

***The Experiences, Support For,
And Coping Strategies Of
Beginner Principals In Secondary Schools
In The Cape Town Metropolitan Area***

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated:

Firstly, to God, for granting me a second chance
at life, and

Secondly, to my wife, Desiree, for her
inspiration, patience, understanding
and support in assisting me to cope; and

Thirdly, to my children, Courtenay and Kalyca -
I trust that they will come to understand and
forgive me for lost time.

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that the whole of this dissertation is my original work and that all the sources I have used or quoted, have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references; and that the opinions expressed or conclusions arrived at are my own.

Signed by candidate
Signature Removed

NATHAN E. SASSMAN

19 JUNE 1996

DATE

CAPE TOWN

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ABSTRACT

PURPOSE

The aim of this study is to describe and critically analyse the experiences and challenges facing first-year principals in secondary schools in the Cape Town Metropolitan Area. The study focuses on the impact of change and reform on beginner principals, the problems that arise as a result; coping strategies of beginner principals and the support available to them. While the emphasis is on analysing the issues and drawing out implications, the study begins to identify those solutions and training needs which beginner principals see as useful.

Many of these principals are products of the rationalisation measures of 1992/3, and the restructuring of education. This process has included the emergence of elements of School-Based Management, which follows on the history of state-aided schools in South Africa, such as the Model C schools. These elements are reconfigured in the recommendations of the Hunter Commission and the policy of the White Paper on the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools (February 1996). This has led to an increase in the number of beginner principals in the Cape Town metropolitan area, especially in the former House of Representative schools.

METHOD

The theoretical orientation of this study required an examination of the complex dynamics of the relationship between the experiences of beginner principals and broader developments. In this regard the perceptions of beginner principals provided valuable insights. These were elicited by qualitative methods, i.e. interviews and open-ended questions in a questionnaire. This was supplemented by Likert type questions in the questionnaire. These were statistically analysed and provided a broader reach and a more systematic, less impressionistic analysis of the responses.

Distribution of the questionnaire to 47 beginner principals in secondary schools in the Cape Town metropolitan area resulted in a sample of $n = 37$, representing a 78% response. A follow-up interview was conducted with ten beginner principals. An

additional interview was conducted with one senior official of the Western Cape Education Department in order to provide answers to particular research questions concerning the political and discursive context.

A survey of literature concerning School-Based Management in international policy discourse provided a lens through which the changes taking place in South African Education, and the implications for beginner principals were viewed.

FINDINGS

The study found that beginner principals have to contend with impending retrenchments of teachers and restructuring of education. This is exacerbated by the lack of institutionalised support, a lack of training for the management tasks of the principal and the dwindling financial resources available from the state and parents. Within this context beginner principals have to deal with specific issues including attendance problems of both teachers and students, building the administrative team and the deterioration of school buildings.

Principals have evolved informal strategies of support that include methods of networking with other principals and using strategies to democratise processes and structures in their schools to counter the problems created by staff and in response to educational policy.

Developments in the political, economic and education policy environment has produced many of the beginner principals and shaped the problems that they face. At the same time, the strategies beginner principals have developed have drawn as much on a repertoire of political and social organisation outside the school as on a repertoire of administrative techniques and 'skills' developed within an education management discourse.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

PREAMBLE

School leadership is not, as some writers on school management would have us believe, achieved in a social vacuum (Angus, 1994 in Ball 1994:84). The realisation of leadership is always set within a framework of possibilities and constraints derived from educational policy and from the political and economic context of education. The policy framework will articulate particular leadership roles and responsibilities and exclude others. One crucial aspect of this articulation is the way in which policies affect and constrain the relationships within which leadership is realised; relationships, that is, with significant others in the institution and its environment (Ball, 1994:84).

In a study of 60 House of Representative school principals in Mitchell's Plain, Daniels (1995) found that 50.8% were in their first year of principalship and had arrived in this position as a result of the rationalisation measures of 1992/3. This has led to an increase in the number of beginner principals, especially in the former House of Representative schools. In this sense, the restructuring of education, due to political and economic factors, has produced beginner principals. In this context of change, beginner principals have to face the particular problems and challenges arising from macro-level policy and have to cope with its influence at the micro- institutional level. Educational restructuring therefore creates the conditions and the constraints under which the beginner principals have to operate, and beginner principals have to contend and cope with the effect of these changes.

Restructuring of education has been shaped geographically and administratively with the decentralisation of authority to nine Provincial Education Departments. These assume responsibility for pre-tertiary education and teacher colleges. A new Education Labour Relations Act, which legislates new laws for the employment of teachers in 1995, was

followed by the Constitution which enshrined the right of every person to basic education and equal access to education.

Two categories of schools have been recommended by the Committee to Review the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools (1995) (hereafter called the Hunter Commission), namely public schools funded totally or largely from state funds and independent schools which are privately owned. A funding partnership for schools has been proposed where parents would pay compulsory or obligatory school fees according to their income, and the state would guarantee the balance of funding that the school requires.

The Hunter Commission recommended the allocation to school governing bodies of a selection of responsibilities from a menu. The implication is that all public schools would, ideally, move towards acquiring all the responsibilities on the menu. Schools would also charge fees. This model takes on a Model C type version of the School-Based Management (SBM) approach as an ideal towards which all schools could eventually move. SBM is an administrative educational policy that has been implemented by international governments in order to provide school-level administrators with more accountability, thus empowering the role players (teachers, parents and students) in the school. Also delegated is the financial responsibility for the school. In other words it amounts to a shared responsibility. Therefore the state school model envisaged in the Hunter Commission is closer to the existing Model C schools and SBM, with all its management implications in terms of the skills that are needed, than to the existing state schools.

An SBM approach within the South African context puts the obligation on principals to build administrative teams and to contend with attendance problems of both teachers and students; cope with the deterioration of school buildings; manage the dwindling financial resources available from the state and parents, and administer the impending retrenchments of teachers and the restructuring of education. These difficulties are exacerbated by the lack of institutionalised support and a lack of training for the

management tasks of the school principal. In addition the principals will have to contend with the management implications of financial delegation to schools.

It is this situation facing beginner principals in South Africa and specifically in the Western Cape that provides the context for this study. This study will focus on the support for, and coping strategies of beginner principals in secondary schools in the Cape Town metropolitan area.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study provides a critical analysis of the experiences and coping strategies of beginner principals and the support available to them. This will inform educational policy which shapes the conditions and constraints under which principals operate. Educational policy also mediates the relationship between the school and its environment and positions principals in relation to the various constituencies of the school community. This is of particular importance in a context of educational reform that is inherently about change and the development of strategies with which to cope with different challenges, roles and relationships.

The aim of this study is therefore to describe and critically analyse the experiences and challenges facing first-year principals in secondary schools in the Cape Town metropolitan area. To this end the following questions can be asked:

1. Who or what is a beginner principal in secondary schools in the Cape Town metropolitan area?
2. What are beginner principals experiencing at this moment in the educational reform process in terms of time, priorities, and internal and external difficulties and issues.

The study focuses on the impact of change and reform on beginner principals, the problems that arise as a result and the support available to, and the coping strategies of beginner principals. While the emphasis is on analysing the issues and drawing out implications, the study begins to identify those solutions and training needs which beginner principals themselves see as useful.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The educational system in South Africa is undergoing tremendous transformation. The context of educational change includes shifts towards increased accountability, shared management and financial delegation which will place tremendous pressure on schools.

Information about the coping strategies that enable beginner principals to cope with the particular pressures arising from present conditions and the forms of support available to them, could be crucial in developing training programmes for future leaders of our schools. Secondly, by positioning beginner principals in relation to the broader policy environment, this study explores not only the potential for particular coping strategies, but also the limits of such strategies. Beginner principals can respond creatively to, but cannot control, national and provincial developments.

Finally, this study will contribute to the very limited general literature on beginner principals in South Africa. It will be the first study in secondary schools in the Cape Town metropolitan area that attempts to address these needs.

SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The following limitations apply to this study:

1. This study applies to the beginner principals of secondary schools in the Cape Town metropolitan area. Generalisation of its findings to other areas, particularly rural areas, would not necessarily be appropriate.
2. This study involved beginner principals in only two of the previous education departments, namely the House of Representatives and the House of Assembly. It also included beginner principals in schools established under the authority of the Western Cape Education Department. No principals in the Department of Education and Training were included because all of these were appointed prior to the study and could not be regarded as beginner principals because they had been in an acting principal position for many years. No beginner principals were identified in the House of Delegate schools.

3. Although all the beginner principals that were identified (numbering 51) were asked to participate in the survey, their participation was voluntary. This resulted in a sample of 37.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

This study draws on discussions of beginner principals in international policy literature where particular terminology is used. The political and educational change in South Africa has also introduced new terminology. Therefore the following definitions are included as terms of reference peculiar to specific circumstances and contexts.

Beginner Principal

Principal that has been appointed in his/her first principalship in a high school.

High or Secondary School

These are schools that include five grade levels, from grade eight through to twelve, also called standards six to ten.

Principal or headmaster or headteacher

This term denotes the male or female officer appointed by the Education Department to be responsible for the supervision and leadership of human resources within the school and for the direction of its programme and activities.

Cape Town Metropolitan Area

This area refers to the Cape Peninsula, Cape Flats, Northern Suburbs, Southern Suburbs and Mitchell's Plain.

DET

Former Department of Education and Training that was responsible for the education of Blacks outside the former Bantustans.

HOA

Former House of Assembly that was responsible for the affairs of Whites.

HOD

Former House of Delegates that was responsible for the affairs of Indians.

HOR

Former House of Representatives that was responsible for the affairs of Coloureds.

WCED

Western Cape Education Department. This is the integrated form of the previous education departments in this province.

LANGUAGE

The sample included only one female beginner principal. The intention of the use of the pronoun "he" does not refer to the universal category of principals but to specific principals who are, in fact, males.

ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study includes six chapters of which this introductory chapter forms the first. Chapter two provides a discussion of the theoretical framework that underpins this particular study. Chapter three presents a review of the related literature. Chapter four presents the methodology. Chapter five reports the data and findings, and provides an analysis of these. Chapter six provides summaries, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - SBM IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

This study focuses on beginner principals in terms of the support available to them and the coping strategies that beginner principals employ. These forms of support and coping strategies must be understood in relation to a critical analysis of the context of national restructuring of education and the international trend towards School-Based Management and Local Management of Schools.

The restructuring of education in South Africa is influenced by political factors such as the dismantling of Apartheid structures and processes, and economic factors such as the decrease in finance available to some provinces. In the Western Cape, this process is pointing to a decrease in the teaching complement available to this province (Bell, 1995).

Part of the administrative response to these developments is a tendency towards SBM, which is manifest in very specific ways in the South African situation. It builds on the South African political, educational and economic history, and draws on a global discourse. I am therefore discussing SBM in an international policy discourse as a lens through which to look at changes taking place in South African Education, and in particular as it affects beginner principals.

Theoretically different approaches exist in research relating to schools and principals. An important distinction exists between those studies that attempt to look at schools and principals in isolation from the context in which they are located, i.e. as an administrative process within a school, and those which locate the school and principal contextually in

terms of the political and socio-economic dynamics impacting on them. This study demonstrates a relationship between what happens in schools and what broadly happens contextually, in policy, political and economic terms.

What is SBM?

Malen provides a useful definition of the self-managing school, also called School-based management (SBM) or Local Management of Schools (LMS) in some countries:

While there are different definitions of the term, school-based management can be viewed conceptually as a formal alteration of governance structures, as a form of decentralisation that identifies the individual school as the primary unit of improvement and relies on the redistribution of decision-making authority as the primary means through which improvements might be stimulated and sustained. Some formal authority to make decisions in the domains of budget, personnel and program is delegated to and often distributed among school-level actors. Some formal structure (council, committee, team, board) often composed of principal, teachers, parents and, at times, students and community residents is created so that school participants can be directly involved in school-wide decision-making. Presumably these formal adjustments foster both autonomy and accountability. Autonomy is enhanced primarily because the formal adjustments grant school-level actors greater discretion, greater opportunity to influence decisions, and, as a consequence, greater opportunity to improve schools. Accountability is enhanced primarily because the formal adjustments strengthen the system's planning, evaluating, reporting processes and/or encourage school professionals to be more responsive to school patrons (Malen, *et al.*, 1990:290).

SBM is an administrative educational policy implemented in countries such as England, Wales, Canada, and the USA to provide school-level administrators with more accountability. This empowering the role players in the school, namely teachers, parents and even students. Also delegated is financial responsibility for the school. In other words SBM amounts to a shared responsibility.

Restructuring of education in South Africa appears to be moving towards SBM. Two categories of schools have been recommended by the Hunter Commission, namely public schools, funded totally or largely from state funds and independent schools, which are privately owned. The Hunter Commission argues that the resources of the state are insufficient to provide quality education at no direct cost to parents. It suggests both

voluntary and obligatory parental fees, with the state's contribution the inverse of the assessed fee income of the parents (Hunter Commission, 1995:42). This is proposed although the constitution guarantees each South African citizen the right to equal access to free and basic education. The White Paper also states that the educational system must be owned and cared for by the community it serves. The community must use all the resources available to it as effectively as possible (White Paper, March 1995).

The Hunter Commission recommendations and the subsequent White Paper (November 1995) are couched in a language of shared management by all stakeholders (parents, teachers and students); financial delegation and accountability to schools and parents. This indicates a move towards SBM. However, while the educational system seems to be decentralised from the top down, from the bottom up it appears to be centralised in terms of responsibility for certification and norms and standards (Parker, 1995).

The official rhetoric in South African education appears to indicate a move towards SBM, while retaining centralising tendencies. On the one hand it indicates decentralisation in terms of shared management and financial accountability, but on the other hand it points towards continued centralised control of curricula, examinations, salaries, training and decision-making.

What are the implications of the move towards SBM for South Africa?

South Africa seems to have borrowed elements of its approach to SBM from many countries. In Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Belgium, England and Wales (before 1988) the emphasis fell on *managerial efficiency and effectiveness*; the LMS approach in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and the Dutch vocational schools emphasises a *market economy*, while the USA approach emphasises *empowerment* (Knight, 1993).

One can look at these approaches as being consistent with two theoretical approaches, namely, those that look at their influence on schools decontextually, and those that approach schools contextually.

The effective schools movement approaches schools and their management in a decontextualised way that ignores the policy, political and socio-economic factors that impact on the school. Within the effectiveness and efficiency approach the underlying assumption is that granting schools greater autonomy increases the probability that some, if not all, of the characteristics associated with effective schools will be created. It is accepted within this paradigm that effective schools exist and that their characteristics can be modelled or check-listed, with the task then simply to get better at measuring such characteristics (Jansen, 1995). Educational practice is seen largely as a set of techniques, the 'core technology' for managing 'throughput'; practice is imposed rather than constructed, negotiated or asserted; it is a set of techniques to be employed by teacher technicians on malleable pupils. Administrators are there to ensure that school effectiveness factors are put in place, teachers are there to implement them in the classroom and students, regardless of their background, are expected to adapt to the technical and cultural regime of the school and do their best. Angus (1993a) also notes that it is not inconsistent with the idealised version of efficiency and market rationality that is the dream of the New Right. School effectiveness research indicates that resources do not matter; it is simply a matter of incorporating effectiveness factors into school practice.

The trouble is that this vision is of an unreal world, in which schools are quarantined from social relations of inequality, cultural hegemony, sexism, racism, and any of the other social and educational disadvantages and conflicts that surround and pervade schooling. Such influences may be remotely acknowledged, but they are sanitised in school effectiveness research, reduced to distant 'home background' and merely regarded as quality of input (Angus, 1993a:343).

A second school of thought around the SBM literature questions the whole notion of effectiveness in terms of the way in which it is portrayed in educational policy (Anderson & Dixon, 1993; Angus, 1994; Jonathan, 1995). These writers regard SBM as a mechanism that diverts attention from the real strategy behind SBM which is ultimately about decreasing the educational responsibility of the state and the reproducing of social inequalities.

One of the approaches within the SBM movement emphasises empowerment, democracy and decentralised decision-making, which accounts for its current popularity. However, Anderson and Dixon (1993) argue that micro-level (school-based) empowerment within a larger policy context of social disempowerment will contribute to an increasingly unequal distribution of educational resources. Participation alone does not guarantee adequate voice to diverse constituencies. Participation continues to be limited, although not necessarily by administrative manipulation of power but by the hidden distinctions of social and economic class (Anderson & Dixon, 1993). This difficulty is compounded when community members and community interests are regarded as relatively homogeneous so that what is presented is 'a homogenised view of parents and community which overlooks major social and cultural differences' (Seddon, *et al.*, 1990 in Angus, 1994:88). Educational policies that ignore the socio-economic realities of parents and communities are therefore exclusive and not inclusive. The reason for this is the failure of such policies to provide an equitable decision-making opportunity to all participants. Consequently, existing inequalities are reinforced and perpetuated.

Another approach to SBM is based on a market rationality. This is premised on the notion that individuals in a free market economy will exercise their choice to satisfy their needs. Jonathan's (1995) analysis of SBM within a market rationality contends that choices are not just *made* in a context of political values and social conditions: those choices, when enacted, *create* changed social conditions and changed political values.

Jonathan (1995) explains the consequences of these choices as follows. Allocation of funding is on a per capita basis - consequently the exercise of choice within the market rationality results in the resources following the students. Schools will experience a drop in enrolment, and resources, causing retrenchments of staff. This increases the diversity between state schools, as 'good' schools get 'better' and the 'bad' schools become 'worse'. A two-tier system of schooling develops as pupils and resources flow from the deprived school in the one area to the more privileged area (Jonathan, 1995:3; Crouch, 1994: i). Within the market context, where provision is a mix of public and private, (or degrees of state-aidedness in SA), the losers will be those who are economically worst

placed. The responsibility for the failure of schools is placed at the institutional level and is seen as the failure of the professionals of the school and not as the result of national policy. Jonathan (1995) argues that this absolution of policy-makers from responsibility for the results of policy, together with the concomitant denial of social structural factors as at least determining individual opportunities, legitimates a market model of social provision and promotes an ideologically coherent set of political values.

