FOCUS:

To study a variety of business administration and management techniques in order to apply them in a secondary school environment

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Sabbatical Report

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Executive Summary

During 2005, I undertook a seven-month period of full time study at the University of Canterbury and successfully completed the course of study for the Post Graduate Diploma of Business Administration. Part of the period of study was supported by the secondary principal's sabbatical leave scheme. The aim was to improve my skills and knowledge for the benefit of myself, my school and the secondary education sector.

Almost all of the content of the course was relevant to the role of a secondary school principal, but I found strategic planning, change management, marketing and human resource management to be of particular interest. This report contains information about five areas of study undertaken during my course.

In the human resource field I researched issues related to principal's appraisal. I concluded that principals have demanding and stressful jobs, and their performance is a key factor in the success of their school. Since the main factors influencing principal's performance are environmental rather than purely individual, an appraisal system intended to help principal's to improve their job performance needs to address the environmental factors by providing the necessary information, resources and incentives to facilitate the achievement of excellent outcomes.

I also examined research on how stress and burnout affect teachers and principals. Research shows that many teachers and principals are hampered in the performance of their professional duties by the effects of stress and burnout. This factor is a major impediment to the ability of our education system to deliver the best possible education to students. I recommend several areas of research which should be pursued to improve our understanding of this issue.

In the area of school strategic management, the TOWS (**T**hreats, **O**pportunities, **W**eaknesses and **S**trengths) matrix provides a way of systematically identifying and analysing environmental threats and opportunities and weaknesses and strengths. It then enables relationships between these factors to be identified, and strategies based on these factors to be developed.

I considered how to manage change in an organisation by using approaches which help to convince people to appreciate the need for change and mobilise support for change from within the organisation.

I also used an appreciative inquiry approach to assist with a review of the strategic direction of a school.

I now intend to continue studying part time to complete the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree during the next two years.

Purpose.

The period of the sabbatical leave was used to study a variety of business administration and management techniques in order to apply them in a secondary school environment.

Background.

The secondary principal's sabbatical leave scheme supported me for part of the period in which I was enrolled in full time study at the University of Canterbury for a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration (PGDipBA). The course of study was expected to provide benefits to myself as principal, to my school and the wider secondary sector.

I wanted to study and reflect on a wide variety of management and leadership issues and gain skills, knowledge and experience to assist in running a secondary school. The PGDipBA programme appealed as being a more general leadership and management course than other specifically educational qualifications.

It was anticipated that the school would benefit from my increased knowledge and skills particularly in areas of strategic planning, change management, marketing, human resource management, accounting and financial management. All of these are essential aspects of a principal's job description and are vital to the implementation of strategic plans and annual goals.

There would also be opportunities for skills, knowledge and experience to be shared with other principals in a variety of forums. There is a recognised need for a greater level of training and professional development for secondary principals and initiatives such as first time principal's training and principal development programmes are seeking to meet these needs. Following the completion of the course of study, I could be of use as a resource person for such training programmes.

Activities Undertaken.

The Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration (PGDipBA) course consists of 12 papers:

- MBAD601 Accounting
- MBAD602 Quantitative Methods
- MBAD603 Management of Information Systems and Technology
- MBAD605 Human Resource Management
- MBAD606 Marketing 1
- MBAD612 Production and Operations Management
- MBAD631 Strategic Management
- MBAD632 Strategy & International Business
- MBAD604 Economics
- MBAD643 Change Management
- MBAD611 Managerial Finance
- MBAD616 Marketing 2

I was successful in completing the course, passing all papers and achieving an average grade of A-.

The duration of the course was from 31/01/2005 to 15/08/2005, but only the ten-week period from 2/05/05 to 8/07/05 was covered by the sabbatical leave scheme. For the

remainder of the course I was on refreshment leave granted by my Board of Trustees.

Findings.

I found almost all aspects of the course content to be very relevant to my role as a secondary school principal. In particular papers in human resource management, change management, strategic planning and marketing have all provided knowledge and skills which I am keen to apply as I return to school.

