentioned Norms and Standards for educators and two out of the seven roles of educators dealt with the following namely: Leader, administrator and manager and Community, citizenship and pastoral care. NDR circular no. 117 of 2001 informed the principals of " Date amendment to invitation to attend course: The Art of Articulation and speaking in public. NDR Notice of No. 14 of 2002 carried out an I.T. Skills Needs Analysis-Non Educators. However, this type of skill is necessary for management, especially the principal of the school. Workshops were also held with principals and deputy principals in terms of "Change management."

The manual *Managing and Leading Schools* (2000: II) shows the main processes that are needed to manage an effective school by the principal and other members of the SMT. Figure 3, clockwise, indicates how important the KZN department of Education and Culture views organisational communication in schools today. The processes such as staff appraisal and development; staff induction and orientation; staff organisation into groups, teams and learning networks; decision making processes; behaviour, codes of conduct; managing diversity and partnership with the community deal with forms of communication that are essential for the running of an effective school. Each one of these processes involves different communication strategies that will ensure success in the implementation of the process. A few examples taken from the Resource guide *School Development Plan* by the department of Education and Culture, KZN explains under the section Staff appraisal and development that "within a school, educators need feedback and development. Regular feedback on performance helps staff to assess their strengths and weaknesses and to make the necessary adjustments to their performance." (2000: 8). The section dealing with Staff organization into groups, teams and learning

63

networks highlights the point that "Teamwork is the thread, which runs through all systems in an effective school." (2000: 9).

The manual, *Managing and Leading Schools* (2002: 36) also looks at school managers as being inviting. They do this by "communicating positively." This type of communication encourages the staff to follow the guidance offered by the principal. The principal needs to always "show that you are also not perfect." It would be wise to "admit that you lack knowledge in a particular area, acknowledge that you do not have the answers for everything and that you are willing to take risks and that you will make mistakes and grow in the process." School managers need to "first cool off" to "avoid the temptation to react when they are angry. They should calm down and wait before they answer otherwise they may regret their hasty actions." She/he also needs to "spread positive news." This is to inform members of the staff, "how good they are and how well they can perform. It further goes on to show that invitational leadership, "is a very powerful tool for school managers. It is a valuable basis for effective school management and if implemented, it brings out the best in the school community."

The above manual also encourages principals to do the following if they are inviting:

- To attend courses in order to contribute to and/or update professional views/standards.

- To liase with relevant structures regard curriculum development.

- To co-operate with members of the school staff and the school governing body in maintaining an efficient and smooth-running school.

- To liase with the circuit/regional office, supplies section, personnel section, finance section, and so on, concerning administration, staffing, accounting,

purchase of equipment, research and updating of statistics in respect of educators and learners.

- To meet parents concerning learners' progress and conduct.
- To co-operate with the school governing body with regard to all aspects in the SA Schools Act, 1996.
- To liase with other relevant governing departments, for example Department of Health and Welfare, Public Works, and so on, as required.
- To co-operate with universities, colleges and other agencies in relation to learners' records and performance as well as INSET and management development programmes.
- To maintain contorts, social, cultural and community organisations.

The duties and responsibilities of a principal in a public school are recorded in *towards effective school Management manual 1* (2002: 69) under the section Communication. Nine points with regards to communication are listed for the principal.

These nine points encompasses the role that principals play in the school so that effective management can be achieved through the forms of communication. The very first point in the duties of the principal indicates the importance of organisational communication in the school as an organisation.

The Department of Education and Culture in module four, *Leadership, Resource Materials for Women in Education Management* (2000: 34) emphasizes that principals play a key role in any needs that take place in school. It refers to the term "organisational change" as meeting the needs of the community, the school has to adapt to changing circumstances, regardless of the causes. The same manual (2000: 36) also lists the factors that contribute towards positive change in school. They are:

65

- Effective communication

- Healthy group relations

- An open organisational climate

- Effective leadership styles.

Notice that effective communication ranks first on the list. This is due to the fact that effective communication is a prerequisite for healthy group relations, and that healthy group relations will depend on an open organisational climate, characterised by a non-autocratic communication culture. Because school leadership is a team effort the open organisational climate in turn will lay the basis for members of the leadership team contribute their particular leadership style in order to fulfil a particular leadership role and in so doing complement those of the other team members.

The Department of Education and Culture is a firm adherent to the government's policy of "Batho Pele," which means 'people first.' This deals with "service delivery" in all schools. . According to module five, "one of the most significant skills that we need in customer service is the ability to communicate properly." (2000: 87).

VIEWS FROM OTHER RECOGNISED ORGANISATIONS

There are many teacher organisations and non-governmental organisations that play a key role in the development in the education in KZN. Many are stressing the value and importance of communication strategies in the school environment and the articles quoted will reveal the emphasis placed on principals on the implementation of effective communication in the schools.

In an article by Wilmot James, associate editor of the Cape Argus and a professor at the UCT Graduate School of Business, speaking at the annual conference of South African Principals Association said:

A culture of communication in schools needed to be encouraged. It means resorting school governing bodies so that they become dynamos of activity committed to the best interests of the school, rather than fiefdoms of personal control or sites of bitter conflict.

<div align="right">

The Teacher, November 2001: 8.

</div>

An article, *Manifestation on values, Education and Democracy*, quoted The Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal at the Saamtrek Conference, February 2001 that:

Values cannot simply be asserted; they must be put on the table, be debated, be negotiated, be synthesised, be modified, be earned. And this process, this dialogue, is in and of itself a value-a South African value-to be cherished.

<div align="right">

The Teacher, Volume 5, Number 10, October 2001:10

</div>

In the same article under Section 2: Educational Strategies, The 16 steps to success, it listed, "Nurturing a culture of communication and participation in schools as number one of the 16 steps. The article goes on to discuss the value of communication in the school. It makes the statement, "Dialogue is one of the values most desired-and most lacking-in South African schools. This emerges from extensive research at schools, an exercise conducted by the Department of Education to take soundings among learners, educators and parents." (*The Teacher* Vol. 5, Number 10, October 2001: 6) The article quotes the report as stating, for educators; this is felt strongly in the relationship between school management and the national Department of Education. The way nurturing a culture of Communication and participation can be done is by, giving principals the kind of management training

that will help them to mobilise their staff effectively. (*The Teacher*, Vol. 5 Number 10, October 2001: 6)

In another article entitled, *Teachers Create Dialogue Every Day* stated, The immense challenges facing our education system can only be addressed by engaging the professionals, the teachers, and other education personnel, in constructive dialogue drawing upon their expertise, acknowledging their key role in the implementation of new policies. (In *Contact*, Vol. 8, No. 4, November 2002: 1).

Janette Bennet states communication is essential to good management. We communicate everyday, but few of us have learned how to do it effectively. And poor communication does not go well with good management and leadership.

From these articles it is imperative that school principals devices means and implement them to make communication strategies in their schools so that the school will function effectively as an organisation.

COMMUNICATION AND THE FULFILMENT OF HUMAN NEEDS

Maslow, a well-known psychologist, (1954; 1968) stated that all humans have five basic needs and these can be seen in figure 4. The pyramid shows the hierarchy of human needs.
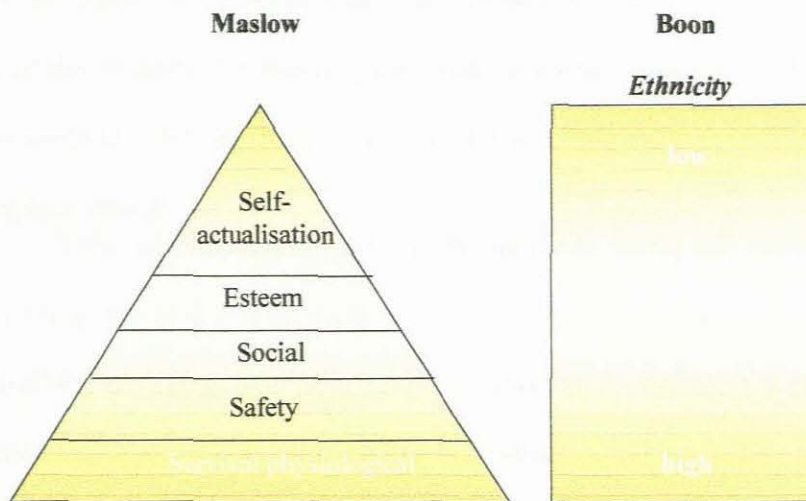
Figure 4: Maslow's hierarchy of human needs: Mersham & Skinner, 1999: 69

In the following section I am summarising Mwamwenda:

According to Maslow man has an inherent capacity for constructive growth, as well as the capability to exercise qualities such as love, kindness, generosity and honesty. However, such qualities can flourish only if provided with an appropriate cultural environment. As has already been mentioned, the hierarchy of needs consists of physiological, safety, love, belonging, self-esteem and self-actualising needs. Beyond these there are other important needs such as cognitive, aesthetic and transcendental needs.