Within the context explained above, superficial participatory decision-making is combined with tightened centralist policies relating to the curriculum, evaluation and standards. This means that the new management of schools, with their task of delivering a public educational service, and therefore public values, amounts to no more than the opportunity to manage dwindling fiscal resources. So in fact SBM appears to be an economic and administrative strategy, but it also has political purposes and consequences.

SBM, SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND PRINCIPALS

SBM also reconfigures the educational system in terms of the approach to management and in the way it positions principals in relation to the various stakeholders, namely teachers, parents and students. Policies that promote SBM, along with the concomitant factors, internal and external to the school, result in a context that creates the opportunities and constraints within which leadership is exercised by the principal. Effective strategies that can be employed to cope with the role of the principal are determined by this context which also determines the support available to principals.

What does the 'new' management of schools then entail within the context of countries that have moved towards SBM, such as the UK, Wales, Australia and the USA? One effect is that decentralisation and devolution places greater pressure on principals to attend to more managerial tasks tied to the delivery of educational services than they have done historically. The principal's job will therefore become more complex and demanding; new responsibilities are being added, but 'few if any of the former role demands is being taken away' (Bredeson, 1989 in Murphy, 1991: 27). One concern expressed is that it is unreasonable to expect the principal to perform the task of financial

manager, public relations manager, personnel and sales manager, legal expert, and labour-relations expert, etc. (Cave, 1990). Stronge (1988) found in a study that school management was the dominant focus of the elementary principalship, taking 62.2% of the principal's time, with instructional leadership accounting for 6.2% and professional development 2.6% (Stronge, 1988:32).

The reality of 'self-determining' schools is that they are in a situation where the "self" (in institutional and individual terms) is partly determined elsewhere' (Bowe, *et al.*, 1992:71). The changes taking place in the various aspects of the market, namely balancing the budget, inspections, accountability to the educational authority and parents, delivering the reform changes and the pace of change, make the principals more responsive to the 'boundary', that is, external influences. Principals are therefore placed in a position of conflict in relation to balancing financial judgements that are oriented to keeping customers satisfied, the professional judgements of teaching staff oriented to good practice and their accountability to the educational authorities in implementing changes required by reform. These tensions have clear implications for the ability of the principal to fulfil the role as educational leader which researchers find associated strongly with effective schooling (Cave, 1990; Simkins, 1994; Ball, 1994).

In the USA, there is a tension between the role expectations of the principal in a school-based strategy as opposed to an empowerment strategy. This tension often leaves principals confused about what is expected of them and 'feeling left out on a limb' (Murphy, 1991:26). In the former strategy the principal is the central actor and dependent business manager and in the latter, the principal acts as the co-ordinator of a group of professionals. Ball (1994) therefore regards the empowerment discourse as a counter discourse

'I ... see real and irreconcilable differences between the consumption orientation and the commodification of education, and democratic participation in school decision-making; between collective, community decision-making and privatised, self-interested decision-making' (Ball, 1994:92).

Influencing the above-mentioned tension can be a lack of information when policies fail to explain who should be involved in decision-making and how decision-making should proceed (Bowe & Ball, 1990 in Bowe *et al.*, 1992; Murphy, 1991). This means that principals have to manage the affairs of the school according to how they interpret policies and their vision of the school's response. Within the UK experience, for example, the fact that the principal (together with school governors) is in control of the budget, appointments, contracts, promotions and incentive awards, places the principal in the position of the employer of teachers (Bowe *et al.*, 1992:148). This creates a position of line management, a hierarchy of decision-making and widens the gap between the staff and the principal. The implications of this is that the collegial culture called for in policy rhetoric is constrained by the employer-employee relationship, decision-making is not shared, control of the school rests in the hands of a select few, and the educational leadership role of the principal is diminished. These factors could lead to demoralisation in the organisation.

This outcome defeats to a large extent the rhetoric of the SBM reform pertaining to devolution of decision-making and participative management. It also creates educational problems in the school regarding the shift from a professional and public service perspective to a market budgetary perspective. The role players within and outside the schools have their relationships with each other redefined, e.g. principal - parent; principal - educational authorities; principal - staff. This has the effect of changing the way in which the school (and the polarities within it) will react to changes. All the immediate key relationships that affect and construct the possibilities of headship and school leadership are changed. In other words the organisational culture changes as a result of changes in educational legislation and the changes in the relationships of the role players within the organisation.

Rather than representing a new organisational paradigm, the 'new headship' is constructed by a set of powerful contradictions (Bowe, *et al.*, 1992 in Ball, 1994:101). They reorient the 'economy of power' within schools but misrepresent autonomy and authority. But the headteacher must continue to inhabit a set of pointed and potentially conflictual relationships with governors, staff and parents, which would appear to have narrowed down the space available for developmental or democratic interpretations of educative leadership. As far as headship is concerned, it is the

change in relationships and in culture that is most significant in redefining the head's role and self-conception (Ball, 1994:101).

SBM therefore has particular implications for principals and the execution of their role in relation to other role players inside and outside the school, and creates different conditions within which they must operate.

A SOUTH AFRICAN APPROACH

Elements of the international trend, in terms of the move towards SBM, are evident in the South African approach to educational policy. The funding partnership model recommendation of the Hunter Commission is closer to SBM than was the state school model that existed before 1994. What South African state schools therefore have to contend with in this period in the educational reform process is the move towards SBM, together with all its implications for principals and for the management of schools. By looking at the research and literature of SBM in other countries we have opened a window through which to look at the implications of such a policy for South African schools and principals. What must however be remembered is that we have a history of a particular variation of SBM. State aided schools that existed before 1994 provided a model for the development of SBM in South African education policy.

Historically South Africa has a strong state-aided tradition in that there have been more state-aided than state schools. The number of state schools is only approximately one-third of the total number of primary and secondary schools in the country (Hunter Commission, 1995). State schools are those schools owned and wholly funded by the state. State-aided schools are schools such as farm schools, mission schools and community schools. In state-aided schools the state pays for personnel, but the buildings, facilities and land have not been 'owned' or maintained by the state. This is a crucial difference between the farm and community schools on the one hand and the Model C schools on the other, where the land and buildings were given to the school communities in 1992 (Jacklin, 1995).

The Model C school is a particular manifestation of SBM which Knight (1993) describes as a new category of financial delegation, namely *cost transfer*. The schools take full responsibility for all their non-salary costs (that is, all premises maintenance, energy and water costs, grounds, rates and taxes, insurance, furniture, equipment, books and materials and other supplies and services) *and to raise the funds for them*. Schools may raise funds and generate income in the usual way, but may also legally charge fees to parents. The Model C schools in the former white House of Assembly education department came into being partly as a result of a decrease of the educational budget to the HOA schools. These schools then chose to accept financial accountability to prevent further retrenchments of teachers and a possible drop in educational standards.

Principals of these schools were unprepared for the tasks of financial delegation or accountability due to the shift of power from the state to the parents (Badenhorst, 1995). The shift forced upon principals a new role as negotiator between parents as clients and teachers as professionals who had to deliver the goods in educational terms or risk losing students and their money to perceived 'better' schools. Badenhorst also mentioned bigger classes in terms of student numbers and the increased multicultural nature of schools as factors that could affect the principal in future.

What is clear from the Model C example, is the impact that educational policy has on changing the role of the principal and in creating new limits within which their role can be exercised. South Africa therefore has a history of SBM from which lessons can be learnt about principals faced with financial delegation and accountability.

School management policy in the Western Cape is indicative of the shift towards SBM management policy. In an interview for this study, the Deputy Director of Education for the Western Cape indicated that principals had to accept that a paradigm shift was necessary, that is 'that what he was used to is not going to continue'. Secondly, the official felt that principals needed to shift from a more informal, non defined management process to a clearly defined one. This follows SBM strategies that provide principals with

clear procedures for school business as a way of coping with new and confusing demands, and comfortable, yet purposeful roles for participants (Angus, 1994).

The approach of the Western Cape Education Department places the principal at the apex of management:

There is always a different dynamic between management and other role players, period. Management is always on a different dimension and I think members of management have got to acknowledge that. It does not deny democratic participation. Principals can't do it on their own - we must forget about that. Any principal who thinks that they are the chief will get sunk very quickly (Deputy Director - Western Cape Education Department).

This comment illustrates that the conflict between the rhetoric of the empowerment strategy and SBM exists in South African school management policy. In this regard, Angus (1994) has argued that SBM advocates a hierarchical leadership style, where its limited and controlled forms of participation has the effect of encouraging school participants not to question the social and political conditions of their work, but to get on and do the job by focusing on their own little domain of the school. Western Cape education management policy is therefore premised on an acontextual approach to schools management and follows the effectiveness and efficiency strategy espoused in SBM.

This approach is likely to be framed by the school governance and funding models developed in national policy. Within the recommendations of the Hunter Commission a range of options is available to schools within the new state school category. School governing bodies and provincial education departments would negotiate a selection of functions from a range of options, in terms of 'negotiable' powers available to them, depending on the will and management capacity of schools (Hunter Commission, 1995: xiv). The consequence of this could be a range of state-aided schools developing according to the financial capacity of the school community.

In the past, all models of state-aided schools in South Africa have had the effect of yoking the quantity and quality of classroom delivery to the level that a particular school

community can afford (Jacklin, 1995). On the one hand this could lead to the development of schools ranging from the old state type of school to the Model C type on a continuum. However, the Model C type is taken as an ideal towards which other schools move. On the other hand those schools positioned in the economically worst placed communities will lose students and funding to 'better' schools in economically advantaged communities. This will create a drop in enrolment and resources, leading to retrenchment of staff (Jonathan, 1995). Within the context of the historically disadvantaged communities, spatially anchored to the historical Group Areas, this scenario has very real and serious implications. It will not only differentiate between advantaged and disadvantaged communities, but also between schools within the same geographic community who are more or less successful in attracting students.

The educational resources available to the school for the provision of educational services has implications for the management role of the principal. This affects the success or failure of schools educationally. The responsibility for the educational outcome of the school is also placed within the ambit of the professionals of the school and not within the ambit of policy at the national and provincial level.

Principals are responsible for educational outcomes related to the quality of the schooling process. National and provincial policy does not address this.

Educational quality, not only the quantity of schooling, strongly shapes academic achievement and eventual economic returns to education investment (Fuller, 1986 in Mboya & Mwamwenda 1994:390). Failure to maintain and sustain such equilibrium will render the very essence of education 'a stratifying and a formidable agency of inequality (Mwamwenda & Mwamwenda, 1987 in Mboya & Mwamwenda 1994:390).

Chisholm & Motala (1995) argue that the South African policy approach, as espoused in the White Paper (March 1995), concentrates on increasing access to education and is concerned with symbolic rather than substantive change, with changing structure rather than content, quality and contextual factors. This is because the policies are based on macro-level findings and discredited production-function and school effectiveness approaches. This approach is regarded as ignoring the elements of chaos, complexity and contradiction (Schofield, 1995) existing at the institutional level that involves the

whole school community consisting of teachers, pupils, parents and their communities (Schofield, 1995; Davidoff, Kaplan & Lazarus, 1995). Current educational policy thus ignores the realities of context. It does not involve institutional actors such as principals in identifying their own needs. It also ignores the effects that policy and context can have on the management role of principals. These factors can affect the quality of educational delivery at the institutional level, because they determine to a large extent the conditions, challenges and strategies employed by principals.

The national and provincial departments should therefore focus on creating a favourable policy environment in which those who have the most influence on the quality of teaching and learning are encouraged and supported to perform optimally. Kissak and Meyer (1995) argue that considerable scope exists for actors involved in implementation to engage in setting objectives and standards and in monitoring more qualitative aspects of quality at various levels such as the school and district.

CONCLUSION

On the one hand, therefore, the example of the Model C schools shows the one type of state-aided school that could evolve under the Hunter Commission recommendations. This embodies elements of School-Based Management, together with its attendant consequences for parents, teachers, students and principals in particular. At the other end of the spectrum are the economically worst placed schools. They will be in a position where their resources dwindle due to an inability to draw fee-paying students and an inability to compete for better qualified teachers. This will cause their educational quality to decrease. In other words the 'good' schools get 'better' and the 'bad' schools become 'worse'.

The financial recommendations of the Hunter Commission and the implementation policies for education of the White Paper, at a national, provincial and school level will affect the management of education in the school. In this regard it will affect the

structures, processes and relationships between the members of the school community, within the constraints of policy and the capacity of the geographic community (Schofield, 1995:166).

On the other hand, the quality and effectiveness of schools will suffer if macro-level policies fail to take the following into account: a concern with what happens inside the classroom in terms of quality; the effect of change at the institutional level on institutional stakeholders; the involvement of institutional stakeholders and a failure to provide support for principals and teachers under these conditions of educational reform.

In terms of preparing principals to meet the challenges of managing schools in South Africa at this time, 'training' does not only mean the acquisition of technical skills. It also means the ability of principals to develop managerial strategies that are sensitive to broader political and social dynamics within which the social relations of the school are embedded. This report shows that principals are themselves developing such strategies in response to current conditions.

This report therefore explores the perceptions of beginner principals regarding the challenges and constraints that they are facing and the support and coping strategies that principals are currently developing as a response to change. These perceptions are relevant to policy and practice. Principals have a better chance of making the most of the circumstances of their schools if they understand what the challenges and the constraints are.

This report also points to the limits of school management, in that national and provincial policies and financing arrangements shape and constrain the possibilities that are available to school managers. This would suggest that the realisation of effective, quality

schooling is not only an administrative project at the school level, but also a political project at the provincial and national level.

It may be argued that the progress of a school system is related to the rate at which each cohort of new principals becomes able to make educationally effective decisions (Schwartz & Harvey, 1991). Effective, quality schooling thus depends in part on the management capacity of the principal and the support for the principal within the national and provincial policies and financing arrangements of schools. The following chapter therefore explores the management position of the school principal and specifically that of beginner principals.

CHAPTER THREE

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter will attempt to locate the beginner principal within the changing international context of school management. This is done by looking, firstly, at the way the principal is portrayed in effective schools literature and, secondly, by looking at literature that specifically focuses on the experiences of, and problems faced by, beginner principals.

The effective schools literature tends to focus on characteristics of effective principals and the identification of problems experienced by the beginner principal. This literature is limited, in that it tends to be decontextualised. Therefore this chapter will provide a critique. Although the effective schools research does not specifically look at the beginner principal, but concentrates on principals per se, it is important for this study to be seen against the background of effective schools and effective principals in identifying possible solutions for South Africa.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AND EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS

The debate about the effect of differences between schools on pupil achievement and the role of the school principal has been one of the central themes of research around effective schools. The existing research is however rooted in time, place and context and this influences the way school management and the role of the principal is perceived. This perception has changed between the early 1960s and the 1990s.

Since the 1960's a series of studies argued that differences in pupil achievement were not so much a consequence of differences between schools as a consequence of social relations, hereditary factors, luck, and family influences (Bernstein, 1970; Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks, 1972; West & Farrington, 1973 in Reid *et al.*, 1988). Sociologists have

tended to see the roots of inequality in the economic and political structure of society itself. (Rutter et al., 1979 in Reid *et al.*, 1988).

Despite disagreement about the degree of influence of schooling on pupil achievement, many researchers have published findings which support the notion that schools are different and can have an important impact on the lives of pupils, teachers and communities (Rutter et al., 1979; Reynolds et al., 1976; Purkey & Smith, 1983 in Reid *et al.*, 1988). Edmond's (1979) description of the five 'correlates' which have remained central to the effective schools movement are the following:

1. The school leader exercises strong administrative leadership and keeps the school moving ahead in the effective mode. The principal encourages staff attention to key elements of effective schools and exerts instructional leadership in many ways. The leader demonstrates some important characteristics. The leader is a believer, is dedicated to quality education, and is committed to school improvement.
2. A climate that is safe and orderly without being rigid and repressive provides the learning environment in an effective school.
3. High and positive expectations are held for students and staff.
4. Teachers and all school staff emphasise the basic skills that will be tested.
5. Teachers use regular and continuous assessment to structure strategies for each pupil (Achilles, 1987:20-21).

A number of critiques have emerged which have identified problems associated with the research on effective schools. Purkey and Smith (1983) identified weaknesses in the research methodologies and Cuban (1984) warned against research that offers an incomplete theory of school improvement that is decontextualised. A further problem is that in focusing on school management and school improvement, all levels of a school system should be addressed. A school is a combination of 'nested layers' in which each organisational level sets the context and defines the boundaries for the layer below, though there is a reciprocal influence (Barr and Dreeben in Purkey and Smith, 1983).

One of the factors found in almost all the work on effective schools is positive leadership by the principal (Gersten et al., 1982; D'Amico, 1982; Purkey and Smith, 1982 in

Valentine *et al.*, 1988). However, most of the other factors listed as characteristic of effective schools, can also be influenced by the principal.

What then are the key characteristics of effective principals? The NAESP's *Principals for 21st Century Schools* (1990) lists the characteristics of effective principals as follows. Effective principals must: nurture positive relationships; inspire confidence, trust, and respect; have a positive attitude and attractive image; possess human relations skills; be actively involved in all aspects of the school; maintain a visible presence; exhibit instructional leadership; have a vision; have high expectations and standards; help teachers plan and implement strategies that match curriculum to student's learning needs; implement innovations; know how to facilitate change; develop a collegial environment; communicate effectively; and be professional (Joekel *et al.*, 1994:34).

Ironically, less than a decade ago the effective schools literature was touting school principals as the heroes of school reform. Effective schools had principals that were strong leaders who were responsible for everything from an orderly school climate to a school's high achievement scores. Principals who achieved positive change in their schools, we were told, were those who were able to promote effectively - even through supportive coercion if necessary - innovation and change (Huberman & Miles, 1984 in Anderson & Dixon, 1993). Joekel (1994) shows how the image of the strong leader who makes the difference between an effective or ineffective school, has given way to the facilitator who empowers by sharing decision-making power with a variety of stakeholders, fostering a culture of collegiality, communicates, possesses human relation skills and treats teachers as professionals.