I enjoyed the case study approach of lecturers and found the interaction with other students, especially in group assignments, to be extremely valuable. The University of Canterbury PGDipBA programme has provided me with a wonderful opportunity for growth and stimulation. It is without doubt the best professional development experience I have had during my career as a teacher and principal.

A full time course of study over 8 months covered a large range of issues related to the management of secondary schools and it is not possible for me to provide feedback on all of them. So, in this summary report I will limit the feedback I provide to a few key areas which I found particularly relevant and interesting.

Conclusions.

A) Principal's Appraisal.

School principals have a unique and demanding job. They have leadership and management responsibilities in their school, and work with a large constituency of people both within the school and across the wider community. Principals are responsible for the educational performance of students, the quality of teaching provided by teachers, the work of other support staff and for liaising with parents and with the community as a whole which has an interest in education. The success of a school is often attributed to a large extent to the performance of the principal, thereby placing an enormous responsibility on that individual and making the quality of the principal's work of prime importance.

Gilbert' Behaviour Engineering Model describes six factors which influence performance in the workplace. Three of the factors, information, resources and incentives, involve the work environment. The other three factors, knowledge, capacity and motives are focussed on the individual. Gilbert argued that unless the environmental factors are addressed, training and development will not be successful in encouraging exemplary performance. This was in contrast to the traditional HR belief that performance improvement could be brought about by "fixing" problems with the individual. Gilbert's model is very relevant to a discussion of principal's appraisal since one of the main reasons for appraisal of principals is to encourage professional development and ongoing performance improvement. Analysing the situation in light of Gilbert's model should enable principal appraisal to better focus on those factors which can most effectively promote performance improvement.

The first environmental factor, information, describes how the individual needs to have a clear description of good performance, guidelines for doing the job and frequent relevant feedback on the adequacy of performance. Gilbert's model identifies this as a stimulus factor, so that having this information will encourage and enable the person to improve their performance. For principals, while comprehensive job descriptions do exist, the day-to-day realities of the job often crowd out important aspects of the role by filling the available time with urgent but less important

imperatives. Getting relevant feedback can be difficult as many staff are reluctant to give frank feedback on their superior even in an anonymous situation. Also, there is a tendency for parents and students to only provide information on performance when there is a problem. In other words, complaints are easier to elicit than praise.

A second environmental factor, resources, relates to having the tools, time, personnel and organised work processes to enable the job to be performed to a high standard. It is often stated that schools are under resourced by government and that increases in school operations grants and staffing levels are required to ensure that the standard of education provided is appropriate. For principals, it can be argued that the lack of sufficient resources make it impossible to perform all of the aspects of their job. Principal insist that more time, support and specific resources are needed, especially as there is an increasing expectation from society that schools will address many of the social problems affecting young people.

The other environmental factor is that of appropriate incentives for excellent performance; such as financial and non-monetary rewards, development opportunities and consequences for unsatisfactory performance. Principals groups have long argued that salaries are considerably lower than those on offer for CEO positions with similar levels of responsibility in commercial organisations. Boards of Trustees, despite being designated as the principal's employer, are unable to supplement salaries without concurrence from the Ministry of Education which is only granted in very limited circumstances. Boards are also constrained by their limited funding in terms of other incentives which they may wish to offer. The Ministry has only recently made periods of paid sabbatical leave available to principals for refreshment and professional development.

The other factors in Gilbert's Model are of an individual nature. Knowledge involves systematic training to match the requirements of the position. For principals, until recently, there was no specific induction and training available for those taking up positions for the first time. This has now been rectified, and a new principals training programme, which includes training, mentoring and support, has been in place for the last three years. Principals often partake in other short term training and educational courses and conferences to assist their professional development.

A further factor is the capacity of the individual to fulfil the role. This is dependant on having good selection processes to provide a suitable match between the person and the position. Principals are usually very experienced in education, having a wide background and knowledge of schools and teaching. One of the main responsibilities of the Board of Trustees is the selection and appointment of the principal, a task for which they usually enlist professional help from a consultant or an experienced principal.