Physiological needs

Homeostasis is the human body's capacity and tendency to maintain a state of equilibrium (balance) by ensuring that it has an adequate supply of water, fats, salt, calcium, protein, oxygen, minerals, vitamins, hormones, etc. If the body lacks some chemical or food value the individual will tend to develop a specific appetite or hunger for that particular food element.

Physiological needs are fundamental to human survival. If the organism lacks food, safety, love and esteem, the need for food will be the most dominant. However,

69

once the physiological needs have been satisfied, new and higher needs will emerge. Hence the rationale for asserting that needs is hierarchically organised. Some of the physiological needs are food, water, sex, rest and oxygen.

Psychological needs

Some of the factors, which threaten the safety of individuals, include quarrelling, physical assault; separation and divorce, while a death in a family may be particularly terrifying. Similarly, a parent's or teacher's outbursts of rage or threats of punishment directed at a child, calling him names, speaking to him harshly, shaking him, handling him roughly or actual physical punishment are likely to elicit panic and terror in the child.

In the event that his basic needs are met, a person will pursue safety needs, which include an environment that is stable, predictable, and free from chaos and threatening characteristics. In the case of a young child, he needs to know that he is accepted and protected from bullying, sickness or discord between his parents. An adult seeks safety by securing a stable, well-paid job accompanied by benefits, a healthy bank account, or enough productive land on which to grow sufficient food from one growing season to the next. The safety needs of a healthy, normal adult are satisfied if his society is peaceful and smooth-running, and enables its members to feel safe from wild animals, extreme temperatures, criminals, assault, murder and tyranny. However, there are people who become neurotic or abnormal because their psychological interpretation is of a world that is hostile, overwhelming and threatening.

The belongingness and love needs

Every normal individual wants to know that someone cares for him or her and that s/he has someone to care for. Most people want friends, a partner or spouse, and, ultimately, children. Love means being tender, affectionate and caring, and receiving

70

similar treatment in return. It must be a two-way affair to prevent it from being unstable or resulting in alienation, rejection and divorce. Love involves giving and receiving love, for to love and to be loved is vital to personality development.

Self-esteem needs

Most people have a strong desire for a stable and firmly based high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others. Esteem needs include the desire for strength, achievement, adequacy, confidence in the face of the world, independence and freedom, recognition, attention, importance or appreciation, reputation and prestige. Satisfaction of these needs results in self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and feelings of adequacy and of being useful and necessary in the world.

People long for self-confidence and mastery and recognition and appreciation of these by others is important in their lives. A person may experience genuine self-esteem as a result of certain achievements and of having developed a certain level of competence. Failure to achieve esteem needs results in feelings of inferiority, weakness and helplessness, which in turn may lead to basic discouragement or compensatory or neurotic tendencies.

Self-actualisation

When all his other needs are fulfilled a person will not be satisfied if he does not achieve what he is capable of achieving. What man can be, he must be. This tendency is know as *self-actualisation*, which means becoming more and more what one is and everything that one is capable of becoming.

According to Maslow, this is the culmination, the ultimate in human growth, and consists of bringing one's potentials and capacities to fruition. For example, some people have the potential and capacity to be excellent farmers, leaders, teachers, doctors, nurses, mechanics, carpenters, technicians, politicians, musicians, lawyers, etc. They must discover this for

71

themselves and do all they can to achieve what they are best fitted for, so that ultimately they attain self-fulfilment, satisfaction and happiness.

Cognitive needs
Man has an inherent capacity for exploring and getting to know and understand himself, those he comes into contact with as well as his environment as a whole. This partly explains the tremendous quantity of learning to which man is exposed both formally and informally throughout his lifetime. Failure to acquire such knowledge and understanding leaves man to the domination of ignorance and fear of the unknown and less in control of his destiny.

Aesthetic needs
Man has a special appreciation and enjoyment of beauty as reflected in nature in the form of plants, animals, human beings, works of art, symmetry, order, and magnificent natural scenes of water, mountains, valleys and sky. An exposure to all or some of these goes a long way towards satisfying man's aesthetic needs.

Transcendence
As term indicates, man needs to move beyond his physiological and psychological needs to a situation where he finds himself one with nature, cosmos and the universe as whole. He enters a period when he assumes a spiritual state of being, not necessarily in the religious sense, but in so far as he is indistinguishable from serenity, tranquillity and peace of mind in their highest form. He is one with himself, his fellow men, nature, his creator, ancestors and the universe and transcends both space and time.

Characteristics of a self-actualising person
Attaining Maslow's highest level of personality is of vital importance not only for pupils, but also for their leaders as teachers and individuals. Maslow has proposed a number of characteristics of self-actualising persons, which are listed below:

- They are capable of making objective and fairly accurate judgements of people, events, ideas and future trends.

- They know and understand themselves and their feelings, motives, strengths, weaknesses, etc.

- They pursue their goals with determination and zeal and achieve excellence in such goals.

- They are not too concerned with what others think of them as long as they are sure that what they are doing is right-they are motivated intrinsically rather than extrinsically.

- Whatever they achieve, be it a good marriage, promotion at work, a child, a new plot or home, or a plantation of coffee, bananas, etc, is looked upon as a blessing with constant admiration and appreciation, thereby contributing meaning to their existence.

- They experience moments of peak experience involving ecstasy, perfection, wonder and awe resulting from love, sex, art, music, creativity, discovery or splendid performance in a given task.

- They are interested in people and assist them when necessary. They delight in others' achievement and success.

- They can make friends with all types of people, irrespective of their tribe, nationality, sex, race or station in life. Discrimination is not part of their lifestyle. As a corollary, they take a strong stand against injustice, cruelty, inequality and the exploitation of others.

- They have definite concepts of wrong and right and are prepared to accept responsibility for their mistakes. They do not explain away their errors or blame others for them.

I have no intention of doing a detailed study of cognition in communication but just an outline on how different individuals rate cognition with communication.

According to Mersham & Skinner (1999: 64), the meaning of a message resides in the recipient's interpretation of it. From this we gather that communication plays a vital role as a process of knowledge construction. This includes transmission of ideas, thoughts, feelings, and experiences by interpersonal and interpersonal communication. So the communicator has to think very carefully and plan his communication so that the recipient understands what is told to him/her. The communicator needs to take into account some barriers to the reception, understanding and acceptance of information. Some of these could include needs, anxieties, attitudes and prejudgements. This is applicable to the principal of the school who has to constantly take cognisance of the way in which the information is put across to members of his staff. Gordon (1996: 230) states individuals bring in a diversity of cognitive skills, experience, and knowledge to decision making.

How does a principal deal with a conflict situation? Her/his understanding of how people behave and how situations or environments cause people to behave the way they do (*Managing conflict Module 7* 2000: 27) will assist the principal to deal effectively with the situation. *Module 7* (2000: 28) quotes two models such as the *Process Model* and the *Structural Model* to analyse the conflict behaviour. The *Process Model* shows the various stages that the principal must go through before s/he can resolve the conflict situation. These are:

- Frustration

- Conceptualisation

- Behaviour

74

- Interaction

- Outcome

The principal may become frustrated because s/he had planned a major event in the school and one of the members neglected or was incapable of doing certain things for the event. However, the principal's perception of the situation will determine the action that s/he will take to remedy the situation. (*Managing conflict module* 7. 2000: 28). What an individual may see and how s/he interprets them influence perceptions. Hellriegel & Staude (2001: 320) Encoding and decoding skills are based on the person's ability to perceive a message and situation accurately. It is important to note that only effective communication strategy and "open and honest" discussion will lead to the resolution of the conflict. So cognition does play a key role in effective communication at schools.

Through language, however, we can assess (in everyday contexts) what may be inside someone's mind. Language may be observed as utterance, dialogue, or discourse (Mantero 2002a, 2002b). An utterance according to Bakhtin (1986) carries with it the possibility of being responded to, and in turn, creating dialogue.

Dirven & Verspoor (1998: preface) states, Language is one of our most articulated means of expressing ideas and thoughts. The cognitive perspective also holds that language is part of the cognitive system, which comprises perception, emotions, categorization, abstraction processes and reasoning. We can make our fellow humans aware of our mental states by using words.

Even in the article *Edward de Bono's Smart Thinking* (De Bono 2003:1) states, Good thinking is not a matter of intelligence, not a gift- it is a skill that can be practiced and developed like any other. Certainly this amplifies the statement that communication skills need to be developed just as one would practice good thinking.

INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN SCHOOLS

This form of communication refers to the way in which we communicate with ourselves. The messages we give ourselves help us to form opinions about ourselves. This is known as *a self-image*, which we build up as we interact with other people. (Module 2. *Effective Communication*, 2000: 88). In this form of communication no one else but the individual communicates with herself or himself. All messages are accepted and modified by you. This aids one to make proper and wise decisions with regards to things that could take place in your environment. This process also occurs simultaneously while you could be engaging in the interpersonal communication. Therefore Mersham & Skinner (1999: 89-90) concludes, intrapersonal communication is the basis of communication in all other contexts and so occurs in all communication acts. They further state intrapersonal communication is a prerequisite for all communication and that it has also a far-reaching influence upon the individual, shaping our behaviour and attitudes.

The principal can either develop a positive or negative self-image, which can affect his/her role as an effective manager. In the process of intrapersonal communication the principal should take into account the individuality of each person that he comes into contact with. People look at things differently and this may differ from the perspective of the manager. Therefore as a manager, the principal must bear in mind that the staff may differ in terms with what you have decided for example the principal may rank entities in a particular order but this differ from the members of the staff. His/her values, attitudes, likings, opinions, beliefs may differ from what the staff believes. He has to accommodate his staff on these issues.

Some of the aspects of communication that were asked in the questionnaire were namely: empathising and commiserating, judging the merits of a case, ranking entities in order of priority, adjudicating, giving feedback.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN SCHOOLS

In each school the principal can use unique forms of communication to communicate effectively and efficiently. As Erasmas-Kritzinger (2000: 2) indicates the quality of communication within the organisation: openness of communication channels/ handling of conflict portrays the personality of the organisation. The Teacher unions and the Department of Education emphasize a need for transparency in what goes on in the school and especially from Management. Therefore such information pertaining to the educators can be gained through communication, as I would outline in this section.

Most aspects of communication would overlap with each other or flow into each other. I tried to separate them for the purpose of the study. I listed all the different forms of communication in my questionnaire and have tried to group them under the forms of organisational communication but again they are not in watertight compartments. An example would be conversation that can be grouped under interpersonal, intrapersonal, small group, intraorganisational and interorganisational communication. A principal needs to note that s/he must be skilful in using the forms of communication as a manager. Skilful means that the principal has acquired expertise, technique or know-how, either through education or training. As such, you are skilful in guiding, counselling, training, controlling or supervising the activities of your team. (Module 7, *Managing conflict*. 2000: 39). The forms of organisational communication that were chosen will be discussed below.

77

Communication between the principal and departmental officials

In the course of his daily duties at school the principal makes contact with officials from the education department: people from the head office, the regional office and the circuit office visit the school for a variety of reasons. The principal's attitude, reaction and conduct towards these people, who are mostly senior professional people, must at all times be professional. Professional conduct implies, among other things, that:

- Visitors must be received hospitably and peacefully;

- They should be made welcome on arrival and must never be made to wait for the principal;

- All other matters, however urgent or important, must be left in abeyance until the visitors have left;

- Careful attention must be paid to what they say (if necessary the principal must take notes);

- He must react promptly to their request;

- He must do everything in his power to ensure that matters run smoothly during such a visit;

- All relevant documents must be at hand and ready for perusal.

A principal should never hesitate to obtain advice and assistance from these visitors. A principal who does not make use of the expert knowledge of his superiors is not making the most of the opportunities offered to him.

Liaison between the departmental offices and the principal takes place mainly through correspondence. Written official directives and documents are regularly sent to his office.

Except when he is instructed to do otherwise, a principal's liaison with Head Office must always be via the Circuit Office. He should make constantly liaise with his (circuit inspector) SEM to keep him abreast of matters concerning his school. The circuit inspector is the person who has to make decisions in accordance with departmental regulations and directives in the interests of the school, especially in emergency situations.

A teacher may not arrange or conduct an interview with a departmental official without the principal's knowledge.

Communication between the principal and governing bodies of schools

Most schools have governing bodies-state schools have governing councils, and community schools have the then school committees. The constitution, qualifications for membership, duties, powers and functions of these bodies are determined by Government Notice (No R828 of 30 April 1982). These bodies are the official link between the parents and the school and they are also the officially recognized bodies through which the parents can make representations through the circuit and regional offices to the Department regarding matters related to the school's welfare.

Through them the parents have a say in aspects such as the appointment of staff and the management of the school funds. The principal should respect their rights and make sure that his handling of matters related to the governing body is correct and beyond criticism. He must be especially meticulous in his handling of school funds.

It is recommended that the principal convene a general parents' meeting annually with the approval and co-operation of his governing body. This will enable him to inform the parents about their children's achievements, progress and

79

difficulties at school, their (the parents') responsibilities towards the school, the state of the school funds etc.

Communication between the principal and parents

A principal who is honest, sincere and dedicated and who is genuinely interested in the pupils, will find that he is trusted by the community and by parents and that they are prepared to give him and the school their full support. There is interdependence between school and home (principal\teacher and parents). A school cannot cope with its educational task without the co-operation of the parents; neither can the parents succeed in their educational task without the support of the school.

For the above reason it is clear that a healthy parent-principal relationship should be fostered. A principal must do all that is honourable and right to secure the goodwill and co-operation of parents and his office should always be open to them.

Parents, like all other visitors, should be courteously and warmly received and assured that whatever they wish to discuss will be given attention. A parent must always leave the principal's office with a feeling of satisfaction and with assurance that he has been treated with respect.

A parent who visits the school to complain about a teacher should first be calmed down by the principal in his office and assured that he himself will investigate the complaint and then do whatever needs to be done. If it appears that the parent is unreasonable or wrong, the principal should point this out to him tactfully but firmly.

Co-operation does not mean servility or that the principal has to agree to any unfair demands of parents. That would be a fatal mistake and would undermine his authority and position. He should not be dictated to by a parent on the subject of his professional work in the school. Should someone try to do so, the principal should resist him in a tactful and courteous manner.

Communication between principals

There is a very special kind of relationship between principals. They are not only officials working in the same education department but colleagues serving the same ideals and vocation. This relationship should be marked by qualities of courtesy, loyalty, openness, trust, friendship and empathy.

It is, however, a professional relationship and one principal may never encroach on the territory of another. No principal has any jurisdiction over the pupils of another school and should not get involved with the affairs of another school.

Principals should not try to recruit staff from other schools as this may handicap any sound relationship he may have had with these schools.

Communication between the principal in the community

The principal is in constant contact with different people, bodies and groups in the community, such as churches, administration boards, community councils and welfare organisations. In all these contact situations he does not only represent the school but the education department. It is necessary that his conduct and his manner should be worthy of his position as principal.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discussed the use of effective communication in education. I started by explaining what is meant by communication in education and also explained what professionalism means. Firstly, I started by discussing forms of communication required in foundation phase classrooms. I started by touching on Outcomes Based Education issue since it is the most recent way of communication between educators and pupils. Then I proceeded to how principals should communicate with the departmental officials. I also explained how principals should communicate with school governing bodies. I also touched on the importance of

smooth relationship or communication between the principals of schools and parents, the principals and other school as well as the principal and community since in all these contact situations he/she does not only represent the school but the education department and as well as his/her manner of communication should be worthy of his/her position as principal. With an aid of organogram I also highlighted the lines of command in a school set-up, different duties of different people were mentioned. Also Maslow's hierarchy of human needs was illustrated and discussed accordingly.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will give a concise characterisation of the method I used to collect, systematize and analyse the result of my research regarding miscommunication and communication breakdown between schools and parents in urban settings. I will begin by explaining how I gained access to the respondents who completed my questionnaires.

PERMISSIONS TO CONDUCT THE SURVEY

Written permission to conduct the survey among principals in the then North Durban region was sought from Doctor D.W.M. Edley, Director of Support Services and the District Centre Managers by my supervisor. The first page of the questionnaire constituted an explanatory letter from my supervisor to principals, explaining to them the nature of my research and appealing to them to participate. Therefore, permission to conduct the survey was obtained from all authority structures, from the director of Education right to the level of the principals themselves.

DISSEMINATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

With these permissions in hand I personally delivered the questionnaires to 500 principals and also personally collected 387 completed ones within two weeks of disseminating them between October and November of 2002.

Generally principals of schools were very co-operative. Some called in the Heads of Departments and obtained their assistance in the distribution and collection of questionnaires in their schools.

REPRESENTATIVENESS OF MY RESEARCH SAMPLE

According to the Provincial Education Management Information Services (EMIS), there are 568 primary and secondary schools in the North Durban Region. According to figure 9.8 in Leedy (1997: 211) I needed 234 responses for 600 respondents in order to have a sufficient sample that would allow me to extrapolate the results of my research to all schools in the North Durban region. According to the same table in Leedy a sample of 384 would have been enough to represent 100, 000 principals. This implies that my results could be extrapolated to all principals in the greater Durban regions, and that with certain limitations placed on the interpretation of my results, it could arguably also be considered typical of other metropolitan regions in South Africa.