Zirkel and Greenwood (1987) caution the advocacy of the 'Great Principal - Great School theory' (Rallis & Highsmith, 1986). In a review of research around effective principals, they found that the instructional leadership emphasised in the literature may well be multidimensional, involving the interplay of personal traits, leadership styles, management behaviours and contextual factors. Finally, some research syntheses have concluded that this leadership may be supplied by other members of the school staff (Zirkel & Greenwood, 1987).

The approach to school management in the effective schools literature, and especially the approach expected of effective principals, has therefore changed from the control and line management of the 1980s, towards the shared school management and empowerment rhetoric of SBM in the late 1980 and the 1990s. This 'new' management, coupled with the many tasks and expectations of the principal, helps to shape the boundaries of constraint and opportunities within which principals must operate.

Thus the effective schools research suggests that principals can and do have influence over what happens in schools and that this influence has real and measurable effects. However, what is not clear yet is how principals achieve these results in their schools causing them to become effective schools. It may be argued that the progress of a school system is related to the rate at which each cohort of new principals becomes able to make educationally effective decisions (Schwartz & Harvey, 1991). Thus the beginner principals have a heavy responsibility resting on very inexperienced shoulders. If unsupported, they could very early in their career lose the battle to cope and survive, given the expectations of effective schools within the contextual constraints of reform in South Africa.

THE BEGINNER PRINCIPAL

Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) noted

Whatever the reasons for wanting to become a school principal (some are more noble than others), most aspirants to the role have a vague understanding of much it entails. The loneliness, the conflicts, the dullness of the routine, the "busy work", and the anguish that accompany having to solve complex educational and organisational problems with extremely limited resources are usually not part of teachers' conceptions of the principalship (in Gorton, 1983:512)

Beginner principals therefore enter their posts, which encompass many leadership and managerial aspects, often with little more than the incidental experience they have gained during their careers. Although much has been made of the beginner teacher, and the accompanying trauma that many may vividly recall, little has been written about the beginner principal (Bath in Parkay and Hall, 1992; Weindling & Early, 1987b).

The purpose of this section of the chapter is firstly to survey literature that attempts to develop a realistic understanding of major problems that the beginner principal may face during the first year. It is difficult to generalise about the types of problems that the beginner principal may encounter, because these problems will vary according to the principal's background, training, personality, and school situation. Secondly, the chapter will deal with case studies which has attempted to establish an understanding of the beginner principal of which little is known or documented. The particular problems and experiences of beginner principals in contexts of SBM in other countries, can offer lessons for South African principals and policy makers faced with a shift to SBM.

RESEARCH STUDIES ON BEGINNER PRINCIPALS

UNITED KINGDOM

In a study done in England during 1986, Weindling and Early (1987b) noted the international emphasis placed on principals and leadership in schools by writers and governments. Since then the role of the principal has changed due to factors such as the change in school size and composition, the demand for greater accountability, the decline in school enrolment, changes in legislation and the increased use of industrial action by teacher unions. Generally the role has increased in complexity and scope and heads are facing increased pressure both from within and outside the school.

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) project of Weindling and Earley (1987b) had the following objectives: to document the demands made on heads in their first years of headship; to describe the range of strategies employed to cope with them; to identify the requisite skills and knowledge needed to carry out their new role and to provide guidelines for in-service agencies involved with senior management training. Their research involved three groups: newly appointed secondary heads, a random sample of heads with three to eight years experience and all senior secondary advisers.

Their findings and recommendations can be summarised under the following headings:

- efforts to improve preparation for headship should be concentrated on aspiring deputy heads;

- providers should tailor their senior management courses more carefully to the needs of Local Education Authorities(LEAs), heads and deputies;
- new heads should fully recognise the importance of their relationships with the senior management team;
- new heads should concentrate much of their effort in establishing good working relationships with the staff;
- new heads need to learn more about the management of change;
- LEAs should have a planned programme of induction for new heads.
- LEAs should consider ways of improving their support for heads (Weindling & Early, 1987a:204-210)

Weindling (1990) reported that the NFER (1986) study of beginner principals conducted in the UK found that the main problems confronting new headteachers were found within the school, and involved relationships with staff. Relationships with the senior management team played a key role in determining how well the new administrator settled in, and how able and willing he or she was to delegate. The research also showed the importance of historical factors, especially the influence of the previous principal, something many neophytes tend to ignore. The cultures of schools are very strong and could take three to five years before the headteacher's influence has much effect on the ethos of the school. Most new headteachers were given a honeymoon period, usually a few months, while staff watched and waited. During this time headteachers believed they could do no wrong and not surprisingly, these expectations generally proved unrealistic in short order.

The new headteachers seemed to have an ideal image of what they wanted their schools to resemble. As they settled in, they found that they differed from their ideals and soon became involved in the management of planned change. Initially this focused on communication, consultation, and efforts to improve the public image of the school. Curricular reviews, discussion papers and staff work parties prepare the groundwork during the first year for implementation during the beginning of the second year (Weindling, 1990).

Weindling (1990) believes that, although the term instructional leader is not used in Britain, most headteachers were closer to the ideal than their US counterparts because they were involved in all aspects of the school curriculum. The most important factor contributing to instructional leadership was that they taught for an average of 20% of the week. They found it difficult to teach as part of the normal time-table, but better to serve as substitute teacher. This allowed them to stay in touch with the 'pulse of the classroom', be aware of teachers' problems, be known by students as a teacher and not just a headteacher and to get to know the students. A study by Stronge (1988) found that experienced high school principals spent only 11.3 percent of their time on activities related to instructional leadership.

In a follow-up study, the NFER found that the role of beginner headteachers had changed considerably between 1983 and 1988. Headteachers were now much more concerned with the need to respond to external initiatives, with the need to engage in sound management while providing effective instructional leadership, and with enhancing positive public relations while also seeking staff support. There had not only been a change in emphasis, but also in intensity. In an interview, an individual, who disliked the recent changes in his role, said, "I have become more of a salesman, entrepreneur, opportunist, lawyer, and accountant. It is not the job I came to do originally" (Weindling, 1990:44).

UNITED STATES

Gorton (1983) and Gorton and Thierbach-Schneider (1991) provide a useful survey of the problems faced by beginner principals from an American perspective: They identified the following problems:

The Acceptance Problem

Initially many beginner principals are concerned about how students, parents, and particularly teachers will react to them. Whether a beginner principal will actually encounter difficulty in gaining the acceptance of others will depend in large part on the type of acceptance that is sought (Gorton & Thierbach-Schneider, 1991:600).

The Problem of Insufficient Time

During the first year the beginner principal may frequently have the feeling that there is never enough time to do everything that needs to be accomplished (Gorton & Thierbach-Schneider, 1991:601). This is to a lesser degree also a problem for experienced principals.

Research on school principals found that they spend most of their time in meetings, frequently of an unscheduled nature and dealing with organisational maintenance tasks rather than instructional and curricular improvement activities (Gorton, 1983:514). These findings on principals' use of time contrasts with principals reported *preference* for spending the most time on improving instruction and curriculum.

The problem of having too little time can generally be attributed to four factors: (1) inexperience, (2) the absence of a system for organising time, (3) the administrative job itself, which by its very nature is demanding and time-consuming and (4) failure to delegate responsibility (Gorton, 1983:515).

The Authority Problem

Many beginner principals seem to have trouble in exercising authority during their first year (Gorton & Thierbach-Schneider, 1991:604). Gorton notes two reasons for these problems: One is that beginner principals have not examined carefully the nature and scope of their authority. They should recognise that their basic authority is delegated to them by the school board and the superintendent of schools. Therefore they should understand clearly the policies and directives of the school board and the superintendent (Gorton, 1983:517). Unfortunately, in too many situations the authority of the principal is not formally delegated or explicitly stated. This is because it is believed to be inherent in the position or associated with the responsibilities that have been assigned. A second reason for the difficulty in exercising authority is that beginner principals do not seem to understand the limitations of authority or the conditions under which it is best exercised (Gorton, 1983:517).

The Effectiveness Problem

It is understandable that beginner principals may experience some concern about their effectiveness during the first year (Gorton & Thierbach-Schneider, 1991:604). Firstly, there may not be general agreement on the criteria to be used in evaluating a principal's effectiveness. Secondly, although the superiors and the other groups with whom the beginner principal interacts may be constantly making evaluative conclusions, they may not explicitly communicate these conclusions to the beginner principal (Gorton, 1983:519).

The Socialisation Problem

In the USA many, if not most, beginner principals finish their university coursework and start their first job in administration without practical experience. Once on the job, however, they are typically exposed to a socialisation process that, in many cases, diminishes much of the idealism they may have acquired (Gorton, 1983:525).

In a study of the Socialisation Experiences of Beginner Principals in Canada, Leithwood, Steinbach and Begley (1992) recommended that principals and their deputies share job responsibilities. Consequently deputies have experience with a comprehensive array of principals' responsibilities, not simply the mundane, routine, maintenance tasks. They take this a step further by formally including in the criteria used to evaluate principals, responsibility for the instructional leadership development of their deputy principals (Leithwood *et al.*, in Parkay & Hall, 1992:303).

The above-mentioned American literature suggests that beginner principals, in general, are subjected to problems in the institutional context that will have an impact on their role as managers and instructional leaders.

The Beginner Principal Study

Parkay and Hall (1992) conducted the Beginner Principal Study (BPS) that consisted of a national survey (n = 113) as well as case studies (n = 12) of beginner principals in the USA. The aim of the study was to identify any pattern, themes or trends that characterise how principals shape their professional identities. A summary of their findings showed the

typical beginner principal to have had experience as an assistant principal and be male, about 40 years of age and assigned to a rural school with an enrolment of 500-1100.

Their analysis showed significant differences amongst principals related to demographic variables: school size, school location and prior experience as an assistant principal. School size was found to be related to the importance attached to working with parents and community members and to building the administrative team in a significant way. Whether the principal had prior experience as an assistant principal, was related to the perceived importance of dealing with finance and budget, dealing with problems on campus grounds and school buildings, and dealing with public/ community relations.

Although beginner principals are confronted with many challenges related to internal and external issues, their greatest difficulty, as revealed in their responses to the open-ended 'key events' questions on the BPS survey, is realising their educational goals. Their responses indicate that today's beginner principals do see themselves as providing leadership for their school's curricular and instructional programmes. However a staggering array of problems deters them from devoting continuing attention and energy to this task. Furthermore, these difficulties appear to affect all principals equally, regardless of gender, age, race and level of education.

The findings of the BPS survey suggest the need to provide support programmes for beginner principals that help them deal with priority tasks and enable them to address issues more centrally related to improving teaching and learning. This support should focus on three areas:

- (1) providing future principals who have not had assistant principalship experience with realistic internship experiences,
- (2) creating opportunities to attend skill-development workshops related to the numerous daily operational tasks associated with the principalship, and
- (3) providing principals with the knowledge and skills to work effectively with key individuals and organisations beyond the school walls (Parkay & Hall, 1992: 37-38)

AUSTRALIA

Two Australian studies of beginner principals by Beeson and Matthews (1992) and Schwartz and Harvey (1991) provide valuable insight for South Africa. The Australian context in which the studies were conducted included the following dimensions of change: (a) a shift in policy making and control where responsibility for many areas of operation and decision making are being devolved to schools (b) the press for accountability where at both national and state levels economic considerations are having a greater influence on educational policy development and where restructuring is taking place in some states. Both studies looked at both primary and high school principals.

Beeson and Matthews (1992) found that the major concerns of the beginner principal included the identification of curriculum development; the need to have clear curriculum policies and statements; relationships with staff; the image of the school in the wider community; administrative matters; communication within the school; discipline of students and time management.

Schwartz and Harvey (1991) found that principals need an analytical framework from the beginning for systematic scanning of the school and its environment in order to choose their style of operation for the new school year. Principals need to consult (and be seen to consult) with their staff about teaching practice, curriculum development and the quality of student learning. This develops shared thinking about the state of the school, and demonstrates a concern for staff views. Principals should, especially in a time of devolution, examine the *de facto* policy process within the school to determine whether it has sufficient legitimacy. Principals require frameworks for analysing the nature of working relationships among staff. Principals should get beyond reactive management and day-to-day administration in order to think about the medium and long term future of the school. The development of the requisite school boundary maintenance skills is a major learning experience for new principals in managing external relations. The instructional leadership skills are critical elements in the change process. This process cannot begin to be effective without the agreement of the staff on the need for change, and their support for and perception of ownership of the change in question. Especially

during periods of extensive educational change, principals must maintain awareness of the social, economic and political contexts in which the schools operate.

The follow-up study of the NFER and the Australian studies share corresponding contextual elements of decentralisation of management to the institutional level. They show the possible effects on beginner principals in South Africa, from which policies for the support of beginner principals could be developed. The focus of this report now shifts to whether research information exists about beginner principals in South Africa from which inferences can be drawn for future policy.

SOUTH AFRICA

Theron and Bothma (1990) noted that the basic problems experienced by South African principals in the House of Assembly schools during the Apartheid era was the lack of training for the task and the misconceptions about the principalship. They endorsed the fact that training, which would alleviate these experiences, must receive the highest priority. Specific problems experienced by the beginner principal were:

1. Uncertainty about exactly what can be delegated;
2. The division of work;
3. Overhead planning, planning with regard to certain tasks or planning with a view to simplifying certain tasks;
4. Making decisions;
5. Conducting staff meetings
6. Management of school hostels
7. Miscellaneous: staff appointments, class teaching (self), instructional leadership, school finances, and the extent of community involvement (Theron & Bothma, 1990:32)

Van der Westhuizen and Janson (1990) conducted a survey of beginner principals of Afrikaans secondary school principals in the Transvaal, to ascertain the extent to which they experienced the same problems as principals in the UK and USA. Their survey consisted of a questionnaire sent to 48 principals that occupied the post of principal for the first time.

Their investigation showed that newly appointed school principals in the RSA, and more particularly those in the Transvaal, experienced similar problems as those in the UK and USA. The problems experienced were: trying to do regular class visits, hostel finances, dealing with teachers whose work is not satisfactory, recruitment of temporary staff, evaluation of staff and paying insufficient attention to the principal's own family. However they found that fewer than half of the principals (35%) experienced the problems mentioned above.

Their conclusions include the fact that the school principals in their study (N=40) experienced problems to a small degree, and generally assumed their new positions and dealt with problems with relative ease. They also state that evidently the newly appointed principal does not experience the same degree of practice shock that principals in the UK and USA experience.

Amongst the interesting findings in the study is the fact that principals listed the lack of opportunity to act in the position of principal as a problem; the fact that they would have liked better in-service training by their previous principals; a closer involvement and guidance role by the Circuit Inspector regarding the details of managing a school and the absence of a person (or mentor) who could serve as a sounding board and with whom problems could be discussed (Van der Westhuizen & Janson, 1990: 495-498).

The current South African research shows an emphasis on management issues facing principals within the institutional context. It does not focus on the influence that factors, both internal and external to the school, can have on beginner principals and the execution of their role.

CONCLUSION

From the research on beginner principals it is clear that the depth of research internationally is very thin and in South Africa almost non-existent. The USA literature identifies a staggering array of problems confronting the beginner principal, namely being accepted, insufficient time, problems of authority, effectiveness and socialisation (Gorton, 1983; Parkay & Hall, 1992). The South African literature indicates that beginner principals experienced these problems to a lesser degree (Van der Westhuizen & Janson, 1990). The South African research studies are however limited in the extent to which their findings can be generalised to all schools because only one of the previous education departments was researched in each case. However, both the USA and South African studies tended to follow a decontextualised approach to beginner principals and the problems they face (Gorton, 1983; Gorton Thierbach-Schneider, 1991; Theron & Bothma, 1990; Van der Westhuizen & Janson, 1990).

However, the USA and UK literature show that the problems experienced by beginner principals prevent them from realising their educational goals as emphasised in the call in the research for the principal to exercise instructional leadership (Joekel, 1990).

Common themes to emerge from the literature are the following:

- (1) aspiring principals need hands on experience of the tasks associated with the principalship;
- (2) training in the management of external relations and relationships with staff needs attention;
- (3) principals need to realise the importance of their senior management team;
- (4) new principals need to know how to manage change;
- (4) hat the educational authorities should find ways of improving support for new principals.

On the one hand this indicates the need for training, but on the other hand, the literature also indicates the limits of training in preparing beginner principals to deal with issues arising from external sources over which they have no control.

In this regard the findings of the NFER follow-up study of 1990 show the effect of Local School Management, implemented in the Reform Act of 1988, on beginner principals. The role of beginner principals changed towards a concern with responding to external initiatives, balancing management and instructional leadership, enhancing public relations and gaining staff support. This is echoed by the Australian studies which point to the skills that are required in the context of devolved management of schools. This includes boundary management, communication, relationships with staff, participatory management, analysis and evaluation of policies and programmes and an awareness of the external context of the school. The UK and Australian literature also indicate the increased difficulty of the induction of the beginner principal into the principalship during times of educational restructuring. This has clear implications for South African principals faced with the shift towards the introduction of elements of SBM. These elements include delegation of financial responsibility and increased accountability to parents, as part of the educational restructuring and reform process.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study sets out to explore the complex dynamics of the relationship between the experiences of beginner principals and broader developments. In this regard the perceptions of principals provide valuable insights. These are more effectively elicited by qualitative rather than quantitative or statistical methods, although the statistical method provides a broader reach and a more systematic, less impressionistic analysis of the responses.

To achieve the purpose of this study, a questionnaire was distributed to 47 beginner principals in secondary schools in the Cape Town metropolitan area. This resulted in a sample of $n = 37$, representing a 78% response. A follow-up interview was conducted with 10 beginner principals, as well as an interview with the Director General of the Western Cape Education Department. The objective was to provide answers to particular research questions concerning the political and discursive context.