The last part of Gilbert's Model is motive, which relates to the willingness of the employee to do the job, their level of motivation and appreciation of the realities of the role. Most principals are well-motivated people with a sense of commitment to education and to the young people they are responsible for. Principals usually self select for the personal qualities required, and have a high degree of awareness of the nature of the role prior to their appointment.

In summary, applying the framework of Gilbert's Engineering Model to the appraisal of school principals reveals that environmental factors play a key role in principals' performance. In terms of information, principals need clear job descriptions with specific performance indicators so that the principal is fully aware of the key tasks and to enable their performance to be measured against clear and objective

standards. Also, the appraisal process needs to provide ways for staff, parents, the community, Board of Trustees and students (when appropriate) to be able to give honest and constructive feedback on the principal's performance. The appraisal process needs to identify the resourcing needs of the principal to ensure that the appropriate support, time and tools are in place to facilitate a high standard of performance. The process also needs to relate to the use of suitable incentives to reward and encourage performance.

School principals have demanding and stressful jobs, and yet their performance is a key factor in the success of their school. The main factors influencing principal's performance are environmental rather than purely individual. So an appraisal system intended to help principal's to improve their job performance needs to address the environmental factors and provide the necessary information, resources and incentives to facilitate the achievement of excellent outcomes for schools, students and principals.

B) Stress and Burnout among School Principals and Teachers.

Some occupations are recognised as being potentially more stressful than others. For example, working as a police officer or fire fighter is more stressful than being a hairdresser. Teaching and educational administration are also considered to be occupations where stress can be a potential problem.

Teaching is a very demanding and emotionally exhausting occupation with a huge number of interpersonal interactions taking place each day. Teaching involves dealing with large groups of students, who may come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds. They may have varying degrees of motivation and academic ability and some may exhibit aggressive, uncooperative and disruptive behaviour toward the teacher or other students. In recent years teachers have also been faced with numerous changes in assessment, pedagogy and curriculum and with the introduction of information technology in the classroom.

Stress will have a detrimental effect on both the performance of the teacher and the educational experience of the student. Teachers feeling harassed, nervous and tired will be unable to perform to the best of their ability, may be unsympathetic and impatient when dealing with students and are unlikely to be able to make a positive contribution to the work of their colleges within the school and the profession.

On an individual level stress and burnout will affect a teacher's health and well-being leading to more frequent illness, absence from work, chronic health problems and in extreme cases can result in depression or even suicide. Teacher unions in particular have expressed concerns about teacher stress and burnout, and have cited workload and student violence as causes of increased levels of stress and high staff turnover.

The Health and Safety in Employment Amendment Act 2002, placed obligations on employers with regard to work place stress. The Act identifies stress as a potential hazard in the workplace. Stress may arise as a result of hazards in the workplace or may be the cause of hazards in the workplace. Health and Safety legislation requires employers to seek to identify potential workplace hazards and take all reasonably practicable steps to reduce, minimise or eliminate such hazards. Employers must take steps to manage the impact of stress where it may cause harm.

Boards of Trustees and principals, in their role as employers, have to ensure that they take steps to address these concerns, both for the well being of their staff and to

protect themselves from personal grievances or other action under employment or health and safety legislation.

Currently in New Zealand there is concern about the recruitment and retention of teachers. Schools are finding it difficult to attract applicants for both teaching and principal's positions. These problems are especially acute in rural areas and in some specialist subjects. As the government has made improvements to school staffing levels in recent years the recruitment problems have become worse as more teachers are needed to fill the increased numbers of positions. Despite recruiting from overseas and offering scholarships to encourage people to train as teachers the problems remain. Concern is also expressed about the high numbers of teachers who leave the profession in the first few years with workload and stress levels often cited as a cause.

The current state of research on workplace stress and burnout among teachers and school principals shows widespread agreement that stress and burnout are major issues for education in many nations. Stress and burn out cause considerable personal suffering to the educational professional it affects. It has an adverse effect on both the physical and psychological wellbeing of a considerable proportion of educators and prevents many professional educators from teaching to the best of their potential ability.