With regard to the KZN Department of Education, the North Durban Region responded very well. The letter seeking permission was sent in September 2002 and they responded in November 2002, after several attempts of contact to the department. Together with their positive response I received telephone call from the Support Services in the North Durban Region stating that they had no intention of preventing me from carrying out research, and they assured me of the assistance. Although this set me back timewise, I thoroughly enjoyed conducting the fieldwork. A more positive response from principals of schools for assistance would have assisted me greatly.

84

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Five hundred questionnaires were prepared to research this problem. All were directed to principals for schools in urban settings. The respondents were required to respond either in a "yes or "no" response designed questions.

The questionnaire heading

Text here

Fifty questions for primary & secondary school principals

About the forms of communication employed at your school

Researcher: Mr. B.M. Majozi
Supervisor: Prof. R.M. Klopper
Department of Communication Science
University of Zululand (Durban-Umlazi Campus)

Figure 5: The questionnaire heading information

This was designed so that the cover page could create a professional outlook for principals who would normally be attracted to a document that is professionally done and creates an eagerness to complete the questionnaire and forward it to the sender as soon as possible. Secondly, to identify myself as a researcher to the respondents so that they would know whom I am. By putting Prof. R.M. Klopper's details, I wanted to create credibility into my research. University of Zululand (Durban-Umlazi Campus) is my institution of which the respondents must know.

To the principal

We need your help to assess the forms of communication employed by your school.

Although we would like you to help us, you do not have to take part in this survey. If you do not want to take part, just return the blank questionnaire to the researcher.

What you say in this questionnaire will remain private and confidential. No one will be able to trace your opinions back to you as a person.

This questionnaire has five parts:

<u>Part 1</u> asks general particulars about you and your school.

<u>Part 2</u> asks what contact information your school solicits from parents.

<u>Part 3</u> asks about the forms of communication that you employ to contact parents

<u>Part 4</u> asks about the forms of communication that you employ when you communicate with persons or organizations that sponsor events or facilities at your school.

<u>Part 5</u> asks what proactive communication plans your school has in place in case of a crisis or a disaster.

Please answer the questions as truthfully as you can. Also, please be sure to read and follow the directions for each part. This will help us a lot if you do. If you do not follow the directions, it will make it harder for us to do our project.

Do NOT put your name anywhere on this questionnaire. We will put a secret code number for you at the top of the page so only the researchers doing this project can identify who you are.

We are only asking you about things that you and other educators should feel comfortable telling us. However, if you don't feel comfortable answering a question, you can leave it blank. For those questions you do answer, your responses will be kept top secret.

Mr. Majozi will have disseminated the questionnaire to you via a venue where principals periodically converge for meetings. Please complete it as a matter of **high priority** and return it to that centre where he will collect it again.

Please use a **pen** to fill in the required information, or tick off the option that you select.

_____

Prof. R M Klopper

HOD: Communication Science (Durban)

Figure 6: To the principal who must fill in the information

This section identifies the principals as the target respondents of the survey. It reassures them of the voluntary and confidential nature of the survey and presents them with a brief preview of the five different areas of organisational communication that are in the

questionnaire. Brief instructions on how to complete the questionnaire are followed by the signature, identity and rank of my supervisor, emphasising the official nature of my research.

Thank you very much for filling in this questionnaire

Figure 7: To the principal who must fill in the information

Since the respondents were not duly bound to fill in this questionnaire, I felt it was my duty to thank them. So that in future when I request them to assist me with the same kind of information, they will do it without any hesitation. In other words I was displaying my manners.

Practice questions

A. I am a principal at the following type of school

        Primary school   Secondary school   Comprehensive school

B. I am _____ years old.

C. Parents attend parents' meetings

    Never   Sometimes   Often   Regularly

Figure 8: Practice questions

Practice questions were meant for them to feel at ease so that they will be in a position to fill in the next sections, which in my view are more demanding, to the respondents. They were practising so they would know the exact information I was looking for. This was going to eliminate the possible mistakes. Since they had practice section, they would minimise their errors or mistakes when they were doing the real questionnaire.

Part 1: general particulars about you and your school
(Here the real questionnaire begins)

Please provide the following general information about yourself and your school:

1.   I am the principal at the following type of school

          ❑ Primary school   ❑ Secondary school ❑ Comprehensive
school

     I am _____ years old.

     I am a: ❑Female   ❑Male

     I have been principal for _____ years

     There are _____ female learners and _____ male
learners in my school

Figure 9: General particulars about you and your school

I was looking for personal information about respondents and the schools they head. I

may   find that the communication   is far better in high schools or primary schools. The

information was going to help me to find out which schools seem to have better

communication structures. (Primary schools or Secondary schools; female headed or male

headed schools)

Part 2: contact information that your school solicits from parents

Explanation: *Contact information* is information about children's or guardians that you and other
educators can use to contact them. Which of the following details does your school solicit from
parents/ guardians for each learner?

Postal address of parents/ guardians:
❑   Yes   ❑   No

Postal address of sponsor (e.g. church denomination, employer of a parent, company giving a
bursary):
❑   Yes   ❑   No

Residential address of parents/ guardians:
❑   Yes   ❑   No

Residential address of child:
❑   Yes   ❑   No

Work address of at least one parent/ guardian:
❑   Yes   ❑   No

Residential telephone number:
❑   Yes   ❑   No

Work telephone number:
❑   Yes   ❑   No

Cell phone number of at least one parent/ guardian:
❑   Yes   ❑   No

Telephone number of family doctor:
❑   Yes   ❑   No

Emergency Telephone number of neighbour/ friend/ relative:

❑   Yes   ❑   No

The e-mail address of at least one of the parents/ guardians:

❑   Yes   ❑   No

Figure 10: Contact information that your school solicits from parents

This section was meant to find out how each individual school communicates with the parents. This information was going to be crucial in finding out whether the school does communicate with parents or guardians.

PART 3: THE FORMS OF COMMUNICATION THAT YOUR SCHOOL EMPLOYS WHEN DEALING WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Which of the following forms of communication does your school employ to communicate with parents/ guardians?

Circulars (dealing with routine matters) given to learners to hand to their parents:

o   Yes   o   No

Letters (dealing with official matters) given to learners to hand to their parents:

o   Yes   o   No

89

Letters (dealing with official matters) posted directly to their parents:

o Yes   o No

Phone calls to parents regarding specific urgent problems involving their child:

o Yes   o No

Grade-specific notes to parents given to learners to hand to their parents, inviting them and their children to progress meetings:

o Yes   o No

Grade-specific notes posted directly to parents inviting them and their children to progress meetings:

o Yes   o No

Written report cards reflecting the progress of learners in specific learning areas, given to learners to hand to their parents:
o Yes   o No

Monthly school newsletter, informing parents about regular school events and special school events.

o Yes   o No

Notes on report cards requesting parents to make an appointment for a personal interview with subject teacher/s regarding the progress of their child:

❑Yes   ❑No

Direct phone calls to parents requesting them make an appointment for a personal interview with subject teacher/s regarding the progress of their child:

o Yes   o No

Announcements over Ukhozi FM regarding annual general meetings between parents, staff and the school governing body:

o Yes   o No

Announcements in Ilanga regarding annual general meetings between parents, staff and the school governing body:

o Yes   o No

Figure 11: The forms of communication that your school employs with parents/ guardians

I wanted to find out how regular the schools are in using the radio if at all they use it, as a form of communicating with parents. Also to find out whether the school use print media (news papers) to communicate with parents.

PART 4: THE FORMS OF COMMUNICATION THAT YOUR SCHOOL EMPLOYS WITH SPONSORS

Which forms of communication does your school use when communicating with persons or organizations that sponsor facilities or events at your school?

My school does not have sponsors:
❑ Yes ❑ No

By personal telephone calls:

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ My school's telephone does not work

By personal letters:

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ My school does not have an active postal box

By acknowledging sponsors in our school newsletter:

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ My school does not publish a regular newsletter

By acknowledging sponsors during assembly:

❑ Yes ❑ No

By acknowledging sponsors in my school's annual school magazine:

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ My school does not publish an annual magazine

By inviting sponsors to a special assembly and handing over letters or tokens of appreciation:

❑ Yes ❑ No

In another way (Please stipulate): _____

Figure 12: The forms of communication that your school employs with sponsors

91

Here, I wanted to find out whether the schools have sponsors and how regular do they communicate with those sponsors. Since sponsors are crucial stakeholders in education, the schools that have sponsors need to communicate with their sponsors on regular basis, e.g. by sending them financial report.

Part 5: proactive communication plans during crises and disasters

Explanation: A proactive plan for crisis and disaster communication is a plan that has been designed, implemented and tested <u>before</u> a crisis happens so that one knows that it can be used to help solve or alleviate the crisis. Which of the following forms of crisis or disasters have your school devised a crisis and disaster communication plan for:

Does your school have a plan for when a child gets seriously hurt in front of the school or on the school grounds?

❑   Yes: (*Indicate which parties you would contact*)

_____

❑   No

Does your school have a plan for when a child gets shot in front of the school or on the school grounds?