The questionnaire and interviews complemented each other. The interviews allowed for a much deeper probe into the motivation of the respondents and their reasons for responding as they did. For the focus of this study the combination of questionnaire and interviews provided the opportunity to explore and understand the complex relationship between the experiences of beginner principals and broader developments. One of the developments explored was the implication of emerging government policy in the White Papers concerning the restructuring of education for principals.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The structured survey technique using a specific questionnaire (Appendix A) was modelled after the instrument used in the recent Beginner Principal Study (BPS) conducted in the USA by Parkay & Hall during 1992. Their survey instrument was based in part on early findings of the in-depth case studies of 12 first-time high school principals who participated in the BPS. It was also patterned after a national survey of 188 new secondary headteachers conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales (Weindling & Early, 1987b). However, Parkay and Hall were interested in the 'developing professional identity' of the beginner principal, that is 'an image of the self as a proactive leader who can make a difference'(Parkay & Hall, 1992: 2). In terms of this, their questionnaire focused on internal institutional factors which have an impact on the principal.

For the purposes of this study Parkay and Hall's questionnaire was adapted to suit the South African context and the focus of this particular study. The way the questions were posed in this instrument shifted the focus to the socialisation of the principal, rather than the developing professional identity of the principal as in the BPS. This study accepts the theoretical precept that the beginner principal seems to be more socially constructed, more influenced by social events and as such, is not purely an individual interacting within his/her institution.

Secondly, the instrument was influenced by the study of 400 headteachers in the United Kingdom by Anne Jones in 1987. She tried to find out what principals thought their training needs were in relationship to particular tasks associated with the principalship. Firstly, principals were asked to choose from the 16 listed tasks of the principalship those in which more training would be helpful and desirable. Then they were asked to rank the tasks from the most important (1) to least important (5). They then repeated the process for the specific tasks of the principalship, as well as the kinds of skills and personal qualities needed in the principalship today (see Tables 5-9).

Jones (1987) concluded that the self-managing school (LMS) in the UK requires heads to focus on their external role; developing their skills in public relations and marketing; and their responsiveness to parents, governors, LEAs and employers. Present South African educational policy includes elements of LMS for which the skills mentioned by Jones might be needed by South African principals. Jones' instrument has been adapted in this questionnaire to ascertain the training needs as envisaged by beginner principals. The rationale is that the beginner principals are experiencing educational reform that includes elements of LMS. Jones' approach is also more suited to the focus on socialisation of the principal in this study. The focus of this study is then on the experiences, support for and coping strategies of beginner principals in secondary schools in the South African context of educational reform and financial delegation, and specifically on the beginner principals in the Cape Town metropolitan area.

The questionnaire was designed to gather the following kinds of data: (1) descriptive information about the respondents and their schools; (2) open-ended responses linked to various research questions such as sources of support, sources of conflict and coping strategies; (3) responses to Likert scale items related to, "internal" and "external" problems and issues, and time priorities which respondents ranked in order of importance; and (4) principals' perceptions of the training requirements in the present context.

The Likert type response forces the respondents' choice and provides a space, "other" in which the respondents could, if they choose, insert their own additional response. In the open-ended questions respondents were expected to give their own answers, that is a self-report, to certain questions.

The reliability of the instrument rests on its "impeccable source", as all respondents are principals who are best placed at the present time to answer the questions posed in this study. Furthermore, assurance that the responses obtained from them would be kept confidential may encourage the participants to give the questions accurate and honest

responses. The questions that were asked, and their phrasing, would elicit the information needed.

The questionnaire was piloted by administering it to three individuals, comprising a beginner principal, a retired principal and one inspector of education. The pilot study was used to test the clarity of instructions, as well as the questions and method used. Those problem areas identified were then changed, after which the final questionnaire was compiled.

THE INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews (See Appendix B) were conducted to complement the self-reporting questionnaire sent to principals by delving deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they did. For the focus of this study, the interviews contributed a great deal in arriving at a clearer understanding of the complex relationship between the experiences of beginner principals and broader developments. It also facilitated the interpretation of the information provided by respondents in the questionnaire. The interview design was based on the interviews conducted in the Beginner Principal Study of Parkay and Hall of 1992. It was adapted for the purpose of this study for application in the particular South African context.

The interviews with the principals were recorded on audio cassettes and took approximately 40-45 minutes to complete. The interview consisted of questions that explored different aspects of the principal's first-year experiences, namely selection, personal reflections, goals and plans related to the period immediately after becoming principal, important steps taken, support systems, and educational philosophy.

The interview with the Deputy Director General of Education in the Western Cape was also recorded on audio-cassette and took approximately 40-45 minutes to complete. The semi-structured interview (See Appendix C) consisted of questions related to the position and responsibilities of the respondent, the impact of present educational policy on the principal; and support of beginner principals.

Sample

The population of the sample for the questionnaire consisted of 37 principals appointed in their first principalship in a secondary or high school. These included schools from the former House of Representatives and House of Assembly as well as schools established under the authority of the Western Cape Education Department. The sample of $n=37$ forms 72% of the total number of beginner principals, namely 51, that were identified. Therefore it can be regarded as a representative sample. The reason given for non-responses was generally as being due to a lack of time to fill out the questionnaire.

The population of the sample for the interviews consisted of ten principals. The Deputy Director General of Education in the Western Cape was also interviewed. Firstly, this was done to ascertain the extent of support for beginner principals in the Cape Peninsula. Secondly, the interview served to ascertain the interpretation of school management and governance as understood by the education department, and in particular the Western Cape.

PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTION OF DATA

It was very difficult to identify, through official channels, principals appointed in their first principalship. Initial information from the former education departments elicited information pertaining mainly to the names of the 1995 appointees. Beginner principals were then identified by comparing Education Bulletins in which posts were advertised during 1992, 1993 and 1994. Inspectors of Education were then asked if the principal in a particular post in their circuit had been appointed. Lastly the principals were contacted telephonically to confirm their status as beginner principals.

During the third school term of 1995, forty-seven of the fifty-one principals approached, agreed to be part of the research. These principals were sent copies of the questionnaire together with a covering letter (Appendix D), as well as a pre-paid reply envelope. The covering letter to the principals explained the purpose of the study and procedures for filling out the questionnaire and the return thereof. A follow-up letter (See Appendix E) was sent to the principals as a reminder and as an effort to speed up the return of the

questionnaire. Principals were then also reminded telephonically. The co-operation and interest from principals were high, with many requesting copies of the completed thesis.

The population of the sample for the interviews consisted of ten principals selected from the total sample of 37. This was achieved by obtaining a representative sample of respondents in terms of age, experience, geographic location and former education department. The interviewees were approached telephonically after which an interview was conducted at the school of the principal. There were many postponements due to the workload and time-management issues facing the specific principals.

The Deputy Director General of Education was also approached telephonically, during which an appointment was made for the interview, which subsequently took place. The co-operation and assistance offered was extremely helpful and indicative of all the officials of the department, junior and senior, with whom I had contact.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Both quantitative or statistical and qualitative methods were used in order to explore the experiences of principals in relation to the broader social, political, economic and policy and policy environment.

Questionnaire

Data validation and analysis of the questionnaire were conducted by the researcher and the findings expressed in Tables and Graphs that were analysed. Table one shows the demographic characteristics of principals and their schools with the percentage distribution of each. Tables two, three and four, respectively deals with the time priorities, internal factors and external factors facing principals. They show the ranking for each item in terms of the percentage of respondents that rated the item 'serious' or 'important'. The items under time priorities also had to be ranked in the order from most time spent (1) to least time spent (5) by the principals. Ranking of this also took place according to the percentage of respondents that rated the item accordingly.

In Tables five to nine, Principals were asked firstly to choose from the 16 listed tasks of the principalship, those in which more training would be helpful and desirable. Then they were asked to rank the tasks from the most important (1) to least important (5). They then repeated the process for the specific tasks of the principalship, as well as the kinds of skills and personal qualities needed by the principal today.

The section dealing with training needs of principals was ranked according to free choice, top five and first choice. These were expressed as percentages to indicate the percentage of respondents that made a particular choice (Table five and Tables seven to nine). In only one table (Table six) was the number of respondents that made a particular choice indicated.

Besides the computation of basic descriptive statistics, the analysis of this data included a series of one-way ANOVAs. This analysis examined the relationships between principal characteristics such as age, date of appointment, experience as deputy, qualifications, size of school and time priorities -- as well as internal versus external problems and issues. The 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$) was used for the statistical tests. In cases having a significant relationship, the responses were found to be parametric, and the standard deviation was not large (See Graphs one to five).

Interviews

The study focuses on the perceptions of beginner principals and this required qualitative methodology with which to interpret the statistical responses. Semi-structured interviews consisting of questions which explored different aspects of the principal's first-year experiences were conducted. This included selection, personal reflections, goals and plans related to the period immediately after becoming principal, important steps taken, support systems, and educational philosophy. The semi-structured interview with the Deputy Director General of Education (See Appendix C) consisted of questions related to the position and responsibilities of the respondent; the impact of present educational policy on the principal; and the support of beginner principals.

Transcription of the interviews and the analysis of responses related to the focus of the study took place. Salient comments and quotes were selected from transcripts were selected from transcripts for discussion in this report. Particular transcript extracts were chosen either because they exemplify in general the points that arise from the study, or because it substantiate the points made by the respondents. Extracts were chosen in such a way that they are representative in general terms of respondents.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This chapter presents the research findings of this study and provides a critical analysis of the data collected. The data pertains to the following:

1. The demographic characteristics of beginner principals in secondary schools in the Cape Peninsula;
2. Internal and external factors that impact on the role of the beginner principal;
3. Coping strategies and support for the beginner principal; and
4. Training needs as identified by beginner principals.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF BEGINNER PRINCIPALS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE TOWN METROPOLITAN AREA

(The data of this section is presented in **Table 1**, on page 46)

Analysis of the data shows a typical beginner principal in secondary schools in the Cape Peninsula to be male; 42.54 years old; with between two and four years experience as deputy principal and a B.Ed degree. The typical beginner principal was appointed from within school that has an average enrolment of between 801 and 1100.

The age of the youngest principal is 32 and the oldest 62 with 43.24% of principals younger than 40. In terms of experience, 16.22 % of principals have less than one year's experience and 59.46% have less than two years experience as principal. Combine this with the fact that 62.16% of principals have less than four years experience as a deputy principal, then the crucial need for support of beginner principals in the context of restructuring and rationalisation of education, becomes a priority in anyone's terms.

Table 1 - Demographic Characteristics of 37 Beginner Principals and Their Schools

Item	Number	Percent						
CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOLS:								
Former Education Department								
House Of Representatives	32	86.49						
Cape Education Department	2	5.41						
Department Of Education And Training	3	8.11						
Age of School in Years								
0-5	5	13.51						
6-10	0	0						
11-20	17	45.95						
21+	15	40.54						
Standard Levels								
6-10	36	97.30						
Other	1	2.70						
Enrollment								
Less than 500	4	10.81						
501-800	7	18.92						
801-1100	15	40.54						
1101-1500	10	27.03						
More than 1500	1	2.70						
Demography of students								
% Students	Black		Coloured		Indian		White	
	No. Schools	%	No. Schools	%	No. Schools	%	No. Schools	%
0%	9	24.32	6	16.22	32	86.49	33	89.19
1-10%	18	48.65	2	5.41	2	13.51	2	5.41
11-30%	4	10.81	1	2.7	0	0	0	0
31-60%	1	2.7	1	2.7	0	0	0	0
61%+	5	13.51	27	72.97	0	0	2	5.41
Percentage Permanent Teachers at Schools								
0-25 %	2	5.41						
26-50 %	0	0						
51-75 %	1	2.70						
75+ %	33	89.19						
Percentage Temporary Teachers at Schools								
0-10 %	21	56.76						
11-20 %	9	24.32						
21-40 %	3	8.11						
41 % or more	1	2.70						
Number of Heads of Department								
0-3	4	10.81						
4-7	8	21.62						
8-11	20	54.05						
11 or more	4	10.81						
Number of Deputy Principals								
0	3	8.11						
1	9	24.32						
2	14	37.84						
3	11	29.73						
4 or more	0	0						

CHARACTERISTICS OF PRINCIPALS:

Age		
20-30	0	0
31-40	16	43.24
41-50	15	40.54
51 or older	4	10.81
Average Age		42.54
Gender		
Male	36	97.30
Female	1	2.70
Ethnicity		
Black	3	8.11
Coloured	28	75.68
Indian	1	2.70
White	2	5.41
Highest Degree		
Bachelor	3	8.11
Honours/Bachelor of Education	27	72.97
Honours not in Education	4	10.81
Master's in Education	3	8.11
Experience as Principal at Other Level		
Yes	6	16.22
No	31	83.78
Years of Experience as Deputy Principal		
0-1	5	13.51
2-4	18	48.65
5-8	8	21.62
8 or more	4	10.81
Years of Experience as Head of Department		
0-1	1	2.70
2-4	12	32.43
5-8	16	43.24
8 or more	5	13.51
Years Teaching Experience		
0-5	6	16.22
6-10	16	43.24
11-20	10	27.03
21 or more	2	5.41
Prior Position		
Teacher	0	0
Head of Department	1	2.70
Deputy Principal	35	94.59
Principal	1	2.70
Promoted from within School?		
Yes	28	75.68
No	9	24.32
Date of Appointment		
1993	14	37.84
1994	16	43.24
1995	6	16.22
Choose Principalship As a Career Again?		
Yes	14	48.65
Uncertain	16	24.32
No	6	27.03

Furthermore, the response of principals to the question of whether they would become a principal again, indicates that 51.35% might decide to take early retirement (the "package") if the proposed rationalisation as envisaged by the Western Cape Education Department continues. Of these principals, 24.32% were uncertain and 27.03% answered a definite no.

The breakdown of ethnicity of principals closely follows that of the former education departments. This indicates that in the two years since the election, no shift has taken place in terms of appointments of principals across the former education departments. However the profile of student demography indicates a shift between the former education departments, which is not numerically large, but still significant. This implies a significant crumbling of Apartheid student demography patterns. It also raises the question of whether principals, appointed from within their own schools, are equipped to deal with the implications of multicultural schools.

TASKS ON WHICH PRINCIPALS PLACE AN IMPORTANT TIME EMPHASIS

(See Table 2, page 48)

Table two should be interpreted in the following way. Tasks with an important time emphasis are those tasks on which principals spend their time as they arise. The top five priorities and the ranking of the top five can be interpreted as those tasks on which principals would like to spend their time, and see as desirable. Unfortunately they do not necessarily get around to these planned tasks because of the tasks that are dealt with as they arise.

The tasks with an 'Important Emphasis' shows that 56.76% of principals spend most of their time dealing with attendance problems of both teachers and students. It was found that 51.35% of principals are spending their time on building the administrative team, and that 37.86% ranked it second in the top five and as the top priority. This indicates a lack of experience amongst the supporting administrative team. It suggests that principals have to do in-service training with their administrative staff, even though the principals themselves are inexperienced.

TABLE 2 - RANKING OF TASKS IN TERMS OF TIME BY 37 BEGINNER PRINCIPALS

	Tasks with Important Time Emphasis	% Respondents	Priorities in Terms of Time - Top Five Tasks	% Respondents	First Priority in Top Five in terms of time - Rank Order	% Respondents
1	Attendance problems	56.76	Curriculum development, improvement/ academic program evaluation	43.25	Building the administrative team	16.22
2	Building the administrative team	51.35	Building the administrative team	37.86	Curriculum development, improvement/ academic program evaluation	13.51
3	Curriculum development, improvement/ academic program evaluation	48.65	Teaching students	32.43	Teaching students	8.11
4	Handling student development	43.24	Attendance problems	29.73	Attendance problems	5.41
5	School finance/ budget	37.84	Working with parents/ community members	29.73	Handling student development	5.41
6	Working with parents/community members	32.43	In-service/ staff development	29.72	School finance/ budget	5.41
7	Teaching students	29.73	School finance/ budget	27.04	Working with parents/ community members	5.41
8	Public/ community relations	27.03	Handling student development	27.03	In-service/ staff development	2.70
9	In-service/ staff development	24.32	Supervision/ evaluation of teachers	27.03	Legal/ ethical issues	2.70
10	Supervision/ evaluation of teachers	21.62	Legal/ ethical issues	24.33	Public/ community relations	2.70
11	Legal/ ethical issues	5.41	Public/ community relations	16.21	Supervision/ evaluation of teachers	0

Curriculum development, improvement and academic programme evaluation are consistently ranked in the top three. This is not surprising given the context of educational reform in which principals are practicing their craft.

Teaching students is ranked as fourth in terms of **desired** time spent, but only 29.73% of principals **actually** spend time on this. This is consistent with the findings of Weindling (1990) that principals find it difficult to teach as part of the normal timetable. It also indicates an awareness by the principals that they need to keep in touch with the 'pulse of the classroom'. This enables them to be aware of teacher problems, and for students to know them as a teacher and not just as a principal.

Principals do not place an important emphasis on time for public/ community relations (16.21%) and supervision and evaluation of teachers (27.03%) in terms of desired time. School finance/ budget (27.03%) is ranked low in desired time spent, but increases in the actual time spent (37.84%). This might indicate that they are *au fait* with this aspect of their work. However, in view of their short term in office, and their limited experience as deputies, this is unlikely to be the case. In fact, the increase in actual time spent on finance shows that principals are increasingly struggling with these tasks.. Thus principals place least emphasis on the very tasks that increasingly will be required of them within an SBM approach.

SUMMARY

Beginner principals are affected by time management issues that prevent them from fulfilling the desired role of the principal. This is because they become caught up in fire-fighting internal, external and survival issues. The new approach to school governance includes financial delegation as well as increased accountability to parents, as envisaged by the Hunter Commission. In terms of the expectations of schools and principals implied by this approach, the analysis shows that the focus of present in-service training programmes should be on skills related to external relations and boundary management, which are lacking.

INTERNAL ISSUES FACING PRINCIPALS

One of the top two issues ranked most serious is 'working with problems related to the school buildings'. This was chosen by 40% of schools in the HOR, 33.33% of schools in the WCED and none of the CED schools. This indicates the realities of what principals have to cope with in terms of physical resources, or the lack of thereof. Recently schools were told to pay for their own repairs which is likely to add to this burden.