This impediment to personal and professional performance in turn affects students who are being taught by under performing teachers. Stress damages the relationships between students and their teachers and reduces the educational benefit to students from their time at school. Currently, education systems worldwide are under real pressure to meet the challenges of growing economies, rapidly developing technology and a worsening skills shortage. It is very concerning that the success of an education system can be so badly affected by the widespread problem of stress and burn out.

There are some contradictory aspects to the research findings. Some programmes aimed at stress reduction seem to have the opposite effect, causing increased stress levels in the participants. Experience, which usually helps a person to do their job well, seems to make the effects of stress and burn out worse for some educators. Also, stress levels do not seem to be directly related to specific tasks which the educator is completing, but to a wide range of factors related to the job.

Much of the research into this topic has focused on the causes and effects of stress in educators. For many researchers this has culminated in a list of strategies and programmes, either at the individual or organisational level, to bring about a long term solution to this problem. However, there appears to be little research into the benefits and effectiveness of any programmes or strategies in order that they can be properly evaluated.

Research into stress among teachers and educators seems to be aimed at either a personal or organisational level. Either the focus is on the effects of stress on the individual and the things that person can do to avoid the problem, or there is emphasis on the administrative and organisational causes of stress and suggestions on structural, financial or practical solutions. Should such a major educational issue be, in effect, blamed on the individual, and should that same individual then be left to apply the solution. If stress really is a systemic problem then it is inappropriate to expect the individual to find the solutions and apply the cure. This comes down to the question of whether stress and burn out among educational professionals is an internal problem related just to the person, or is it a structural problem related to the

way schools are planned, organised and funded? Many studies have shown that the causes of stress are related to features of the educator's job and organisational and administrative factors about the way schools function and yet many of the solutions are aimed at actions the individual can take to mitigate their stress. The question must be asked, if the individual is not the cause of their stress, why should they be the source of the solution? Should more responsibility for stress in teachers and principals be accepted by their employers and those who are responsible for the structure and organisation of our school?

Research clearly shows that stress is more of a problem for educators who are teaching students at secondary level as opposed to primary. Also, teaching in state schools is more stressful than in the private sector. A further risk factor for stress and burn out is teaching students who exhibit violent or aggressive behaviour. For society, it is vital that adolescents are well educated, that students in state schools have a quality of education equal to private schools and that students with violent or aggressive behaviours are exposed to positive educational experiences. Yet, the education of all of these groups of students will be at risk if educators are subjected to very high stress levels in dealing with them.

Education is a major priority for society for both social and economic reasons. The future success of both individuals and our society depends, to a large extent, on the quality of the teaching and learning which takes place in our educational institutions. Research shows that teachers and principals are hampered in the performance of their professional duties by the effects of stress and burnout. This factor is a major impediment to the ability of our education system to deliver the best possible education to students. In addition, the personal cost in terms of the adverse effects on physical and psychological well being is very significant. The employers of teachers and principals have a legal obligation to provide a safe workplace and to identify and mitigate any workplace hazards. Research shows clearly that stress is a hazard for teachers and principals and employers may be at risk of legal action under employment law for failing to provide a safe workplace.

There is currently a shortage of staff to fill teaching and principals positions. Many beginning teachers leave the profession during their first few years and Boards of Trustees report a shortage of applicants when principal's positions are advertised. It may be that the issue of stress is a factor in this situation of shortage. Research needs to be carried out to establish the degree to which stress is contributing to teachers leaving the profession and to the reluctance of many experienced educators to consider applying for a promotion to principal.

It is of note that while stress is a major concern for a substantial proportion of educators, many (indeed perhaps the majority) are not affected to any great extent. Why are some people apparently immune to the ravages of stress and burn out while their colleagues are suffering so badly? What are the differences between teachers who suffer from work related stress and those who seem to escape its effects? This is an area where more research is needed.