❑   Yes: (Indicate which parties you would contact)

_____

❑   No

Does your school have a plan for when a child or teacher collapses and dies in front of the school or on the school grounds?

❑   Yes: (Indicate which parties you would contact)

_____

❑   No

Does your school have a plan for when a child or teacher has been bitten on the school grounds by a dog that may carry rabies, or a spider/ snake that could be very venomous?

❑   Yes: (*Indicate which parties you would contact*) _____

❑   No

Does your school have a plan for when a child or teacher is taken hostage on the school grounds?

❑   Yes: (Indicate which parties you would contact)_____

_____

❑   No

Does your school have a plan for when a group of children or teachers complain of nausea and suffer from headaches or diarrhoea on the school grounds?

☐ Yes: (Indicate which parties you would contact)

_____

☐ No

Does your school have a plan for when a group of children or teachers lapse into unconsciousness on the school grounds?
☐ Yes: (Indicate which parties you would contact)

_____

☐ No

Does your school have a plan for when tanker filled with hazardous (flammable or poisonous) gas or liquid crashes near your school grounds?

☐ Yes: (Indicate which parties you would contact)

_____
☐ No

Does your school have a plan for when a helicopter or an aeroplane crashes into your school building, causing serious casualties?

☐ Yes: (Indicate which parties you would contact)

_____

☐ No

Figure 13: Proactive communication plans during crises and disasters

Other than these formal forms of communication in schools. I wanted to find out the schools have pro-active communication plans in case of emergency.

FIELDWORK

In this section I will outline the method that I will employ in conducting the fieldwork among principals of public primary and secondary schools in the North Durban Region. I will start by explaining the rationale behind the organization of the questionnaire that I used, by explaining how I gained access to respondents at particular schools. I timed the dissemination of my questionnaires with a series of workshops that the KZN Department of Education

conducted for principals with regard the nature and functions of school governing bodies. With the permission of Senior Education Manager (SEM) who conducted the meetings I disseminated my questionnaires during the first tea break of the session. I collected them a week later during the follow-up session.

The mode of welcome was different according to personality of each principal, that is to say some were positive and some were negative. Therefore, only three hundred and – eighty- six were retrieved in lieu of five hundred.
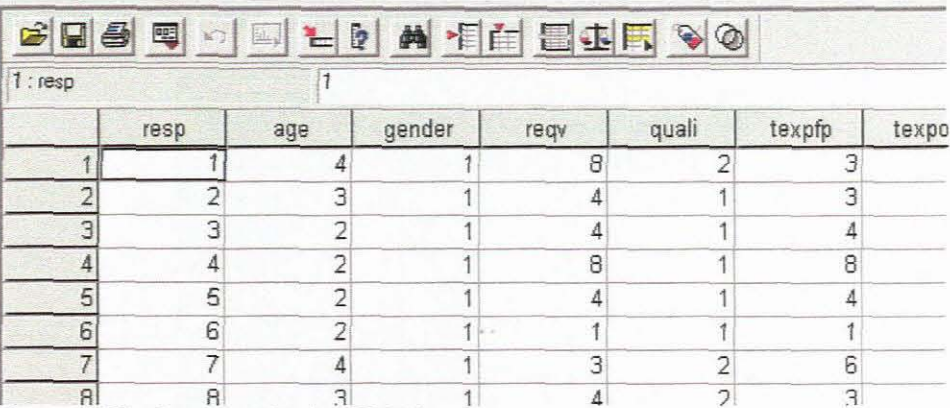
SETTING UP MY DATABASE IN SPSS 11

In this section I will provide information regarding the SPSS11 database program. I will explain how I set up the codes for analysing the results of my survey, and how I coded the actual results for each respondent. The illustrative graphics in this chapter showing coding aspects of the SPSS11 database were captured with the Windows Alt + Print screen keys and directly dumped into single line tables.

Rows, columns and cells

SPSS 11 is a statistical analysis database organized in vertical columns and horizontal rows. Each column contains the data for a particular question of the questionnaire. Each row contains the total number of responses of a particular respondent as shown in the SPSS 11 screen shot below. The rows and columns attribute what I have been testing for. The data is entered in the numeric codes 1 to 9, including 0. The first column is the respondent number, which represents the respondent in an anonymous way. This was done because respondents were assured that they would not be identified. The sum total of a respondent's responses make up the total number of attributes that reflect the respondent's overall attitude about the aspect that is being surveyed. The point where a row and column intercept is identified as a cell. Data is entered in a cell.

94

The data for each respondent is entered one cell at a time, proceeding from left to right. Each cell in the respondent row contains the respondent's particular response to the attribute what is being tested in that particular column of the database.
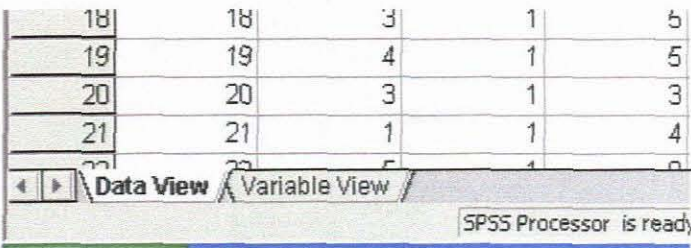
	resp	age	gender	reqv	quali	texpfp	texpo
1	1	4	1	8	2	3	
2	2	3	1	4	1	3	
3	3	2	1	4	1	4	
4	4	2	1	8	1	8	
5	5	2	1	4	1	4	
6	6	2	1	1	1	1	
7	7	4	1	3	2	6	
8	8	3	1	4	2	3	

Figure 14: The data entry view in SPSS 11

In the above image one can see the coding parameters for age, gender, REQV, Qualifications, and so on. Responses were entered in numeric format that is 0 to 9. I used 0 as default places because they are not sum able.

Variable view and data view
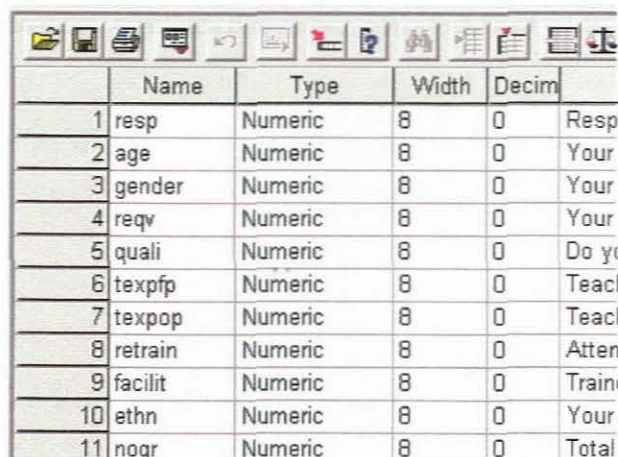
One sets up the coding parameters for each survey item of the questionnaire by right clicking on the column banner at the head of each column, by then selecting the Define Variable option, indicating whether the question relates to a scalar, an ordinal or a nominal measurement set of variables. One first fills in the Age label on the panel, then you tick Scale as the measurement unit before clicking on the Labels tab, as shown in the image below:

18	18	3	1	5
19	19	4	1	5
20	20	3	1	3
21	21	1	1	4

◄ ► \ **Data View** ⟨ Variable View /

SPSS Processor is ready

Figure 15: The Data View in SPSS 11

Figure 16 below indicates the variable view of the database. Coding parameters such as the respondent ID number for each respondent, age, gender, race and for the possible responses to questions are set up in the variable view mode.
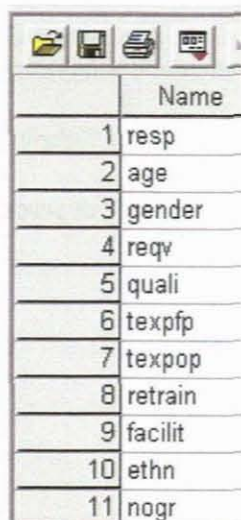
	Name	Type	Width	Decim	
1	resp	Numeric	8	0	Resp
2	age	Numeric	8	0	Your
3	gender	Numeric	8	0	Your
4	reqv	Numeric	8	0	Your
5	quali	Numeric	8	0	Do yo
6	texpfp	Numeric	8	0	Teacl
7	texpop	Numeric	8	0	Teacl
8	retrain	Numeric	8	0	Atten
9	facilit	Numeric	8	0	Train
10	ethn	Numeric	8	0	Your
11	nogr	Numeric	8	0	Total

Figure 16: The variable view in SPSS 11

The name column in variable mode

The name column, shown under figure 17 below, gives the short hand name for each of the question elements to be coded into SPSS. It appears in the abbreviated form, and gives an indication of which questions or statements appear in the questionnaire. For example, 'quali' represents the question; 'Do you have a foundation phase qualification?' In the questionnaire.
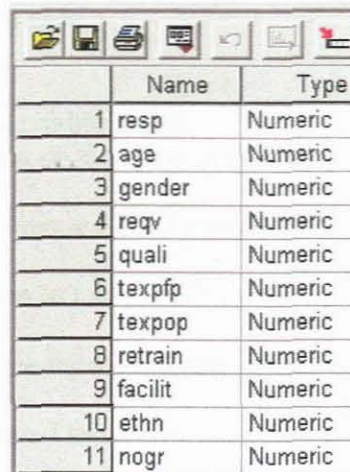
	Name
1	resp
2	age
3	gender
4	reqv
5	quali
6	texpfp
7	texpop
8	retrain
9	facilit
10	ethn
11	nogr

Figure 17: The Name column

The type column in variable mode

The Type column in Figure 18 below indicates the nature of the coding symbols that will be used to encode each respondent's responses in SPSS. One can use numeric (0-9), alphabetical (a-z), or string (e.g. a1$) symbols. As can be seen from this figure I used numeric codes to represent the responses that respondents indicated on their questionnaire.