TABLE 3 - SERIOUS INTERNAL ISSUES FACING BEGINNER PRINCIPALS

	Ranking for 16 Internal Issues Rated Serious by 37 Beginner Principals	% Respondents
1	Establishing better standards of discipline.	37.84
2	Working with problems related to the school buildings.	37.84
3	Coping with a wide range of tasks.	35.14
4	Dealing with a large range of decisions.	32.43
5	Difficulties caused by the practice and style of the previous principal.	32.43
6	Dealing with disciplinary problems on the grounds of the school.	21.62
7	Establishing/ improving consultation procedures within the school.	18.92
8	Conflicting relationships with other role players	16.22
9	Dealing with problems relating to students	16.22
10	Establishing your priorities.	16.22
11	Establishing/ improving channels of communication within the school.	16.22
12	Empowerment of teachers	10.81
13	Working with school finance.	8.11
14	Obtaining information about curricular areas other than our own discipline.	8.11
15	Finding out about the daily routine of the school.	2.70
16	Working through ethical dilemmas.	2.70

'Establishing better standards of discipline' is jointly ranked first by 37.84% of principals. This was seen as one of their most difficult challenges in terms of setting up new forms of discipline and improving existing forms of discipline amongst pupils.

As one principal put it

Transition is the cause of a host of new problems. We have a new kind of child that deals with issues on the spot, dealing with it by fighting. There is an increasing arrogance where freedom is a licence to do everything. Children have rights, but they have not come to terms with understanding that rights must operate within a school and that has proven a far greater responsibility (HOR school).

Similarly, principals are also experiencing problems with the discipline of teachers where 'teachers tend to be lackadaisical due to past experiences' (HOR school).

Principals have to cope with a large range of tasks (35.14%) and deal with a large range of decisions (32.43%). This causes principals to experience practice shock due to, on the one hand, a lack of preparation and training and secondly, the lack of exposure to the realities of the principalship.

One of the greatest challenges facing principals is the democratisation of their schools. On the one hand they have to contend with difficulties caused by the practice and style of the previous principal (32.43%). In the open responses, principals frequently refer to the previous principal as 'authoritarian, almost rude'. This factor often leads to mistrust. On the other hand, principals commented that teachers were not used to taking ownership because they suffered from 'blame syndrome'. This challenge facing principals is understandable given the changes in democratic governance structures in the present educational and management context.

A direct effect of this is that it leads principals to establish and improve consultation and communication procedures within the school by getting teachers on board. Illustrating the difficulty of doing this is the comment of one principal who said that the success of this strategy depends on whether 'one can get the teachers and pupils on board with the principal instead of jumping overboard' (WCED school). One area that is affected by the attempt at democratisation is the selection and appointments of teachers, especially in promotion posts.

As a principal explains:

One wanted to democratise the whole process but even that has problems. I don't think that the school had sat down and placed other issues aside and looked at the broader principles involved here. Yes, we wanted the staff involved - how do we go about it. It was only when we had to implement it that the staff worked out a modus operandi. Even then it had its problems. Finally when a decision is made it does not satisfy everybody. That I think is symptomatic of a growing democracy, an infancy democracy - where people still cannot accept that a democratic decision is a decision because they had never ever been engaged in this kind of process (HOR school).

Principals are also facing the dilemma of interpreting democracy, which can have different meanings for different people.

How far must we consult? Sometimes you feel like you are doing the right thing and somebody says we are not consulted and they say 'who took the decision', so there is especially from my side, maybe the meaning of democracy and all such things, are not clear to everybody (WCED school).

You find that teachers want to have more say, but they can't because the competencies is often lacking. They know what the product is, but the process is where they have a problem (HOR school).

Beginner principals are therefore facing internal problems arising from their inexperience, the inherited culture attached to the style of the previous principal, and management problems that arise as a reaction to educational policy.

EXTERNAL ISSUES FACING PRINCIPALS

(The data of this section is presented in Table 4, page 53)

The most serious external issues are the retrenchments of teachers (56.76% of principals), restructuring of the educational system (35.14% of principals) and the implications for schools of the Hunter Report (35.14% of principals). An analysis of the most serious external issues shows that principals are facing factors related to the transition period that South African society in general and education in particular, are undergoing.

Compounding the concern with restructuring is the lack of information about retrenchments of teachers that is also leading to uncertainty:

The tragedy is that information is not coming forth. The department has plans. The plans are bad but it is better for one to know. There is a decline in motivation and

a high absenteeism rate amongst teachers. The increase (in absenteeism) is due to the stress level impact on their health. The percentage of absent teachers is higher than students. This is symptomatic of the stress and uncertainty which compounds it in teaching' (HOR school).

TABLE 4 - SERIOUS EXTERNAL ISSUES FACING BEGINNER PRINCIPALS

	Ranking for 16 External Issues Rated Serious by 37 Beginner Principals	% Respondents
1	Issues concerning retrenchment of teachers	56.76
2	Dealing with dwindling resources	54.05
3	Restructuring of the educational system	37.84
4	The implications for schools of The Hunter Report	35.14
5	Creating a better public image of the school.	29.73
6	Getting information about educational decision-making in the region/ circuit.	29.73
7	Getting information about areas of administrative responsibility - "who does what" - in the education department.	27.03
8	Working with parental problems	16.22
9	Obtaining information about what has been tried in other schools	13.51
10	Co-ordinating with feeder schools.	8.11
11	Developing a good working relationship with: Regional Education Department personnel	8.11
12	Developing a good working relationship with: The School Committee	5.41
13	Issues arising from school committee politics	5.41
14	Developing a good working relationship with: The Circuit Inspector	2.70
15	Working with the media (e.g. local press).	2.70
16	Working with local community groups and services	2.70

This is underscored by the fact that 29.73% of principals noted that difficulty in getting getting information about educational decision-making in their region/ circuit and areas of administrative responsibilities was a serious issue. Principals find difficulty in

coming to terms with the fact that retrenchments are happening. They feel they are not being consulted or informed and as a result they feel helpless.

This is compounded by the uncertainty of the position of the principal in terms of the Educators Employment Act (1994), which does not spell out whether principals are employers or employees of the state.

And especially in the times we are going through now, the onus is going to be on him with rationalisation. The onus is going to be on him to advise the department or to do the job himself of firing people, of allowing people to become redundant and be retrenched. And so either way, whether he is considered as employer or employee he is a key person as far as retrenchments are concerned. He is the fall guy, either way he is the fall guy (HOR school).

Principals are therefore caught in the middle - between the state and their rationalisation policies, and their staff, who through rationalisation, could lose their jobs.

The external issue rated second by 54.05% of principals, is dealing with dwindling resources. 'To maintain and move the school forward during a time when facilities are cut to the bone and staffing is threatened in a drastic way'(HOR school) is regarded as a major challenge by principals. In reply to the question as to the external factors that had created a crisis for them, typical answers involved a lack of resources (financial and physical) and the socio-economic conditions of the community in which the school was situated. These factors can influence the impact of the funding partnership recommendation of the Hunter Report. About these principals had the following responses:

I think the time will come when the school will have to appoint a Treasurer, etc. because the teachers are complaining all the time about having to collect money and keeping record and they're not trained and find it very difficult to hassle with money affairs (HOR school)

Given the reality of the community that we serve - it's going to be difficult (HOR school)

'We are really struggling getting fees from parents, so we are relying on fund-raising at the moment, which helps manage the school'(HOR school).

The fees part is the difficult part. Especially when people say 'look it was announced that there are no more fees and things like that education is free'(WCED school).

In terms of Jacklin (1995) and Jonathan's (1995) analysis, the quantity and quality of classroom delivery are yoked to the level that a particular community can afford within the state-aided financial model. This has implications for the school regarding the fact that the money follows the student (Jonathan, 1995). This could be why 29.73% of principals regard creating a better public image of the school as a serious issue for getting parents to choose their particular school; getting the parents involved; and creating a sense of ownership.

The following extract places into perspective and summarise what beginner principals are facing at this juncture in the educational reform process:

Being a principal in an unstable school environment of teacher political in-fighting, has stifled one's creativity and limited one's capacity to be both a leader and a manager. Most of one's time is taken up by matters external to teaching and learning. Perhaps given a different environment where teachers teach and students learns one would be able to exercise one's principalship with greater effect (HOR school).

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PRINCIPALS, EXTERNAL FACTORS AND TIME PRIORITIES

(The data of this section is presented in **Table 5** on page 56)

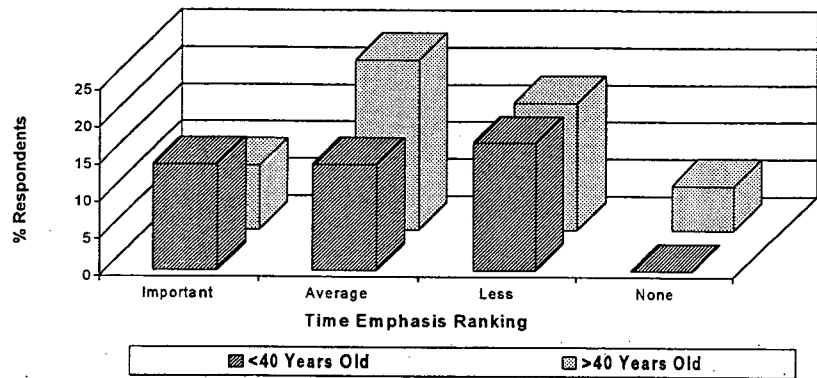
A series of one-way ANOVAs was used to identify significant relationships between Likert scale survey items and demographic variables. This revealed non-significant differences regarding the level of qualifications, years of experience as a deputy principal and the enrolment of the school. However, several significant ($p < 0.05$) differences were obtained regarding the following demographic variables, namely age and date of appointment (years of experience as a principal).

Age And Principals' Priorities

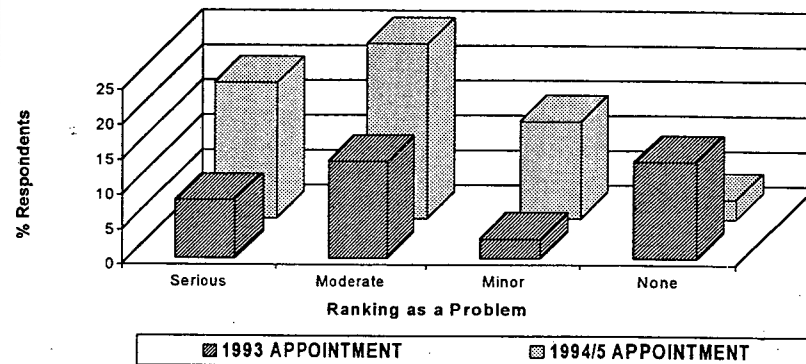
The age of the principal was significantly related to the time spent on public/ community relations and working with parents/ community members. Both these aspects are part of the external relations portfolio of the principal. The younger beginner principals place more time emphasis on public/ community relations (14.2%) and working with parents/ community members (23.5%). The older beginner principals however spent less time on public/ community relations (8.6%) and working with parents/ community members (5.9%). See **Graphs 1 and 2** on page 56.

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF BEGINNER PRINCIPALS,
EXTERNAL FACTORS AND TIME-PRIORITIES**

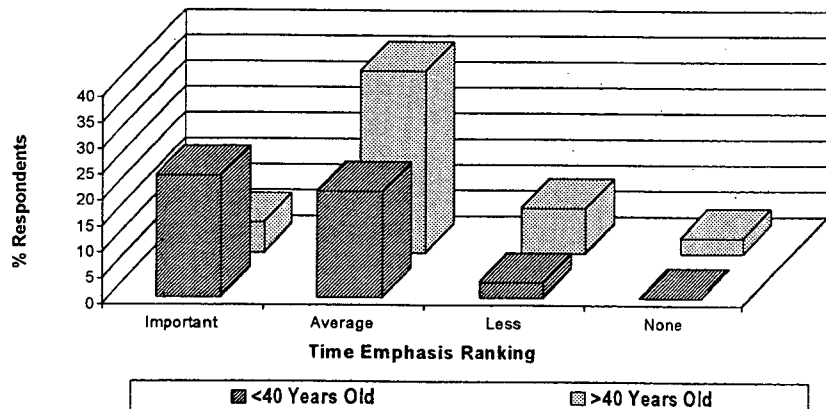
Graph 1 - Public / Community Relations



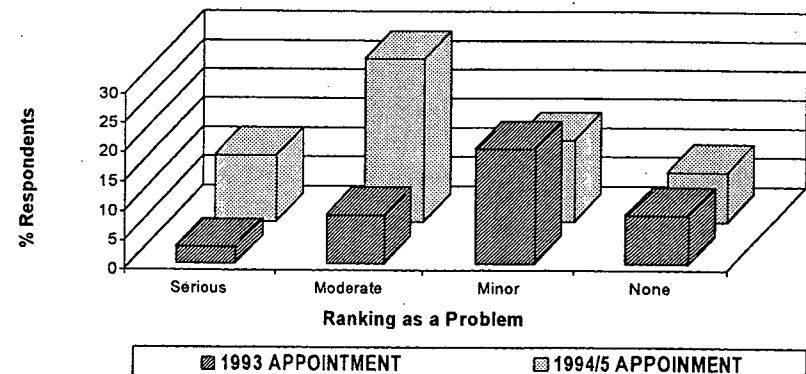
**Graph 3 - Getting Information about Administrative Responsibility
in the Education Department**



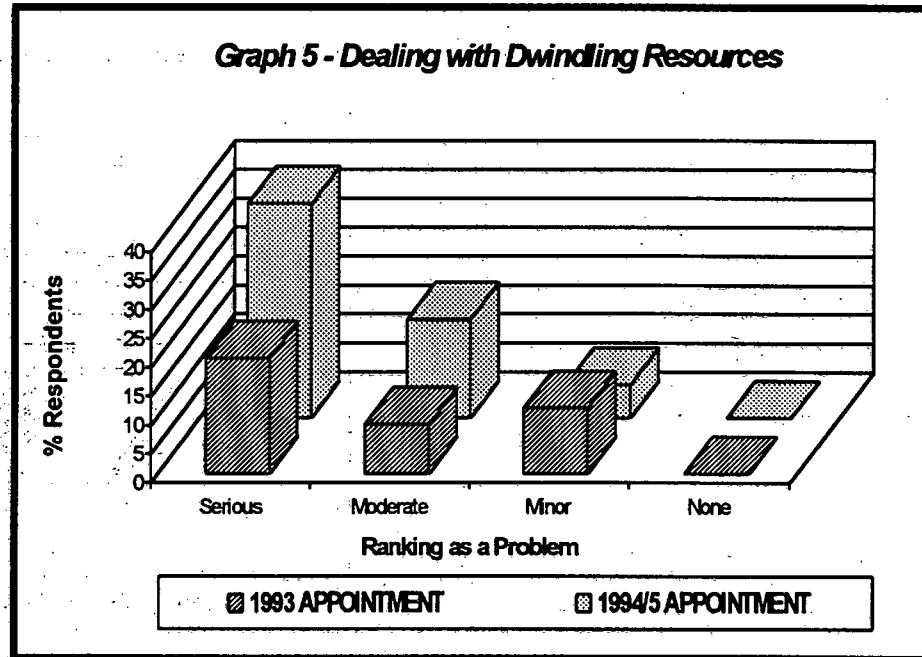
Graph 2 - Working With Parents / Community Members



**Graph 4 - Obtaining Information about What has been Tried in
Other Schools**



DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF BEGINNER PRINCIPALS, EXTERNAL FACTORS AND TIME-PRIORITIES



An explanation for this could be that the younger principals have spent less time in the position of deputy principal and therefore have less experience of dealing with external relations. The opposite seems to be true of the older, more experienced principals. This indicates the need for more support of the younger inexperienced principals in terms of training for the portfolio of external relations.

Date Of Appointment And Principals' Priorities

The date of appointment of beginner principals was significantly related to a concern with getting information about administrative responsibility - "who does what" - in the education department; obtaining information about what has been tried in other schools and dealing with dwindling resources. The principals appointed in 1994/95 are more concerned with these aspects than those appointed in 1993. (See **Graphs 3-5**, page 56 & 57)

One possible explanation for this is again the lack of experience as a deputy principal and the short time over which the beginner principal has been exposed to these aspects. A third explanation centres on the restructuring of education during 1994/95 and the consequences of the rationalisation policies of 1992/3.

The inexperienced beginner principals face the internal management tasks of the school. They also face the impact of external factors resulting from the educational reform process such as the restructuring of the system, retrenchments of teachers, a new curriculum and cutbacks in state expenditure on education. DET and HOR schools also have to contend with the socio-economic circumstances of deprived school communities.

The loss of teachers as a result of retrenchments in 1992/3 has caused principals to be inward-looking to solve problems arising from a lack of personnel for the educational programmes of the school. This is a consequence of external policies that polarises schools from each other and undermines co-operation and exchange of information. The lack of information from the department and a lack of resources were mentioned by principals as a stumbling block in achieving their goals in their schools.

SUMMARY

The lack of resources, both physical and financial, indicates the realities that beginner principals face together with the expectation of the educational reform policies. Secondly, beginner principals face disciplinary problems; problems caused by the management style of the previous principal; and the challenge of democratisation. These factors are symptomatic of the heritage of alienation of students and teachers from a school system perceived to be illegitimate. The external issues facing beginner principals stem directly from the transition that education is undergoing. Exacerbating the external issues is a lack of information about retrenchments of teachers, a lack of information about the education department and dwindling resources in terms of financial contributions by parents and the state.

Beginner principals are therefore not concerned or aware of those internal school issues in the new management discourse critiqued by Ball (1993) which are more of a long term concern. This is due to being caught up in fire-fighting internal, external and survival issues. The beginner principals are also inexperienced regarding the management and leadership tasks expected of them as principals. In the survey sample, 50% of beginner principals named their staff as *the* internal factor that is creating a crisis for them regarding unity, conflict, commitment, appointments, political differences, discipline and rationalisation. Consequently the support of principals regarding in-service training for the democratisation of structures and processes in the school, as well as the provision of resources, seems to be a crucial area that needs attention in policy-making.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR, AND COPING STRATEGIES OF BEGINNER PRINCIPALS

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

The interviews with ten beginner principals and the questionnaires received from beginner principals provided the data for this part of the study. The following questions provided the data for this section:

Interview questions:

1. Where did your support come from in making the decision to apply for this job and during the selection process?
2. Who has helped you to realise your vision and goals?