A further contradiction is that some research suggests that stress is just as much an issue for experienced teachers as for trainees or those who have recently commenced teaching. Researchers need to investigate why experienced teachers get stressed. Why does their experience not seem to offer any protection from stress and in fact does stress get worse the longer a teacher or principal is in the job?

Another area for further research is the effect of stress on the individual. It would be interesting to find out what long term effect teacher and principal stress has on those

affected. Does it have an influence on life expectancy or on other health related measures? Are teachers or principals more likely than other similar groups to be affected by depression or to attempt suicide?

Further research is also needed into programmes and initiatives aimed at reducing stress in education professionals. What programmes have been put in place and how successful have they been? Programmes aimed at helping individuals to cope with stress need to be evaluated. Also, initiatives which try to address stress and burn out from an organisational standpoint also need to be assessed for effectiveness.

C) Management of Strategic Planning.

When a school is about to embark on a strategic review of its goals, operations and planning processes, this creates an opportunity to develop a strategic management process which can be used by the Board and management of the school to determine the actions necessary to achieve its goals. The first step in this process is to adopt a strategy framework to guide the review and to provide a starting point for structuring the process.

The recommended framework for developing this strategy management process is the TOWS matrix. The TOWS (or **T**hreats, **O**pportunities, **W**eaknesses and **S**trengths) matrix provides a way of systematically identifying and analysing the environmental threats and opportunities and the school's weaknesses and strengths. It then enables relationships between these factors to be identified, and strategies based on these factors to be developed.

Many people may be familiar with the process of a SWOT analysis with identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A SWOT analysis is often used as a brainstorming technique when discussing strategic planning with various groups associated with the school, such as the Board, staff, parents and even students. The limitation of this approach is that once the SWOT items have been identified it is not clear how to use that information to develop a coherent strategy to enable the goals of the school to be achieved. Also, a SWOT analysis looks at the items in isolation without considering the inter-relationship between say strengths and threats, or between weaknesses and opportunities.

In contrast the TOWS matrix has a much wider scope and enables more useful outcomes to be achieved than SWOT. TOWS focuses on the external situation in identifying the threats and opportunities. These are factors in the environment outside of the school which have a significant impact, either positive or negative, on its operations and future success. TOWS also examines the internal resources of the school, looking at strengths and weaknesses and how these affect the operation and the achievement of the school's goals.

The next step in applying the TOWS matrix is to take the factors identified, consider how they interact and use them to develop strategies or tactics in four distinct alternative modes.