	Name	Type
1	resp	Numeric
2	age	Numeric
3	gender	Numeric
4	reqv	Numeric
5	quali	Numeric
6	texpfp	Numeric
7	texpop	Numeric
8	retrain	Numeric
9	facilit	Numeric
10	ethn	Numeric
11	nogr	Numeric

Figure 18: The type column in variable mode

When one clicks on any cell under the Type column, the Variable Type selection box opens, allowing one to stipulate what sort of coding symbols one wishes to use.

The label column in variable mode

In the Label column, the questionnaire elements are typed in exactly as they appear in the questionnaire. They are called "labels" because they appear as labels on the tables and graphs that one extracts from the database to visually represent one's results.

97

	Name	Type	Width	Decim	Label	
1	resp	Numeric	8	0	Respondent number	
2	age	Numeric	8	0	Your age	{
3	gender	Numeric	8	0	Your gender	{
4	reqv	Numeric	8	0	Your REQV level	{
5	quali	Numeric	8	0	Do you have foundation phase qualifi	{
6	texpfp	Numeric	8	0	Teaching experience in foundation p	{
7	texpop	Numeric	8	0	Teaching experience in any other ph	{
8	retrain	Numeric	8	0	Attended workshop conducted by KZ	{
9	facilit	Numeric	8	0	Trained as facilitator to conduct work	{
10	ethn	Numeric	8	0	Your ethnic group.	{
11	nogr	Numeric	8	0	Total no. of grades in your school.	{

Figure 19: The label column in variable mode

The values column in variable mode

For every response option on the questionnaire a coding parameter has to be set up in the values column that follows directly after the labels column. Response options could include a simple choice between YES and NO, or a scale such as NEVER, SOMETIMES, OFTEN and CONSTANTLY, or it can take the form of categories such as the ethnic group or the gender of the respondent. In Figure 16 below I show how the value labels for the age ranges of educators were set up.
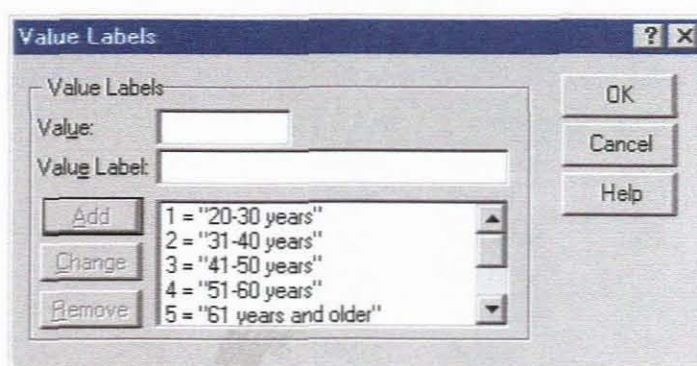
Figure 20: Value Labels

One sets up the response options by typing "1" in the values slot and "20-30 years" in the value label slot. Thereafter one clicks on the "add" button to establish it as a value label. The process is completed until one has completed the whole age range of the respondents. If one wants to change a value label, you click on it, change either the number in the value slot or the range in the value labels slot and click on the "change" button.

In this manner the value labels have to be set up for each column of the database. However, if one uses the same scale in consecutive questions, one can simply copy and paste existing value labels.

Selecting the appropriate measure for the type of data
There are only three types of statistical measurements, namely Nominal, Ordinal and Scalar. The scale of measurement will dictate the statistical procedures that will be used in processing the data. According to Leedy 1997:40 when nominal measurement is used data is usually restricted or limited. For example when we measure gender, we divide into two groups, namely, male or female. Ordinal measurement is where various pieces of data are brought together and ranked in either higher or lower values than each other. A scale is used to achieve inferential analysis. A scale has equal units of measurement, where a mean can be determined.
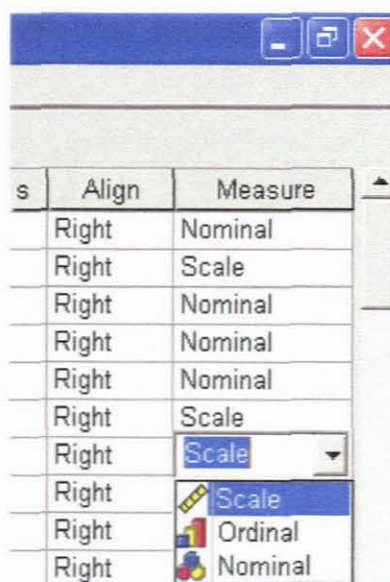
Figure 21: Types of measurement

In my research I used only nominal measurements consisting of the options YES and NO.

Verifying the accuracy of the coding process

I verified the accuracy of the encoding process by double-checking each code that I had entered after the questionnaire had been encoded onto the database.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I explained what the statistical SPSS11 is all about and how it was implemented to capture the data received by means of the questionnaires. By pressing the Alt and Print screen buttons at the same time, snap shots of particular functions of SPSS 11 were taken and placed in Word, to help the reader better envisage how SPSS 11 was set up to code the results. In the next chapter I will report and interpret the results of my research that were obtained using the statistical program SPSS II.

RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will present the results of my survey. I will give an account of my findings and demonstrate my findings through the use of graphs. Tables and Graphs demonstrating some of my findings will be used. This will be done by means of tables and graphs extracted from the statistical program SPSS 11, in each instance followed by short interpretation of the significance of the results. I decided that I would first list the tables and thereafter follow it with a graph so that the reader won't have a problem when considering the analysis. I based my analysis on looking at both table and graph at simultaneously. We will analyse the data received to see what level the educators' understanding of communication strategies are required in primary and secondary schools.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISITCS OF RESPONDENTS

Age

In the light of the age analysis, it appears that most of principals in Inanda, Kwa-Mashu, and Phoenix Circuits range between 40 and 45 years of age.

Gender

		Count	Col %
The gender of the repondent	female	227	58.8%
	male	159	41.2%

Figure 22: Gender of principals in the North Durban region in 2002

In figures 22 and 23 reveals that if one does not distinguish between primary, secondary and comprehensive; a clear majority of the principals are females (almost 59% while just over 41% were males).

Figure 23: Bar graph reflecting the gender of the respondents

The gender of principals according to type of school

If however one differentiates between primary, secondary and comprehensive schools one can see that there is a gender-skewed distribution among primary schools and high schools. As seen in figure 24 below there are more than double the number of female principals at primary school level (just over 70%) than male principals (just under 31%). Figure 24 also shows that male principals predominate by far at the high school level, with just over 23% being females and just over 55% being males. Figure 24 also shows that more than twice as many males (almost 14%) are principals at comprehensive schools in comparison with females (just over 6%).

		The gender of the repondent			
		female		male	
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Principal at type of school	primary	160	70.5%	49	30.8%
	secondary	52	22.9%	88	55.3%
	comprehensive	15	6.6%	22	13.8%

Figure 24: Table reflecting the type of school that the principal manages by gender

The general conclusion that one can draw from figure 24 is that female principals **predominate at primary school level while male principals predominate at high school level.** This pattern is visually represented by means of a bar graph in figure 25:
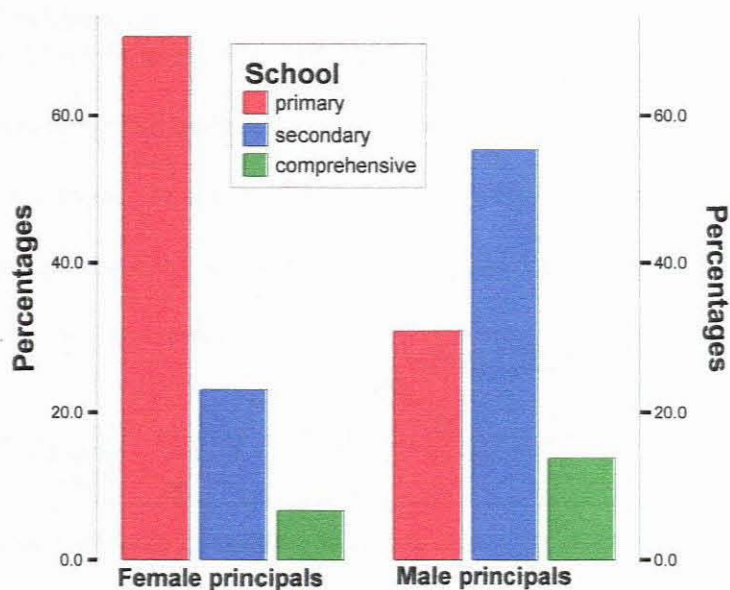

Figure 25: Bar graph reflecting the type of school that the principal manages by gender

YEARS EXPERIENCE OF FEMALE AND MALE PRINCIPALS

Figure 26 shows that female and male principals both are relatively experienced, with 89% of females (202) and 95% of males (151) having occupied their posts between 6 and 10 years.