3. What kinds of resources, ideas or people have been helpful during your first year?
4. What has hindered or blocked your plans?
5. What support would you like to have that you did not have?

Questions from the questionnaire:

1. Of all the people you had contact with prior to taking up the principalship whom would you list as being significant sources of support (mentoring) in leading you to your current position as principal?
2. Please reflect critically on your first year. What were the key sources of support you drew upon and how did you cope with your first year?

Analyses of the responses in the questionnaire show that beginner principals received support from eight sources. These sources included principals' (previous or from a neighbouring school), staff members, family, previous teachers or lecturers, a priest, friend or even a karate instructor.

Peer Support

When principals were asked in the questionnaire to list significant sources of support (mentoring) that assisted them to the principalship, 34 beginner principals mentioned a principal (their own previous principal or the principal of a neighbouring school). This is significant in terms of the fact that principals are networking and helping each other. The type of assistance concerns the administrative tasks with which the principal is not familiar or of the correct procedures to follow in certain situations.

And the previous principal, even though I only worked with him for a year, he helped me a lot in that he gave me information ... So he phoned me regularly in the first year. Or I would approach him and ask him how I should do that. I still feel that if I had to work with him maybe a bit longer, then I would have been better equipped to handle this specific school (HOR school).

A further source of peer support mentioned by principals are principal bodies such as the Friendly Principals Association, the International Principals Convention, the Principals Forum and the Western Cape Principals Association. The latter consists of principals in the Western Cape who regularly meet to provide professional support to each other.

Through them I've learnt that the problems are not unique, the problems are similar at most schools. It's just the fact that you're dealing with the different dynamic of people that you need to adapt your strategies, but we're also dealing with the same problem and we can learn from each other (HOR school).

We get to meetings with principals where these people always help you and advise you - things like that. People are always willing, saying, 'pick up the phone and tell us the problem' and then we see ways of solving them (WCED school).

The contact with more experienced principals provide beginner principals with support in finding out that their situation is not unique, which combats the loneliness that principals experience. The contact also assists in building a support group who could assist and advise them. The comment of one principal sums up the value of such a support group:

It confirms that you are not alone. It can feel very lonely between these four walls (CED school).

Staff Support

For the beginner principals it is important to gain the acceptance and support of their staff. It would seem that earning such acceptance is a difficult and long process, as expressed by one principal:

I believe, I mean, if I'm working with people, especially for the benefit of the school, I would like people to, sometimes, you know, I would like them to just to trust that what I'm doing is honest. It's not that we are tricky or full of tricks. I always say, 'keep on trusting me because if you don't trust me there's nothing we can do and if I do an action, trust that what I'm doing is for the benefit of the school' (WCED school).

The principals also regard the support of their staff as crucial to the success of the school:

The support one really wants to have is the teacher's support, otherwise without their support you can't do anything at the school and I'm still working on that (HOR school).

To achieve this aim, the stumbling block for principals is to unite their staff:

The most important thing for me was that we needed to really weld the staff into one unit and we've had certain groupings as a result of the teacher's strike and the religious groupings. We needed to get rid of the baggage of the past. I saw my first task as welding the staff together and pulling as one (HOR school).

For anything to work colleagues need to be brought together (WCED school).

Principals seem to realise that support operates along a two - way line of communication and consultation. In this process the degree of support received from

the staff would depend on how much the staff is listened to and is involved in decision-making, as indicated by one principal:

Actually what stands out for me first and foremost is that I got a lot of support from the teachers themselves by actually involving them in the important decisions on school level, concerning the students themselves and the teachers themselves (HOR school).

Senior Staff Support

Principals seem to depend on their senior staff for support, although their senior staff, like themselves, might be inexperienced. In answer to the question 'who has helped you to realise your vision and plans', a principal replied:

A strong administration consisting of three vice-principals, as well as head of departments, which meets every morning and is followed by an information session with the staff (CED school).

Circuit Inspector

The circuit inspector was a frequently mentioned source of support regarding assistance with administrative duties and procedures with which beginner principals were not familiar:

More support as far as the administrative aspect of schooling is concerned. I think more training should be given in that direction. Often as a beginner principal and not having been party to the operation as a senior deputy, you find you need to rely on the Secretary and if you've got a new secretary, you've got a problem - you have to start phoning around and wanting to know which are the deadlines and by when it must be in. The Inspector can play a role but every time you have to go and ask him 'what is next' and you're always working under pressure. It's unnecessary pressure to the principal (HOR school).

This comment also shows the lack of hands-on experience to which deputy principals, as aspiring principals, are exposed. At the same time, although the Inspector is an extension of the department, the perception is that the education department itself is not very helpful. This is disconcerting in this time of transition when principals need definite answers under conditions of uncertainty. Beginner principals regard this as a stumbling block:

I think maybe we could say the department because of a lack of communication. We did get certain information and we did get help from the Circuit Inspectors, but the problem was also that the circuit inspectors used to come and tell you: 'We don't know - this is it, here is this thing'. So you must just implement it. [Also] things happen and we do things a certain way and then they come and say 'no, but you are not supposed to do it like that'. They come after the information (HOR school).

This affects the integrity and the relationship of trust between the principal and staff and distances the staff from the principal:

So after you have made plans at school you must change it and that is not really good, because the staff must believe in you because you cannot tell them something and then you must detract all that. So it does make it difficult. The roadblocks was maybe just distance between me and the teachers and I am trying to work on them (HOR school).

This was clearly a problem for many principals who saw the need for the relationship between the department and the principal to change:

To a synergy where the administrative staff of the education department listen to what people are saying on the ground via the principal who are conducting messages as to what teachers are feeling (HOR school).

Parent Support

Many principals indicate that parents constitute a section of the school community from which they would have liked support. Parental support is often lacking, and school fees are paid poorly by parents in the HOR and WCED schools. This has obvious implications for the implementation of the Hunter Commission, which emphasises parent involvement and a funding partnership. This places greater stress on the school principal.

Family Support

As can be expected, the spouses of principals in this study provided emotional support:

But my family have been very supportive. So even now, with me attending various school in-service training, she knows that I need that kind of information, the knowledge as well as the skills (HOR school).

The stress of being a beginner principal however has implications for the private life of the principal as well:

A principal told me once 'nothing you do at school is worth sacrificing your family for'. That idea has stayed by me, but you need to have a balance between the two (HOR school).

School Governors

Principals seem to rely on their school committees, PTSA's or Governing Bodies for support, especially when dealing with issues that could have legal implications, such as the appointment and retrenchments of teachers:

I feared that I did not want to make decisions on rationalisation on my own. I needed somebody or a group of people who knew the staff as well, who would be able to assist me in making decisions as far as rationalisation is concerned. Thank heavens that did not materialise (HOR school).

Other Support

Additional sources of support were also mentioned by the principals. These included management courses they attended, where they could share their experiences with other people and get assistance, educational NGOs like the Teacher Opportunity Programme (TOPS) and the NECC, which runs workshops for principals. Support was also provided by individuals such as former teachers and lecturers who acted as mentors in advising principals, as well priests, former colleagues, friends and even a karate instructor.

SUMMARY

The findings point to a great need for support amongst beginner principals. Principals face a wide range of challenges in dealing with internal and external factors, many for which they were untrained or unprepared. They therefore have to cope with very little help and support. As one principal indicated:

This is a very demanding and thankless job. Pupils, teachers, parents, the community, Inspectors and the department expect you to solve their problems as well as produce results and be beyond reproach all the time. No one ever thanks you (HOR school).

Despite this, principals have created ways of supporting each other through networking, and by sharing of information at particular forums or personally. Formal support should therefore be aimed at addressing the needs as identified by principals and channelled in ways that take into account the types of support principals have found to be useful.

COPING STRATEGIES

The answers to the following questions provided the data for this section:

1. What kinds of strategies did you employ to cope with situations of conflict during your first year?
2. Please reflect critically on your first year: What were the key sources of support you drew upon and how did you cope?
3. Choose the internal or external issue you regard as the most serious. Give your reasons why you chose it. How did you overcome this issue?

Conflict

The conflict situations reported by principals mostly had to do with teaching staff. The conflict situations involving the staff concerned issues related to: opposition to the appointment of the present principal by teachers and governing bodies; appointments of teachers to new and promotions posts; the different management style of the previous and present principal; conflict between members of different teacher organisations; conflict about work allocation; evaluation of teachers; teacher absenteeism; neglect of teaching duties, and retrenchments.

Coping Strategies

Since most of the situations of conflict involved their staff, most of the strategies employed by principals had in common ways of democratising school structures and processes. The involvement of the staff and their co-operation was perceived by beginner principals to be crucial to their success as leader of the school and the success of the school itself.

The first strategy that principals employed is to involve all stakeholders, namely the teachers, parents, students, non-teaching staff and community organisations and businesses as the situation demanded. To achieve this aim principals involved staff in decision-making, consulted widely and listened to all parties involved, and communicated their vision or ideas to all parties involved. As already noted, principals perceive that the school cannot succeed without the support of their stakeholders, especially the parents and teachers. The establishment of PTAs has therefore been a priority for many principals.

Principals regard a transparent, honest relationship, characterised by an 'open door policy' as the way to gain the trust, respect and acceptance of teachers. In pursuit of this relationship, principals are trying to cultivate recognition for people who should be respected as individuals who are different in terms of ideas and attitudes. Principals indicated that when dealing with people one should 'not concentrate on or be involved in personal differences but to - 'stay with the issue at hand', and to 'hate the things we do (sins) but not the person(sinner) facing reality'(HOR school).

Through the writing of a mission statement and rules for the running of the school for teachers and students, involving all stakeholders in its origin and implementation and through participatory management, principals are trying to obtain collective responsibility to make all stakeholders responsible and accountable. Principals are also realising that they are not able to do everything and have to delegate so that they can focus on particular aspects. This meant not only delegating tasks but authority as well. Principals also tended to rely on personal experience and knowledge when they have to deal with issues with which they are not familiar.

It must be noted that although these strategies are espoused by principals in general, the realities and dynamics within the particular schools might differ.

Coping with Internal and External Issues

Principals tend to deal with internal issues with the same strategies as they would the conflict situations because the issues from which they arise have a common origin. Certain issues such as finance, gangsterism, the socio-economic problems of the school community and its influence on the school, problems related to the school buildings and dealing with dwindling resources are, as one principal said 'miles away from a solution'.

External issues such as getting information about areas of administrative responsibility and getting information about educational decision-making are being dealt with by the principal by liaising with inspectors, teacher unions and the department. Working with community groups and services, dealing with parental problems and creating a better public image of the school is achieved by involving the community to take full responsibility and ownership of the school.

However, external problems such as the retrenchments of teachers, dealing with dwindling resources, restructuring of the educational system and the implications for schools of the Hunter Commission, are issues which principals feel they have not been consulted on, and as such they do not see how they are going to cope with the consequences. They therefore have very few immediate or long term strategies to cope with these issues given the uncertainty of information emanating from the education department.

SUMMARY

The coping strategies employed by beginner principals are internally oriented and are aimed at meeting the requirements of educational policy in terms of democratisation, and the consequences of restructuring, especially as it affects the teaching staff of the school. However, many external factors, such as retrenchment of teachers, leave principals feeling powerless in evolving strategies for issues that affect them, but over which they have no control.

TRAINING NEEDS AS IDENTIFIED BY BEGINNER PRINCIPALS

Table five to eight represents the training needs for principals as identified by the 37 beginner principals in the study. It shows those areas in which the present expertise of principals is lacking in developing strategies of coping with their tasks and situation. It is also a starting point for policy makers involved in In-Service Training from which to develop programmes suited to the needs of beginner principals in the context of educational reform, restructuring and change.

Column one of tables five to eight indicates the aspects of the job in which principals would have liked training opportunities. Column two indicates the top five priorities in which principals would have liked opportunities and column three indicates the ranking of the top five aspects from most important to least important.

Training Needs for Principals Overall Tasks

(See Table 5, page 69)

Managing personnel is placed in the top two in all three options, which is not surprising given that 23 principals indicated staff related issues as their most difficult challenge. The top five and first priority rank orders indicate that leadership is however the major aspect in which beginner principals require training. This should be understood in the context of restructuring of education where staff expect leadership from the principal for the implementation of new policies.

Priorities For Principals Overall Training Needs

(See Table 6, page 70)

In table six the overall tasks of the principal were categorised as aspects of either managing, human relations, leading or the external relations task of the principal. The total number of responses resorting under each category is presented. The responses indicated an emphasis on training for human relations in the top five and as a first priority. This probably results from the fact that principals have to deal with parents, teachers and pupils on a daily basis and because it is time-consuming.

What also stands out is that principals believe they require training in the 'hard skills' of management, as Jones (1987) indicated

not to deliver them in a hard way but in order to take on with a greater confidence and skill the many negative aspects of being a Head, which are difficult to face, but which have to be faced if Heads are to do their jobs really well (Jones, 1987: 108).

Leadership is however *the* aspect that beginner principals indicate as a priority for training.

What is however crucial for the requirements of boundary management by principals, is that 'External Relations' is consistently ranked lowest for principals training needs. This has implications for the skills required in terms of the Hunter Commission recommendations and school governance policy that places an emphasis on financial delegation and shared management with all stakeholders.

TABLE 5 - Training Needs for Principals' Overall Tasks

	General (Free choice for self)	%	Top Five for Principals in general	%	First Choice in Top Five for principals in general	%
1	Managing personnel	72.97	Leadership	70.27	Leadership	48.6
2	Managing resources	70.27	Managing personnel	64.87	Managing personnel	17.14
3	Leadership	67.57	Organization	48.65	Planning	11.43
4	Local and national developments	70.27	Planning	43.25	Organisation	5.71
5	Organization	70.27	Self-management	37.84	Integration	2.86
6	Self-management	70.27	Managing relationships	35.14	Managing pupils	2.86
7	Evaluation	67.57	Evaluation	35.13	Managing relationships	2.86
8	Innovation	64.86	Local and national developments	27.04	Managing resources	2.86
9	Planning	64.86	Managing resources	27.02	Philosophy	2.86
10	Managing relationships	62.16	Managing pupils	24.33	Evaluation	0
11	Managing pupils	56.76	Integration	18.93	Governors/ Education department	0
12	Philosophy	54.05	Philosophy	18.92	Innovation	0
13	Governors/Education department	48.65	Innovation	16.22	Local and national developments	0
14	Integration	48.65	Parents/ community	10.81	Local environment	0
15	Parents/ community	43.24	Local environment	5.41	Parents/ community	0
16	Local environment	35.14	Governors/ Education department	5.4	Self-management	0

TABLE 6 - PRIORITIES FOR PRINCIPALS' OVERALL TRAINING NEEDS

	General -Free choice for self	Number of Responses	Top Five for Principals in general	Number of Responses	First Choice in Top Five for principals in general	Number & % Of Responses
1	Managing	101	Human Relations	60	Leading	19 (54.3%)
2	Human Relations	97	Managing	57	Managing	8 (22.9%)
3	Leading	88	Leading	48	Human Relations	7 (20%)
4	External Relations	73	External Relations	16	External Relations	0

Further Training In Current Specific Tasks

(See Table 7, page 72)

Maintaining staff morale is consistently ranked quite high by principals, probably as a result of the impending rationalisation measures envisaged by the education department. Consultation and participation seem to fit in with the notion by principals that they have to democratise their school structures and processes. Staff appraisal is also listed quite high which shows that accountability, measured against the performance of the teacher, is becoming an issue in schools for which principals are not equipped. Staff development for new curriculum initiatives is also rated high which shows that schools are grappling with the changes.

Managing fewer resources is ranked surprising low as a training issue, given that schools are battling to get their school fees from parents in poor socio-economic circumstances. School evaluation is consistently ranked the lowest which means that schools are not evaluating what they are doing. This might be because schools were not expected to do this, but for the envisaged emphasis on attracting students and therefore funding, it might take on an added importance.

Skills Needed For Principalship

(See Table 8, page 73)

Conflict resolution skills, negotiating skills, team-building skills and motivating are consistently ranked in the top four of all three choices. This tallies with the emphasis that principals are placing on democratisation. Principals need these skills to deal with the problems caused by restructuring of the educational system, change and coping with internal and external issues. This shows that the present context is very difficult for principals in coping with the consequences of previous rationalisation measures and the possible retrenchments and uncertainty of impending measures. The thrust of the principal's coping strategies therefore has to do with the people specifically worst hit by these policies and that is the staff.

TABLE 7 - FURTHER TRAINING IN CURRENT SPECIFIC TASKS

	General	%	Personal Top Five	%	First Choice in Top Five	%
1	Maintaining staff morale	83.78	Maintaining staff morale	75.27	Staff appraisal	21.62
2	Consultation and participation	78.38	Staff appraisal	72.98	Consultation and participation	18.92
3	Staff development for new curriculum initiatives	75.68	Staff development for new curriculum initiatives	62.16	Maintaining staff morale	13.51
4	Staff appraisal	72.97	Consultation and participation	56.77	Changing environment	10.81
5	New technologies	67.57	Stress	48.65	New technologies	10.81
6	Pupil assessment	64.68	New technologies	43.25	Staff development for new curriculum initiatives	10.81
7	Stress	64.68	Changing environment	40.54	Stress	10.81
8	Changing environment	62.16	Pupil assessment	40.55	Managing fewer resources	5.41
9	Managing fewer resources	62.17	Managing fewer resources	32.43	Pupil assessment	5.41
10	School evaluation	54.05	School evaluation	16.21	School evaluation	0

TABLE 8 - SKILLS NEEDED IN PRINCIPALSHIP TODAY

	Free Choice	% Respondents	Personal Top Five	% Respondents	First Choice	% Respondents
1	Conflict resolution skills	89.19	Conflict resolution skills	91.89	Conflict resolution skills	37.84
2	Team-building	89.19	Negotiating skills	78.38	Team-building	21.62
3	Negotiating skills	86.49	Team-building	70.27	Counselling	13.51
4	Motivating	75.68	Motivating	54.07	Negotiating skills	10.81
5	Counselling	64.86	Delegating	48.66	Motivating	5.41
6	Group-work skills	64.86	Counselling	35.14	Verbal communication	2.70
7	Delegating	62.16	Group-work skills	35.13	Written communication	2.70
8	Interviewing	59.46	Verbal communication	32.42	Delegating	0
9	Verbal communication	51.35	Interviewing	16.23	Group-work skills	0
10	Written communication	48.65	Written communication	13.50	Interviewing	0

Personal Qualities Needed In Principalship Today

(See Table 9, page 75)

Table nine shows in column one, the personal qualities that principals believe are needed in the principalship today. Column two indicates the top five qualities needed, which was ranked in column three from most important to least important. One interesting feature is that 'toughness' was placed at the bottom of the scale in all three columns. This seems to point to the move towards fostering a culture of collegiality and opposition to the 'kragdadigheid' of the past. Also interesting is that 'good health' is ranked sixth by principals in the top five, but that it becomes the first choice for 29.74 % of principals. This indicates the stress that principals are subjected to at this time. Lastly, qualities like 'creativity', 'flexibility', 'balance' and 'quick thinking' feature amongst the top five in all three choices. These are the type of qualities needed in entrepreneurial management discourse and show that principals might have an awareness of the type of qualities that our schools will soon need.