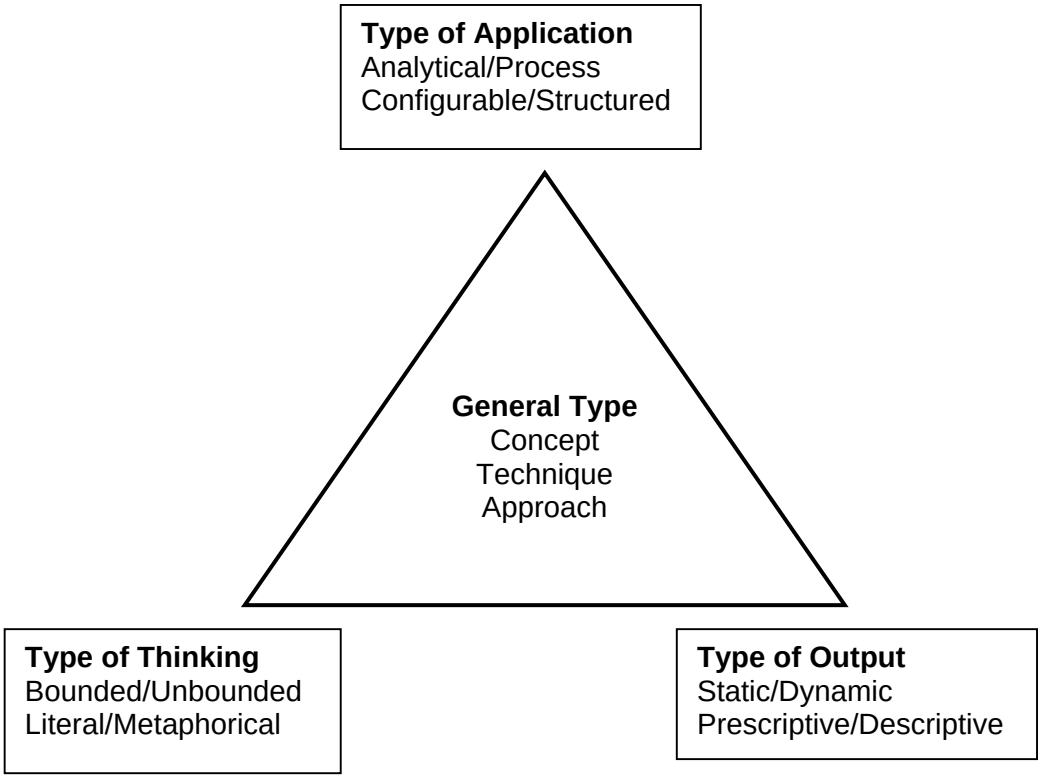
- The W-T strategy looks at the factors identified as internal weaknesses and considers their interactions with external threats. The aim is to find strategies or tactics that minimise the impact of both (referred to as mini-mini).
- The W-O strategy looks at the factors identified as internal weaknesses and considers their interactions with external opportunities. The aim is to find strategies or tactics that minimise weaknesses while maximising the impact of opportunities (mini-maxi).

- The S-T strategy looks at the factors identified as internal strengths and considers their interactions with external threats. The aim is to find strategies or tactics that maximise the impact of strengths while minimising the effect of threats (maxi-mini).
- The S-O strategy looks at the factors identified as internal strengths and considers their interactions with external opportunities. The aim is to find strategies or tactics that maximise the impact of both (maxi-maxi).

The TOWS matrix identifies the situation at a particular point in time. As the situations affecting the school are dynamic it is important to take into account the changing nature of many of the factors in our analysis. This is done by preparing several versions of the TOWS matrix for different times.

In summary TOWS provides a good framework for identifying relationships between different factors and for developing strategies and tactics for gaining the best advantages for the school in the achievement of its aims.

The TOWS framework can be applied to the management of strategic development to provide a range of strategy options for the school. In selecting this framework, it is useful to examine how the TOWS framework fits into a typology. A typology describes the characteristics and functions of the framework which is being recommended and is summarised in the diagram below.



The typology classifies the general type of framework and then identifies the thinking, application and outputs associated with that type. For the TOWS framework the general type is a technique, meaning that it is the most focussed and specific type of framework. This is a great advantage for use in a school situation as the framework needs to bring together and enable discussion of a large amount of information from a wide range of people.

The type of thinking encouraged by TOWS is literal and bounded. This is important as the type of framework tends to guide and channel the kind of thinking which will be encouraged by the process. Literal and bounded thinking will be characterised by being more directed, specific and conventional than that which is unbounded and metaphorical. In the strategic management processes being considered it is recommended that a more bounded and literal approach is used. There are a number of important reasons for limiting the type of thinking used in the framework. Firstly, schools are bound by government regulations and Acts of Parliament, and this severely limits the range of solutions which can be adopted in strategic planning and development. Secondly, parents and the community have a relatively narrow range of conceptions and ideas about the kind of school they want for they children and it is unwise to develop plans and strategies which are too radical as this would risk alienating the very people we wish to serve. Also, the consultation process associated with this framework will involve many different groups; parents, staff, students and members of the Board. For practical purposes of time and in order to collate the various contributions efficiently, it is important to give considerable structure to the type of thinking envisioned.

The type of application of the TOWS framework is structured and is focussed on the process. Being process focused means that the thinking, discussion and debate which accompany the application of TOWS are extremely important to the outcome. Indeed it can be argued that the process is just as important as any results which it generates. The consideration and exchange of ideas between different members of the school community will be invaluable in coming up with strategies and tactics later in the process. Using a structured framework is also important for practical reasons in this situation. The consultation can be carried out in a timely effective way if a standard structure is used, whereas a totally “blue skies” approach can lead to confusing feedback and very long complex discussions with little useful information being produced.