	The gender of the repondent			
	female		male	
	Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Years experience between 1 and 5 years	25	11.0%	8	5.0%
as a principal between 6 and 10 years	202	89.0%	151	95.0%

Figure 26: Table reflecting the average years of experience of female and male principals

More female principals report having fewer years experience than their male counterparts. This difference in experience could be one explanation for a number of gender-based differences that come to light in this survey, as reported below.

KEEPING RECORDS

Parents' postal addresses

From table 27 below it can be noted that only 45% of female principals (102) report having recorded parents' postal addresses, as opposed to 98% of male principals (157) that report the same. As shown in the previous section this puzzling discrepancy cannot be accounted for in terms of the relative experience of one gender over another.

	The gender of the repondent			
	female		male	
	Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Parents'/guardians' yes	102	44.9%	157	98.7%
postal addresses? no	125	55.1%	2	1.3%

Figure 27: Table reflecting how female and male principals keep parents' postal addresses

If both genders were indeed reporting truthfully, any significant performance differences that may emerge between female and male principals could be contributed to other factors than level of experience. What needs to be established through further research is whether female principals are indeed less systematic than male principals, or whether the latter is not perhaps over reporting their record keeping activities.

Parents' residential addresses

Figure 28 reveals the same pattern of gender-differentiated record keeping regarding parental residential addresses among principals, namely that only 54% of female principals reported having kept parents' or guardians' residential addresses, with 99% of male principals that reported having done so.

		The gender of the repondent			
		female		male	
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Parents'/guardians' residential addresses?	yes	123	54.2%	158	99.4%
	no	104	45.8%	1	.6%

Figure 28: Table reflecting parents/guardian's residential addresses

Children's residential addresses

Figure 29 reveals the same pattern of gender-differentiated record keeping regarding children's residential addresses among principals, namely that only 55% of female principals report having done so, with 98% of male ones that reported having done so.

		The gender of the repondent			
		female		male	
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Children's residential addresses?	yes	125	55.1%	157	98.7%
	no	102	44.9%	2	1.3%

Figure 29: Table reflecting children's residential addresses

Sponsors' postal addresses

From figure 30 below it can be seen that only 50% of female principals (102) report having recorded sponsors' postal addresses, as opposed to 93% of male principals (157) that report the same.

		The gender of the repondent			
		female		male	
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Sponsors' postal addresses?	yes	114	50.2%	148	93.1%
	no	113	49.8%	11	6.9%

Figure 30: Table reflecting schools with sponsors' postal addresses

105

Figure 34 above also reveals an interesting break in the pattern reported thus far. It shows that almost all female principals (98%) and almost all male principals (97%) do send circulars dealing with routine matters to parents.

Letters that deal with official matters

Figure 35 below compares the percentage of female and male principals that reported that their schools send letters dealing with official matters to parents via learners.

		The gender of the repondent			
		female		male	
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Letters dealing with official matters to parents via learners?	yes	155	68.3%	21	13.2%
	no	72	31.7%	138	86.8%

Figure 35: Table reflecting letters dealing with official matters to parents via learners

There is an even more drastic change in the pattern reported so far. More than 68% of female principals reported sending letters dealing with official matters to parents via learners, as compared with only 13% of male principals that reported doing the same. This could mean that male principals do not believe in setting official letters via learners since those letters might be confidential. So they would prefer posting them.

Written report cards

Figure 36 below compares the percentage of female and male principals that reported that their schools send written report cards parents via learners.

		The gender of the repondent			
		female		male	
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Written report cards to parents via learners?	yes	216	95.2%	144	90.6%
	no	11	4.8%	15	9.4%

Figure 36: Table reflecting written report cards to parents via learners

A slightly higher percentage of female principals (95%) than male ones (91%) reported sending written report cards to parents via learners. In general, this mode of written communication is well utilised by both female and male principals.

Letters that deal with official matters

Figure 37 compares the percentage of female and male principals that reported that they posted letters dealing with official matters.

		The gender of the repondent			
		female		male	
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %
Letters dealing with official matters posted to parents?	yes	157	69.2%	49	30.8%
	no	70	30.8%	110	69.2%

Figure 37: Table reflecting letters dealing with official matters posted to parents

More than double the number of female principals (69%) than male ones (31%) reported posting letters that dealt with official matters to parents.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I reported the results of my survey among female and male principals in predominantly African communities in the northern part of EThekwini regarding their modes of communication with parents, sponsors and other interested parties. The basis for my results was tables and graphs extracted by means of the statistical program SPSS11.

The general pattern that emerged was that far more male principals in most instances reported using a particular form of communication than females. There, however, were instances where the same number of female and male respondents reported using a particular mode of communication, and a few instances where more females than males reported using a

109

particular mode of communication. Needless to say, interpretation of these different trends reported by females and males need to be subjected to further analysis.

There is no straightforward explanation for the differences that female and male principals reported when they communicate with parents and interested parts. It has to be subjected to further investigation. One explanation could be that male principals on average have more experience in school management than female principals. A second explanation could be that female and male principals tend to have different styles of communication with parents, entailing that male principals tend to use a wider range of forms of communication than female principals, who perhaps tended to employ the forms of communication with parents that they considered most reliable. A third possibility could be that male principals tended to over-report using particular forms of communication. In this regard I would however like to point out that my survey did not include check-up protocols to establish the veracity of results reported. Such verification could however be done during follow-up research that requests a representative sample of respondents to provide actual examples of records that have been kept.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATION

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will present my conclusions and recommendations regarding miscommunication and communication breakdown between parents and schools in urban settings. I found that the forms of communication are lacking among many principals. Therefore my study on the forms of organisational communication in schools has equipped me to assist principals in the then North Durban Region to implement the forms of organisational communication for effective management of their schools.

MY THESIS IN A NUTSHELL

In chapter one I set the scene for the unfolding of the subsequent chapters so that the reader would have some sense of direction as to what to expect. I presented an overview of my thesis by stating how it was organised and I provided insight as to what miscommunication and communication breakdown between parents and schools in urban settings is all about.

In chapter two I outlined the statement of the problems and my research procedure

In chapter three I defined the key concepts of my study namely; key concepts relating to my research regarding the nature of communication between schools and parents in the then North Durban Region.

In chapter four I dwelled on organisational communication in schools. I also highlighted their importance. Forms of communication required in foundation phase OBE classroom were mentioned.

In chapter five I outlined how I conducted the fieldwork. This includes the rationale behind the organization of the questionnaire that I used. I also stated how I gained access to particular schools so that I could use principals to assist in filling in the questionnaires.

In chapter six I explained the results of the statistical program SPSSII which I used to capture data obtained from the questionnaires that were completed by principals, in then North Durban Region. I stated how I encoded and verified the accuracy of the encoding process, and how I extracted the research results in the form of tables and graphs.

In chapter seven I presented my conclusions and recommendations regarding miscommunication communication breakdown between parents and school in urban settings.

In the final chapter of my thesis, I presented my thesis in a nutshell and also summary findings of it.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study has helped me appreciate the different forms of communication that could be used during effective school management. It has also shown that principals need to utilise these forms of communication if they want to be effective managers and improve the effectiveness of their schools. Female principals mainly manage public primary and secondary schools in what a year ago was termed the North Durban Region, while male principals mostly manage secondary and comprehensive schools in the region. What I also found in my study is that, there is imbalance between the male and female principals when it comes to doing work. For example when it comes to passive things like keeping of records one finds that males are active and females are passive. But when it comes to active things like issuing of letters to

parents, females are active and males are passive. This calls for further investigation to identify or check the cause thereof.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on an empirical analysis of the communication trends reported by the female and male principals in my sample I would like to make the following four recommendations:

I am left with a strong impression that the communication styles and practices of principals depend on their personal, subjective command of this important aspect of school management in the absence of directed instruction about leadership communication in schools. I would therefore like to recommend that explicit training is needed for principals in the form of short courses to be presented as workshops, as well as a well conceived manual issued by the department, detailing best management with regard to leadership communication in schools.