CONCLUSION

The data indicates that the particular type of beginner principals existing at the present time, and the challenges they face, are largely a product of the rationalisation measures of 1992/3 and present restructuring and reform of education. These principals have to contend with internal and external factors and time management issues. Principals definitely vary in their ability to cope with the demands of their job. This is a result of promotion on selection procedures biased towards their capabilities as teachers, and due to their lack of preparation for the realities of the role of the principal in terms of the demands of educational restructuring.

On the one hand it may be argued that many of the management problems faced by these beginner principals can universally be encountered by any inexperienced principal. However, the present South African context of restructuring and reform of education exacerbates the problems that are experienced, and creates some of the problems. This context has therefore created a particular type of beginner principal appointed in vacancies created by the rationalisation of 1992/3. These beginner principals face problems created by the restructuring and reform of education. These

TABLE 9 - PERSONAL QUALITIES NEEDED IN PRINCIPALSHIP TODAY

	General	% Respondents	Personal Top Five	% Respondents	First Choice	% Respondents
1	Creativity	94.59	Creativity	75.68	Good Health	29.73
2	Balance	91.89	Flexibility	70.27	Balance	16.22
3	Empathy	91.89	Sensitivity	59.45	Sensitivity	10.81
4	Good Health	91.89	Quick Thinking	56.76	Creativity	8.11
5	Flexibility	89.19	Empathy	54.06	Quick Thinking	8.11
6	Quick thinking	86.48	Good Health	48.65	Sense of Humour	8.11
7	Sense of Humour	83.78	Balance	43.26	Empathy	5.41
8	Sensitivity	83.78	Sense of Humour	37.84	Flexibility	5.41
9	Stamina/ Perseverance	81.08	Stamina/ Perseverance	29.74	Stamina/ Perseverance	5.41
10	Toughness	59.46	Toughness	18.92	Toughness	2.70

problems include the inexperience of senior staff; curriculum development and improvement; attendance problems of staff and students; demoralisation and demotivation of staff; decreasing financial aid from the state; democratisation of schools; retrenchment of teachers and the attendant lack of information, etc.

The support strategies employed by beginner principals indicate the lack of formal support available to them. Despite this, beginner principals have created ways of supporting each other through networking, and by sharing of information at particular forums or through interpersonal contact. Formal support should therefore be aimed at addressing the needs as identified by principals and channelled in ways that take into account the types of support principals have found to be useful.

The coping strategies employed by beginner principals show an emphasis on democratisation of school structures and processes. On the one hand this is a response to the educational policy that emphasises shared management. On the other hand it is also a strategy to combat the inherited problems created by the alienation of teachers and students from schools regarded as part of an illegitimate educational system. These facts compelled beginner principals to employ democratisation strategies.

There is however a limit to the extent to which beginner principals can resolve management issues at the institutional level that arise due to external constraints. This limits the usefulness of training aimed at solving the management issues if not underpinned by educational policy that creates an environment that encourages and supports beginner principals to perform optimally, and which accounts for the effects of context.

The problems experienced by beginner principals such as the restructuring of education, the lack of information about retrenchments of teachers and information about the education department, can be eased by the improvement of administrative and restructuring processes at the national and provincial levels.

The improvement of the secondary schools in the Cape Town metropolitan area depends on the effectiveness of the principal, which in turn is dependent on the

provision of the necessary support. Beginner principals are not only expected to cope with the demands of jobs for which they were not trained, but are also expected to be experts in initiating change within the school through democratisation in a context of educational reform and restructuring.

The analysis of both internal and external issues facing beginner principals shows that the challenges facing principals can be seen as a product of current political, economic and social conditions. This affects the way in which principals spend their time and determine the tasks on which time is spent. In general these factors dictate the way principals execute their role. It also affects what principals can or cannot do within their school and how effective they are at what they do.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter six of this study is organised into three sections. The first is a general review of the study that includes background information; the purpose of the study; a summary of the related literature; and the procedures used in the study. The second section is a discussion of the findings. Recommendations are found in the third section.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The problem addressed in this study is that a critical analysis of the experiences, coping strategies and support of beginner principals is crucial for informing educational policy in a context of educational reform. This context creates the conditions and constraints under which principals operate and positions them in relation to the various constituencies of the school community.

The aim of this study is to describe and critically analyse the experiences and challenges facing first-year principals in secondary schools in the Cape Town metropolitan area. This study also focuses on the impact of change and reform on beginner principals regarding the problems that arise, the coping strategies they develop and the support available them. The study also notes those solutions, and training needs which beginner principals see as useful.

SUMMARY OF THE BACKGROUND

The South African educational system, after the dismantling of Apartheid and the first democratic election in 1994, has undergone tremendous restructuring. At the national level educational policy is couched in the language of democratic governance. It calls for

the involvement of all stakeholders (parents, teachers, students and community) in the management of schools. This shifts the management responsibility for schools to the institutional level. The Hunter Commission (1995) recommended a funding-partnership approach for the financing of schools where parents are obliged to pay school fees according to their income, although the state guarantees a minimum level of funding. South African educational policy thus incorporates elements of School-Based Management that has particular implications and challenges for principals.

Following staff rationalisation in education departments, many principals have been appointed in their first principalship. Here they face the internal management issues of the school that are compounded by external factors such as the decentralisation of financial management and the restructuring and reform of education. At the same time they are trying to cope with the practice shock of the realities of being a principal.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Clearly, the depth of international research on beginner principals is very thin and in South Africa almost non-existent. What exists however paints a dismal picture of the beginner principal, one which shows that a staggering array of problems confronts the beginner principal. These problems prevent the beginner principal from realising educational goals and exercising instructional leadership.

What is however emphasised by the literature is that aspiring principals need hands on experience of the tasks associated with the principalship; that training in the management of external relations and relationships with staff needs attention; that principals need to realise the importance of their senior management team; that new principals need to know how to manage change; and that the educational authorities should find ways of improving support for new principals.

Important, however, is the NFER (1990) follow-up study of beginner principals in the UK and the Australian studies (1991/2) which point to the skills required in the context of devolved management of schools. These include boundary management; communication; relationships with staff; participatory management; analysis and evaluation of policies and

programmes; and an awareness of the external context of the school. This has clear implications for South African principals faced with increased accountability and the delegation of financial responsibility.

Many of the problems faced by beginner principals arise from external sources over which they have no control, such as educational restructuring. On the one hand this changing context makes necessary training for the skills needed to cope with such problems. On the other hand, it is important to understand the impact of external factors on beginner principals and, consequently, the limits of solutions that imply that these problems can be dealt with exclusively at the level of the school.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the purpose of this study, a questionnaire was distributed to 47 beginner principals in secondary schools in the Cape Town metropolitan area. This resulted in a sample of $n=37$ which represents a 78% response rate. A follow-up interview was conducted with ten beginner principals, as well as an interview with one senior official of the Western Cape Education Department. The objective was to provide answers to particular research questions concerning political and discursive context.

FINDINGS

A typical beginner principal is on average 42.54 years old and has between two and four years experience as a deputy principal. Nearly 60% of the beginner principals have occupied their present position for less than two years. The context of educational restructuring and reform creates many of the internal and external challenges which beginner principals face, and determines the strategies beginner principals employ to cope with their role as leader and manager.

These beginner principals are a product of the rationalisation measures of 1992/3, and restructuring of education, especially in HOR schools. They face the emergence of elements of School-Based Management, which builds on the South African history of state-aided schools such as the Model C schools; the recommendations of the Hunter Commission (1995) and the policy of the White Paper (February 1996).

TIME MANAGEMENT

The data shows that the attendance problems of both teachers and students and the building of an administrative team are the issues on which over 50% of principals spend their time. This is closely followed by curriculum development. The same three issues, with the addition of wanting to teach students, were the issues on which principals would like to spend their time.

The emphasis on team building is a response to the effects of the impending retrenchments on teachers that include demoralisation and demotivation. This results in absenteeism that in turn affects students. Secondly, this emphasis arises from the restructuring of education, which is inherently about changing circumstances and therefore about changed approaches and strategies to meet those changes. This affects the curriculum and therefore the staff development needs of teaching personnel. Principals are thus caught up in fire-fighting crises as they occur and do not have time for teaching students.

INTERNAL ISSUES

The major internal issues facing principals are the deteriorating condition of their school buildings and the need to create better standards of discipline. Other issues facing them relate to the difficulties principals have in executing their management tasks without experience in dealing with the realities of their role as principal.

The lack of resources available from the state is directly related to the position of schools within a particular ex- education department. In other words the physical condition of the school is a direct result of the unequal Apartheid education fiscal policies. Changed disciplinary measures are necessary to combat the heritage of the past in terms of the previous measures that did not include the degree of accountability which teachers experience at present. Secondly, changed disciplinary measures are necessary because of the impact of the changing context in schools and society on students regarding behaviour and expectations.

The practice shock experienced by beginner principals in dealing with the realities of their role is due to the absence of hands on experience of the tasks they have to perform. This is the consequence of an absence of in-service training by the previous principal. There is a lack of support for those tasks by the education department and circuit inspectors and there is a lack of training courses for aspiring principals, organised by the education department.

EXTERNAL ISSUES

The major external issues facing more than 50% of principals are the retrenchments of teachers and the dwindling resources available from the state and parents. Over 35% of principals named the restructuring of the educational system and the recommendations of the Hunter Commission as one of the most important external issues facing them.

These issues are emanating from a particular political, economic and educational policy. On the one hand these policies involve increasing the quantity of schools and couching policy in a language of shared management and democratisation. On the other hand it ignores the effects on the actors involved, namely teachers and principals. Cutting back on state expenditure to schools and rationalisation measures involving retrenchments of teachers have the effect of increasing the accountability of schools in educational and financial terms whilst retaining centralist control.

These factors affect the time management and priorities of beginner principals in executing their management and leadership roles. These factors also determine the types of strategies that are employed by beginner principals to cope with the problems that arise. The coping strategies are also influenced by the nature of the support available to beginner principals. Cumulatively, all these factors influence the effectiveness of the beginner principal in achieving the educational goals of the school.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR, AND COPING STRATEGIES OF THE BEGINNER PRINCIPAL

Sources of Support

Given the nature of the internal and external challenges that beginner principals are facing, the need for support is crucial. This is not being provided institutionally. Despite this, beginner principals do however find a number of unofficial sources of support and have created ways of supporting each other through networking, and by sharing of information at particular forums. The most important of these are peer support from previous principals or neighbouring principals and principal organisations. The value of this contact is the knowledge that their situation is not unique, which combats the loneliness experienced and creates a support group that assists and advises them on particular issues.

Other sources of support include the circuit inspector for administrative duties; the staff regarding acceptance and co-operation; emotional support from their families; and the support of school governors on legal issues regarding retrenchments. The lack of parental support is a stumbling block for many principals.

Support should therefore be aimed at addressing the needs as identified by principals and channelled in ways that are conducive to assisting the principal with their role in the school.

Coping Strategies

The staff was mentioned by 50% of principals as the factor that creates an internal crisis for them regarding unity, conflict, commitment, appointments, political differences, discipline and rationalisation. This shows the effect of the present instability and insecurity of school personnel at this time of impending retrenchment measures, as well as the effect of the changes resulting from the restructuring of education.

Since most of the conflict situations involved their staff, most of the strategies employed by principals had in common ways of democratising school structures and processes within the school. There was a perception among beginner principals that the involvement

of the staff and their co-operation was crucial to their success as leader of the school and the success of the school itself.

However, beginner principals felt that they were not consulted on many external issues such as retrenchments of teachers, restructuring of the educational system and the implications for schools of the Hunter Commission recommendations. As a result they did not see how they would cope with the consequences. They therefore have few immediate or long term strategies to cope with these issues, given the uncertainty and lack of information emanating from the education department.

TRAINING NEEDS

The training needs indicated by principals show that principals need training in the management tasks needed for their role. This shows their lack of experience of those tasks. Managing personnel, human relations and maintaining staff morale are also areas in which principals need training, which is not surprising if their staff is the issue that creates the most problems for principals. Conflict resolution skills, negotiating, team-building and motivating show the emphasis that principals are placing on democratisation and in trying to deal with the effects of impending retrenchment measures.

The data in this section also indicates the need for those skills required in the SBM management discourses such as flexibility, creativity, balance, conflict resolution, negotiating and team building. However, throughout the analysis of this study it was found that the skills related to external relations and boundary management, namely public relations, financial management, supervision and evaluation of staff and evaluation of schools were consistently ranked low by principals. This seems to indicate that principals are aware of the skills needed for the management of schools in the Hunter Commission recommendations, but a host of internal and external issues and the lack of training programmes, prevent them from practising or learning those skills.

CONCLUSIONS

This study found that beginner principals have to contend with impending retrenchments of teachers and restructuring of education. This is exacerbated by the lack of institutionalised support, a lack of training for the management tasks of the principal, as well as the dwindling financial resources available from the state and parents. Within this context beginner principals have to deal with specific issues including attendance problems of both teachers and students, building the administrative team, the deterioration of school buildings, disciplinary problems, problems caused by the management style of the previous principal, and the challenge of democratisation. This is compounded by a lack of information about the retrenchments of teachers and a lack of information about the education department.

Many of these principals are a product of the rationalisation measures of 1992/3, and the restructuring of education. This has ^{led}lead to an increase in the number of beginner principals in the Cape Town metropolitan area, especially in the former House of Representative schools. The restructuring process has included the emergence of elements of School-Based Management which follows on the South African history of state-aided schools such as the Model C schools; the recommendations of the Hunter Commission (1995) and the policy of the White Paper on The Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools (February 1996). This places the obligation on principals to contend with internal and external issues as well as the management implications of financial delegation to schools.

In terms of preparing principals to meet the challenges of managing schools in South Africa at this time, 'training' does not only mean the acquisition of technical skills. It also includes the ability of principals to develop managerial strategies that are sensitive to broader political and social dynamics within which the social relations of the school are embedded. This report shows that principals are themselves developing such strategies in response to current conditions. This includes evolving informal strategies of support such as methods of networking with other principals. It also includes the use of strategies to democratise processes and structures in their schools to counter the problems created

by staff and in response to educational policy. Existing policy does not acknowledge strategies outside the formal framework and does not take existing management capacity into account. The White Paper (February 1996) begins to suggest moves in this direction.

This report also points to the limits of school management, in that the policies and financing arrangements shape and constrain the possibilities that are available to school managers. This would suggest that the realisation of effective, quality schooling is not only an administrative project at the school level; but also a political project at the provincial and national level.

The process of management is not to be equated with sending people on courses. It has to be regarded as an integral part of a whole set of policies, processes and practices that supports an over-arching objective (Everard, 1986 in Jones, 1987:116).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy makers should find appropriate and effective ways of:

- (1) easing the problems experienced by beginner principals. This includes the lack of information about retrenchments of teachers; restructuring of education and information about the education department. This could be achieved by the improvement of administrative and restructuring processes at the national and provincial levels.
- (2) supporting and possibly formalising the informal support networks and strategies that principals have developed as a way in which to cope with the demands of their role.
- (3) implementing training that would (a) assist principals to understand what restructuring involves (b) assist principals to participate effectively in an environment characterised by shared decision-making and collaborative learning and (c) provide principals with the tools necessary to assume new roles and responsibilities.

Similar research studies could also be conducted in rural and urban areas in the larger South African context to ascertain the extent to which the problems identified in this study are experienced by beginner principals in those areas, and the extent to which coping strategies and forms of support are similar.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

**SURVEY OF FIRST-YEAR
SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

1995

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The general aim of this questionnaire is to learn about the background and experience of first-year high school principals. The specific purpose of the questionnaire is to learn more about the support and coping strategies of beginning principals.

The survey is being sent to principals in 51 secondary schools. The study findings will be useful in the improvement of training and support for future first-time principals.

The questionnaire has been designed with some multiple choice items and some spaces for you to describe your specific experiences. *All the information will be treated confidentially and no direct references will be made to you or your school i.e. neither your name nor that of your school will be mentioned.*

Thank you for taking time off from your very busy school year to participate in this study.