The type of output which would naturally result from the application of TOWS is static if it is only applied at one point in time. This limitation can be overcome by doing a TOWS matrix analysis for the present situation and also for several different points in the future. However, this may not be necessary in the analysis of a school as the situation is usually changing relatively slowly and may not have factors which are very dynamic. The output of the TOWS analysis is descriptive in nature rather than being prescriptive. This means that the output will describe the information in a structured way but will not produce a specific course of action. This is an advantage for the analysis as it encourages further consideration and thought, which may enable more creative solutions to be developed.

In applying the TOWS framework it is important to be clear about the goals of the organisation. What is it that the Board, staff, students, parents, and the government want the school to achieve? As a first step it is necessary to consult widely about what each group perceives as the most important aims for the school and for the Board to develop a clear succinct statement of these goals. Once this is done the process of strategic management can then begin, so that the goals can be realised.

The next step in applying the TOWS framework is to identify the threats and opportunities in the external environment and the weaknesses and strengths in the internal organisation. This needs to be undertaken with the Board, staff, students and parents and can be carried out in variety of methods. Facilitated group discussions or workshops for members of the various groups are recommended. Staff and the Board should hold workshops separately as doing this jointly may inhibit a frank discussion of ideas and concerns. Consulting with students and parents is less

straightforward due to the numbers in these groups and the difficulty of getting significant proportions of parents to attend meetings. Students can be consulted in small groups using trained members of the student council to facilitate. Parents can be invited to facilitated workshop meetings, but it will also be necessary to provide the option of a survey type response sheet to attempt to elicit a response from who do not attend.

In considering treats and opportunities in the external environment participants are encouraged to consider a wide range of factors such as; the geographic location of the school, key attributes of competing schools, demographic effects, the local economy, other economic and financial influences such as overseas students, and the education policies of the government. There are also a wide range of internal factors which constitute the strengths and weaknesses of the school. These include the management and organisation, financial position, staff, students, parental and community support, infrastructure and reputational assets. These factors should be grouped into the four categories of the TOWS matrix.

The next step is to use the TOWS matrix to generate strategies and tactics based on the factors identified. This step should also be done by all the groups identified as having an interest in the school. The factors should be assessed in pairs based on the W-T, W-O, S-T and S-O strategies. For example, the school may have the opportunity to enrol foreign fee paying student but may have a weakness in providing pastoral care. A possible strategy is to hire additional staff with expertise in pastoral care of overseas students so that the opportunity of enrolling these students can be taken. Similarly, the school may have strength in the provision of outdoor education experiences for students while falling roll numbers constitute a threat. A possible strategy is to develop an outdoor education academy to attract new enrolments by utilising the strength in that subject area.

The analysis of the strategies generated by all of the interest groups in the school may become quite complex as there will be a significant number of alternatives which may impinge on each other. There are several generic strategies that may be used when collating the alternatives.

- Specialisation. Concentrating strengths and energies in one area of operation
- Diversification. Moving into new and advantageous areas of operation.
- Innovation. Introducing new products or services.
- Retrenchment. Reducing the size and scope of operations.
- Combination. Using a number of strategies together.

In conclusion, the TOWS framework will provide the Board of Trustees with a method of undertaking a strategic review of the school so that they can develop a strategic management process to enable their goals to be achieved. The Board will need to agree on a timeframe for this process so that consultation can take place and the strategies and tactics which result can be implemented.

The Board will need to ensure that all groups involved in the process are adequately informed about the typology of the framework and its background so that all involved will have confidence in the process and they will feel confident that their views and opinions will be valued and considered.