Furthermore, teacher-training courses should include both practical aspects and the theoretical aspects of the variety of forms of communication required for effective facilitation of knowledge acquisition in Outcomes-Based Education classrooms.

With the emphasis in Outcomes-Based Education on the acquisition of verbal and written communication skills the introduction of communication will serve as a coherent natural extension of the communication skills that learners gain in the General Education and Training band in the language, literacy & communication learning area. To enhance communication skills among learners serious consideration should be given to introduce Communication Science as a language option in the Language Literacy and Communication learning area. As things stand now the draft national curriculum statement October (DNCS): 2002 presents the language and communication-learning area with 11 official languages. The home language and first additional language are compulsory. The learner may choose a

113

second additional language if s/he so wishes. It does not matter in what language Communication Science is taught; the important thing is that learners learn the art of communicating successfully. Learners, who study Communication Science, and wish to enter the job market after Grade 12, will be equipped with a range of career focused on oral and written communication skills, highly prized on workplace setting. Learners will be able to develop skills such as being able to work as part of a team, enhanced leadership skills, being able to render professional secretarial and editorial services, being capable of preparing and delivering a range of professional written reports, being able to use the computer to carry out word-processing tasks, being able to react and understand the various contracts and agreements and being in command of the principles of types of communication.

It is known that the feasibility of introducing Communication Science in the Further Education and Training (FET) band has been investigated by a group of master's students at the University of Zululand and that a proposal to this effect has been submitted to the national Department of Education and Culture.

If Communication Science is introduced as proposed in the FET, it would prepare prospective students who enrol for disciplines like Communication Science, electronic communication, media studies, computer science and journalism in higher education and training band (HET). Communication Science would enhance the learning skills and expressive skills of all learners who decide to progress to higher education.

CONCLUSION

My research forms part of a coordinated programme of completed as well as ongoing research conducted by Communication Science students at the University of Zululand regarding *communication for education transformation*. My research focussed on the forms of

communication that principals reported using as part of education management. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of the following:

- Rugbeer (Y) 2001 who worked on small group verbal communication as part of an envisaged Communication Science curriculum in the FET band.

- Rugbeer (H) 2001 who worked on electronic communication as part of an envisaged Communication Science curriculum in the FET band.

- Hiralal 2001 who worked on public relations as part of an envisaged Communication Science curriculum in the FET band.

- Balliram 2002 who worked on the individual and social construction of knowledge in foundation phase classrooms.

- Govindsamy (K) 2002 who worked on the perceptions of high school principals regarding the forms of communication required in school management

- Govindsamy (N) 2002 who worked on the forms of communication that need to be employed by educators in foundation phase classrooms.

- Harriparsadh 2002 who worked on written communication as part of an envisaged Communication Science curriculum in the FET band.

- Ramcharan 2002 who worked on record keeping in the intermediate phase.

115

REFERENCES

Agarwala & Agarwala, Rogers 1976. *Communication in organisations.* Sage Publications.

Barbour, R. S. & J. Kit zinger. 1999. *Developing focus group research: politics, theory and practice.* Sage Publications.

Balliram, U 2002 *The social and individual construction of meaning Interpersonal and intrapersonal communication in foundation phase learning.*

Barker, LL. & Gaut D.A. 1996 *Communication,* Boston, Allying Bacon.

Berger, Charles, R. 1995. "Inscrutable goals, Uncertain Plans and the Production of Communication Action." In Berger, Charles, R. & Michael Burgoon (editors). *Communication & Social Influence Processes.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Blasius, J. & M. J. Greenacre. 1998b. *Visualization of categorical data.* Academic Press.

Burgoon (editors). *Communication & Social Influence Processes.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Burgoon, Michael. 1995. "Language Expectancy Theory: Elaboration, Explicitation, and Extension." In Berger, Charles, R. & Michael Burgoon (editors). *Communication & Social Influence Processes.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

De Beer, A.S. (editor) (1998). *Mass Media Towards the Millennium: The South African Handbook of Mass Communication.* J.L. van Schaik.

De Bono, Edward. *Edward De Bono's Smart thinking.* Quest books. Accessed on 16/01/2003. Online

Department of Education 2002a. *Revised National Curriculum Statement. Grades R. to 9 (schools) Policy Overview.* Pretoria.

Department of Education. 1 July 2002. C2005 *National Curriculum Statements (NCS) Foundation Phase: Grades-R to 3.*

Dirven, Rene; Verspoor, Marjolin 1998 *Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics* John Benjamin Pushing Amstedam.

Engelbrecht, S.W.B., Yssel J.C., Griessel G.A.J., Verster T.L. *Education and Teaching Series New* Edition 1984 Syllabus Via Afrika Limited

Gardner, R.C. 1985. *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: The Role of Attitudes and Motivation.* British Library.

Glesne, C. & A. Peshkin. 1992. *Becoming qualitative researchers: an introduction.* Longman.

Govindsamy, Nalin D. 2002 *From chaos to cooperation the role of communication during effective learning in foundation phase classrooms.*

Govindsamy Krishna 2002 *Modelling optimal communication for the school as an organisation.*

Greenacre, M. J. & J. Blasius 1998a. *Correspondence analysis in the social sciences.* Academic Press.

Greenacre, M. J. 1993. *Correspondences analysis in practice.* Academic Press.

Guetzkow, G.L. 1965. *A social psychology of group processes for decision making.* Academic press.

Klopper, R.M 2000. *OBE: Learning, Assessment & Emotional Intelligence.* Unpublished lecture notes.

Klopper, R.M. undated. *Accelerated-Learning.* Unpublished lecture notes.

Leedy, P.D. 1997. *Practical Research – Planning and Design.* Prentice Hall. USA.

Link Community Development, on behalf of the Department of Education. 2000. *School Management: Teams Instructional Leadership.*: CTP Book Printers

Maltz, D.N. & Borker, R.A. 1982. *A cultural approach to male-female miscommunication.*

Meadows, Sarah. 1993. *The Child as Thinker: the development and Acquisition of Cognition in Childhood.* London & New York: Rout ledge.

Mersham, Gary & Chris Skinner 1999. *New Insights into Communication & Public Relations.* Heinemann.

Mersham, Gary & Chris Skinner 2001a. *New Insights into Business & Organisational Communication.* Heinemann.

Mersham, Gary & Chris Skinner 2001b. *New Insights into Communication & Media.* Heinemann.

Milroy, N.J. 1984. *Successful Communication and Communicative breakdown.* East Lansing Michigan State University Press.

Mwamwenda, T.S. 1995. *Educational Psychology An African Perspective* Second Edition. Butterworths Durban.

Nikolas Coupland, Howard Gilles & John M. Wieman. 1991.*Miscommunication & Problematic Talk.* Sage Publications.

Parks, Malcolm, R. 1995. "Webs of Influence in Personal Relationships." In Berger, Charles, R. & Michael Burgoon (editors). *Communication & Social Influence Processes.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Rajecki, D. W. 1990. *Attitudes.* Sinauer Associates Inc. Publishers.

Ramcharan, A 2002 *Keeping Record Applying organisational communication in intermediate phase classrooms.*

Reed, Stephen, K. 1996. *Cognition.* Pacific grove: Brooks / Cole Publishing Company.

Roloff, Michael E. 1995. "Interpersonal Influence: The View from *Between People.*" In Berger, Charles, R. & Michael Burgoon (editors). *Communication & Social Influence Processes.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Rugbeer Hemduth 2001 *Communicating by ordering electrons.*

Rugbeer Yasmin 2001 *A meeting of minds*

Schumann, H. & S. Presser. 1996. *Questions and answers in attitude surveys: experiments on question form, wording, and context.* Sage Publications.

SPSS Marketing department. 1999. *SPSS Base 9.0 – Applications Guide.* Chicago: SPSS Inc.

Stein Farr, Thomas M. 1995. "Communication & Personality: Improving the Predictive Fit." In Berger, Charles, R. & Michael

Stiff, James, B. 1995. "Conceptualising Deception as a Persuasive Activity." In Berger, Charles, R. & Michael Burgoon (editors). *Communication & Social Influence Processes.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Van Der Horst and McDonald.1997*Outcomes Based Education A* teacher's Manual: Kagiso. Publishers. Pretoria.

Vivviers, D. & van Schalkwyk, H. 1991. *Success with English Language & Communication Skills.* Academic Press.

Wardhaugh, R. 1987. *Language in Competition.* Billing and Sons Ltd. Great Britain.

Weinstein, B. 1990. *Language Policy and Political Development.* Alex Publishing Corporation. New Jersey.

Wiechers, M. et al. 1991. *South Africa in the Nineties.* HSRC Publishers.

Williams, Frederick. 1992. *The New Communications.* Wadsworth Publishing Company.