13. Rate the extent to which teaching staff assists you with your administrative tasks:

1 2 3 4 5

 To a minor extent Reasonably To a great extent

Your Background and Experiences

1. What was your age when you were first appointed as principal of this high school?
_____ years
2. Gender: Male Female
3. Your ethnicity is?
a) Black b) Coloured c) Indian d) White e) Other_____
4. What is your highest earned degree?
a) Bachelor's degree f) Master's degree not in education
b) Honors degree in education g) Doctor of Education or Philosophy
c) Honors degree not in education h) Other, please specify
d) B.Ed _____
e) Master's degree in education
5. Have you done any undergraduate studies in education? YES NO
6. Which, if any, of all the courses you have studied, have proven to be the most helpful to you as a beginner principal? _____
7. Please indicate the number of years for which you held on each of the following positions, prior to taking this secondary school principalship:
Principal of a primary school _____years
Principal at different type of institution _____years
Deputy Principal _____years
Department Head _____years
Teacher _____years
8. How many principalships have you held, including your present one? _____
9. a) Which position did you hold immediately before becoming principal of this high school? _____
b) Was this previous position in the same school? YES / NO
c) Was this previous position in the Western Cape? YES / NO

10. Of all the people you had contact with prior to taking up this principalship, whom would you list as being the significant sources of support (mentoring) in leading you to your current position as principal. Use only position or title, and gender.

POSITION OR TITLE

GENDER

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Entering the New School

- 1. When were you appointed the new principal?
_____ month/ year
- 2. What kind of information did you have about the school prior to taking up the position.

- 3. How did you obtain the information? _____

***** ANSWER QUESTIONS 4-7 ONLY IF YOU MOVED FROM A DIFFERENT SCHOOL TO TAKE UP YOUR POSITION AS PRINCIPAL.**

- 4. Were you able to visit your new school after your appointment as principal, but before taking up the position full-time? YES / NO
- 5. If yes, what was the nature of the contact?

- 6. If you did have contact with the school, did this experience assist you in fulfilling your role as the new principal? YES / NO
IF YES, HOW? _____
- If No, do you believe it would have assisted you in fulfilling your role as the new principal of the school? YES / NO
IF YES, HOW? _____
- 7. In retrospect, how useful was the information obtained from discussions with the previous principal and/ or staff? _____

<i>Critical Events in Beginning the Year</i>

1. Mention any factors or events factor (internal and external to the school) which created crisis for you as a beginning principal?

INTERNAL _____

EXTERNAL _____

2. What were 3 key steps/ events/ actions (positive or negative) that made a difference to your first year as principal?

a) _____
 b) _____
 c) _____

<i>Strategies used to cope with conflictual situations</i>

What kinds of strategies did you employ to cope with situations of conflict during your first year? Please describe the situation and the strategy used to defuse the it.

SUPPORT

Please reflect critically on your first year: What were the key sources of support you drew upon and how did you cope with your first year?

VISION

What VISION for your STUDENTS has guided your policies in your school?

Difficulties Facing the New Principal

Discussions with principals and others have suggested that there are many problems which may face a new principal. Please indicate how serious a problem each of the following has been for you.

Please Circle

	SERIOUS	MODERATE	MINOR	NOT A PROBLEM
1. <i>Internal Issues</i>				
Establishing your priorities.	1	2	3	4
Coping with a wide range of tasks.	1	2	3	4
Dealing with a large range of decisions.	1	2	3	4
Finding out about the daily routine of the school.	1	2	3	4
Obtaining information about curricular areas other than our own discipline.	1	2	3	4
Establishing better standards of discipline.	1	2	3	4

Please Circle

NOT A

Internal Issues

SERIOUS MODERATE MINOR PROBLEM

Establishing/ improving consultation procedures within the school.	1	2	3	4
Establishing/ improving channels of communication within the school.	1	2	3	4
Working with school finance.	1	2	3	4
Difficulties caused by the practice and style of the previous principal.	1	2	3	4
Working with problems related to the school buildings.	1	2	3	4
Dealing with disciplinary problems on the grounds of the school.	1	2	3	4
Working through ethical dilemmas.	1	2	3	4
Dealing with problems relating to students	1	2	3	4
Conflicting relationships with other role players	1	2	3	4
Empowerment of teachers	1	2	3	4
Other problems (please specify) -----	1	2	3	4
-----	1	2	3	4

** Reflect on the questions answered above. Choose the issue you regard as the most serious. Give your reasons why you chose it. How did you overcome this issue?

Please Circle

NOT A

SERIOUS MODERATE MINOR PROBLEM

2. *External Issues*

Developing a good working relationship with:

Circuit Inspector	1	2	3	4
Regional Education Department Personnel	1	2	3	4
The School Committee	1	2	3	4

Please Circle

<i>External Issues</i>	SERIOUS	MODERATE	MINOR	NOT A PROBLEM
Working with parental problems	1	2	3	4
Working with local community groups and services.	1	2	3	4
Issues arising from school committee politics.	1	2	3	4
Working with the media (e.g. local press).	1	2	3	4
Issues concerning retrenchment of teachers	1	2	3	4
Getting information about educational decision-making in the region/ circuit.	1	2	3	4
Getting information about areas of administrative responsibility - "who does what" - in the education department.	1	2	3	4
Restructuring of the educational system	1	2	3	4
Obtaining information about what has been tried in other schools.	1	2	3	4
Creating a better public image of the school.	1	2	3	4
Dealing with dwindling resources	1	2	3	4
Coordinating with feeder schools.	1	2	3	4
The implications for schools of The Hunter Report	1	2	3	4
Other problems (please specify) _____	1	2	3	4
_____	1	2	3	4

** Reflect on the questions answered above. Choose the issue you regard as the most serious. Give your reasons why you chose it. How did you overcome this issue?

Priorities - Time

During your first year as principal, what emphasis in terms of your time and priority did you give to each of the tasks listed below? We know all are important, but you can't do everything in the first year.

N.B. If you can't answer off-hand, keep a diary for a week and then answer this section.

Important Emphasis 1	Average Amount of My Time 2	Less Emphasis 3	Little to None of My Time 4		
<i>Please Circle</i>					
IMPORTANT	AVERAGE	LESS	NONE	RANKING	
1. Curriculum development, improvement/ academic program evaluation	1	2	3	4	_____
2. Supervision/ evaluation of teachers	1	2	3	4	_____
3. Public/ community relations	1	2	3	4	_____
4. School finance/ budget	1	2	3	4	_____
5. In-service/ staff development	1	2	3	4	_____
6. Handling student development	1	2	3	4	_____
7. Working with parents/ community members	1	2	3	4	_____
8. Building the administrative team	1	2	3	4	_____
9. Legal/ ethical issues	1	2	3	4	_____
10. Attendance problems	1	2	3	4	_____
11. Teaching students	1	2	3	4	_____
12. Other _____	1	2	3	4	_____

**** Order the above from most time spent (1) to least time spent (5).**

Key Events During Your First Year

1. What have been the MOST DIFFICULT CHALLENGES/ TASKS for you during your first year? List FIVE.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

2. What have been the MOST REWARDING aspects of this position? List FIVE.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

3. Was there a certain event or happening that represented a MAJOR TURNING POINT in terms of how your first year proceeded? _____

4. What did you have in mind as key steps for ending your first year and launching the next school year? _____

5. At the BEGINNING of your first year as principal, what immediate changes did you effect? _____

6. What OTHER CHANGES have you made as the year progressed?

7. To what extent do you have authority to approve the allocation of discretionary funds within your school budget?

- a) Unrestricted authority
- b) Authority with some restriction
- c) Little authority
- d) No authority

Any Comment _____

PRINCIPAL'S OVERALL TASKS

Column 1. Tick those aspects of the job in which you would have liked training/development opportunities.

Column 2. Pick (out of the total list) the top FIVE priority areas for further training for Principals in general.

Column 3. Rank the top five 1-5(1 = the most important priority for training
5 = the fifth most important priority)

			Tick if more training desirable	Top of FIVE priorities	Rank order 1-5
1	<i>Leadership</i> Providing leadership for the work of the school	1			
2	<i>Philosophy</i> Developing a philosophical framework for policy, aims and objectives	2			
3	<i>Integration</i> Coordinating and integrating the work of the school as a whole	3			
4	<i>Innovation</i> Enabling innovations and changes to take place appropriately and effectively	4			
5	<i>Organization</i> Organizing and controlling systems and structures for the management of curriculum, pastoral care and administration	5			
6	<i>Planning</i> Forward thinking, assessing, planning and deciding priorities	6			
7	<i>Evaluation</i> Evaluating effectiveness of policies, systems, methods and people	7			
8	<i>Managing resources</i> Time, money, people, plant, building	8			
9	<i>Managing personnel</i> Selection, appraisal, supervision, discipline, development and industrial relations	9			
10	<i>Managing pupils</i> Contact, care, discipline, communication, teaching	10			
11	<i>Managing relationships</i> Managing interpersonal, inter-group and group relations	11			
12	<i>Self-management</i> Stress, time, leisure, personal relationships, health	12			
13	Communicating, relating and reporting to <i>governors and the Regional Education Department</i>	13			
14	Communicating with and relating to <i>parents</i> and the <i>community in general</i>	14			
15	Communicating with and relating to the <i>local environment</i> - other local agencies, employers	15			
16	Keeping abreast of <i>local and national developments</i> , legislation, social, economic and employment trends, new educational thinking	16			

CURRENT SPECIFIC PRINCIPALSHIP TASKS

Column 1: Tick if you would welcome training/ development opportunities.

Column 2: Pick out the top FIVE priorities for Principal's further training(TICK).

Column 3: Rank the top five 1-5 (1 = most important; 5 = least important)

			Tick if more training desirable	Tick top FIVE priorities	Rank 1-5
1	Effective consultation and participation	1			
2	Staff appraisal, supervision and discipline	2			
3	Managing fewer resources	3			
4	Maintaining staff Morale	4			
5	Managing stress (in oneself and others)	5			
6	Responding to a changing environment	6			
7	Using the new technologies in administration	7			
8	Staff development for new curriculum initiatives	8			
9	School self-evaluation	9			
10	Pupil assessment	10			

Are there any other specific tasks in which you would welcome further training/ development opportunities for Principals? Please list.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Any comments at this stage?

SKILLS NEEDED IN PRINCIPALSHIP TODAY

Column 1: Tick if you would welcome training/ development opportunities.

Column 2: Pick out the top FIVE priorities for Principal's further training(TICK).

Column 3: Rank the top five 1-5 (1 = most important; 5 = least important)

			Tick if more training desirable	Tick top FIVE priorities	Rank 1-5
1	Verbal communication	1			
2	Written communication	2			
3	Counseling	3			
4	Interviewing	4			
5	Negotiating skills	5			
6	Conflict resolution skills	6			
7	Motivating	7			
8	Group-work skills	8			
9	Team-building	9			
10	Delegating	10			

Are there any other skills in which you would welcome further training/ development opportunities for Principals? Please list.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Any comments?

PERSONAL QUALITIES NEEDED IN PRINCIPALSHIP TODAY

Column 1: Please **TICK** if you **AGREE**, make a **CROSS** if you **DISAGREE**

Column 2: Pick out the top FIVE qualities. (TICK).

Column 3: Rank the top five 1-5 (1 = most important; 5 = least important)

			Tick / Cross	Tick top FIVE qualities	Rank 1-5
1	Stamina/ Perseverance	1			
2	Good Health	2			
3	Sense of humour	3			
4	Flexibility	4			
5	Quick thinking	5			
6	Sensitivity	6			
7	Empathy	7			
8	Toughness	8			
9	Creativity	9			
10	Balance	10			

Are there any other personal qualities which you think are particularly important in the Principalship today? Please list.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Any comments?

CAREER

If you could choose again, would you select the principalship as a career?

- a) Yes, definitely c) Uncertain e) No, definitely not
b) Yes, probably d) No, probably not

Give reasons/s for your answer _____

*I greatly appreciate the time you have given in completing this questionnaire
and thank you again for your help with this research*

**If you have some additional ideas or suggestions for first-time principals, please add
them on this page.**

APPENDIX B

Beginner Principal Interview Guide

Selection

1. Could you describe the selection process for the principalship?
2. The selectors must have thought that you had something to offer the school- what do you think it was?
3. What were the main reasons why you decided to take this job?
4. Where did your support come from in making the decision to apply for this job and during the selection process? (Check for specific individuals and their roles.)

Personal reflections

5. Was there anything about the decision that was difficult/ problematic for you?
6. What were the main concerns and issues or expectations that occupied your thoughts prior to your first day on the job?
 - 6.1. Did these subsequently prove valid?

Entry/ Goals/ Plans

7. What do you see as the opportunities and challenges of this principalship?
8. What was your vision for the school at the beginning of your first year?
 - 8.1. To what extent have you begun to realise your goals?
9. Who has helped you to realise your vision and plans?

Key Steps

10. What steps did you take to learn about the school in order to make your entry successful?
11. What have been the critical incidents/ turning points of your first year? What happened? What did you do next? What was the result?
12. Has anything happened so far that created a personal/ professional (moral, ethical) dilemma for you? How did you resolve it?

Support Systems

13. What kinds of resources, ideas, people have been helpful during your first year?
14. What has hindered/ blocked your plans?
15. What support would you like to have had that you did not have?

Philosophy/ Educational Platform

16. What do you plan to do in your second year in order to be a successful leader of this school?
 17. Current changes in school governance is leading to different relationships between principals and teachers. What impact do you envisage this will have on your job in this school.
 - 18.1. What kinds of staff development would be most useful to yourself and the rest of the staff at this point in the educational reform process? What needs to change.
 - 18.2. How can this be realised?
 19. Do you anticipate the need for new rules or policies?(For INSET)
 20. What would be the ideal relationship between the principal and the educational department?
 21. How do you see yourself as principal right now as opposed to the beginning of your first year?
 22. What do you think are the particular challenges facing a principal at this school in this country at this time?
 23. Is there anything you want to add, or are there any additional concerns you have?
 24. Do you have any questions you wish to ask?
-

APPENDIX C

Interview With Deputy Director General Of Education

1. What position do you occupy within the Western Cape Education Department?
2. What are your areas of responsibility?
3. What do you see as the problems/ challenges facing beginning principals in secondary schools in the Cape Peninsula in these changing times?
4. How do you think the recommendations of the Review Committee, in terms of financial delegation, will impact on the role of the school principal?
5. What type of support exists for beginning principals in secondary schools in the Cape Peninsula.
6. Current changes in school governance is leading to different relationships between principals, teachers, pupils and parents. What impact do you envisage this will have on the job of the principal? What do you think is the function/role of school principals in secondary schools during this period of reform?
7. What would be the ideal relationship between the principal and the educational department?
8. Is there anything you wish to add, or are there any additional concerns you have?
9. Do you have any questions you wish to ask OR are there any questions which you think I should have asked?

APPENDIX D

COVER LETTER TO BEGINNER PRINCIPALS
--

The Principal

RE: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am a registered M.Ed. student at the University of Cape Town. I am writing my dissertation on Beginning Principals in Secondary Schools in the Cape Peninsula. The aim of my research is to learn more about the background and experiences of first-year secondary school principals. Specifically I would like to learn more about the support and coping strategies of beginning principals.

I firmly believe that the principalship is far too important to leave the success of beginners to chance. This is why I am convinced that the information gathered will be useful in improving the training and support for future first-time principals in the context of a restructured educational system. To this end I intend to have the results of the survey published in an educational journal.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would assist me in this research by completing the enclosed questionnaire. *All the information will be treated confidentially and no direct references will be made to you or your school i.e. neither your name nor that of your school will be mentioned.* Please answer all of the questions as comprehensively and as candidly as you can. Please note that the number on the questionnaire is merely for administrative purposes.

Place the completed questionnaire in the self-addressed envelope provided and mail it to me as soon as possible.

Upon completion I would be happy to share the results with you. Please feel free to contact me at:

75-6481 (h) or 701-1551 (w)

Thank you for your time and effort in assisting in this important study.

Nathan Sassman

APPENDIX E

FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO BEGINNER PRINCIPALS
--

The Principal

RE: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir/ Madam

I trust that you have received the questionnaire concerning First-Year Secondary School Principals that was sent to you. The purpose of the research is to learn more about the background and experiences of first-year secondary school principals, and specifically the support and coping strategies that are employed. I believe that the information gathered will be useful in improving the training and support for future first-time principals in the context of a restructured educational system.

If you have completed and posted the completed questionnaire, please accept my thanks and appreciation for your cooperation in sacrificing your time to assist me in my research.

If you have not had the time to complete the questionnaire, could I appeal to you to complete the questionnaire as soon as possible, to reach me before (day/month) 1995.

Please note that *all the information will be treated confidentially and no direct references will be made to you or your school i.e. neither your name nor that of your school will be mentioned*. Please answer all of the questions as comprehensively and as candidly as you can. Please note that the number on the questionnaire is merely for administrative purposes.

In the event of any queries please feel free to contact me at: 75-6481 (h)

Thank you once again for your cooperation in assisting me with this important study.

Nathan Sassman

APPENDIX F

PERMISSION LETTER

Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement
Western Cape Education Department
iSebe leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

avrae
nquiries
ibuzo

Mr D.A. Norton

Verwysing
Reference
Ubhekiso

L.15/73/7/2

Telefoon
Telephone
iMfonomfono

403-6100

Mr N.E. Sassman
P.O. Box 257
RETREAT
7965

Kantoor van die
Office of the
i-Ofisi ye

Head of Education

Privaatsak
Private Bag

9114

Dorp/Stad
Town/City
iDolophi/iSixeko

CAPE TOWN

Poskode/Postal Code
iKhodi lePosi

8000

Faks
Fax

419-9377

Datum/Date
Umhla

28 July 1995

Dear Mr Sassman

RESEARCH REQUEST: BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE OF FIRST YEAR HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

1. Your interview with the department on 27 July is referred to.
2. Your application to approach principals of schools in the Cape Peninsula to conduct the above-mentioned research project is granted, subject to the following conditions:
 - 2.1 The principals are under no obligation to cooperate in the research.
 - 2.2 The principals/schools may not be identifiable in any way in your research project.
 - 2.3 All arrangements in connection with your project must be undertaken by yourself.
 - 2.4 The research may not be conducted during the fourth term.
 - 2.5 The conditions 2.1 - 2.4 above must be quoted in full when you approach the principal.
 - 2.6 A copy of the completed report must be sent to:

The Directorate: Education Research and Examinations
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag 9114
CAPE TOWN
8000

- 2.7 A separate synopsis (a maximum of 2 - 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations must accompany the completed report.
3. The department wishes you every success in carrying out this research project.

Yours sincerely

Signature Removed

for ACTING HEAD OF EDUCATION