D) Managing Change.
I considered how to manage change in an organisation by using approaches which help to convince people to appreciate the need for change and mobilise support for change from within the organisation. It is important to communicate with management and employees so that they can understand the need for change and how it will affect the organisation. Management should conduct an analysis and explain trends which will affect the sector. There is a need to communicate the fact that anticipatory change is necessary, rather than waiting until the organisation is in bad shape before taking action.

Management will need to share their perceptions of the organisation's soul, in particular formal and informal routines, and to explain how these routines are affecting the organisation and its ability to respond to changes. There is also a need to identify and discuss the mental models which both employees and management have built up over many years and explain how there may need to be changes in their assumptions, beliefs and values.

The next step is to use good communication skills to mobilise support for change. This can be done by influencing those people who are undecided about the need for change. In most institutions facing change, about 20% of people will oppose change and about 20% will support it. The remaining 60% are undecided and it is this group that management needs to concentrate on, and endeavour to create a critical mass of about 35 to 40% support for the need to bring about change. Once this degree of support is mobilised, management will have a good chance of bringing about the necessary changes in the organisation.

Cialdini has identified six main ways to influence people:

- liking,
- reciprocity,
- social proof,
- consistency,
- authority
- scarcity.

Management should find ways to apply these methods to persuade the people that change is necessary. Using the liking principle would involve face-to-face communication and a conscious effort to demonstrate a genuine affinity with people. Also, talk to the senior management team and then use them to communicate the change message to the rest of the organisation, again using a face-to-face situation.

Reciprocity relies on the principle that it is easier to mobilise support from people who feel that they have received some tangible item or positive input from the management. Management need to enlist support in protecting the organisation and its future success.

Social proof is a key principle in enlisting support for change. Management should use supporters to enlist their peers to come on board the change "bandwagon". This strategy is likely to be more successful than management appealing directly to all of the staff.

Using the consistency principle means ensuring that people have the reasons for change explained clearly. It would also involve asking people for a voluntary public commitment to the change process as this strongly reinforces the strength of people's support.

The authority principle involves the use of an “expert” to endorse the change process.

The last principle is scarcity. If employees are aware that failure to implement change could result in losses to the organisation and to them personally, they are more likely to support change.

E) Organisational Culture and Appreciative Inquiry.
Appreciative inquiry is a technique for use in organisational change, redesign or planning. It is based on a comprehensive analysis of the organisation’s “positive core” by asking questions about what is most effective and vital in economic, ecological and human terms. I used an appreciative inquiry approach to assist with a review of the strategic direction of a school.

A very important indication of the success of a school and the well being of its staff is found in the nature of the school’s organisational culture. The culture of an organisation arises from the behaviours, values and assumptions that develop from the interactions of the members of the organisation. Organisational culture develops over time and is both complex and dynamic. Culture is affected by and belongs to all members of the organisation. This means that it cannot be controlled or changed by either the management or by any particular group within the organisation.

In developing an affirmative topic around this issue I wanted to investigate the perceptions of a sample of teachers, in order to discover the positive aspects of their experiences both in their teaching practice and in their relationships with other staff. By asking questions which are phrased in a positive manner I also hoped to highlight the positive parts of the culture in the minds of those teachers I was interviewing. I did this in the hope that the very act of being interviewed would cause that person to appreciate anew the valuable experiences and success they have been part of so that their attitude toward the future development of the school will change.

It was my aim to find out the answers to some questions.

- What things make the school an exciting place to teach at?
- In what ways are the staff supportive and how do they work together as a team?
- What are some characteristics of good relationships between staff?
- What makes some teaching experiences successful and enjoyable for the teacher?

Often the mere mention of change evokes many negative comments and the suspicion that management or the government have some ulterior motive behind the change. The focus of the affirmative topic, by contrast, is on those things which are currently successful and how that success can be further developed. In planning for the strategic review and framing the positive questions with which to elicit responses, I was particularly concerned to focus on positive experiences and attitudes. I wanted the experience of the appreciative inquiry to result in a concentration on the possibilities for success and positive transformation when thinking about plans, visions and future intentions. By deliberately discovering the interesting, the successful, the creative and the innovative and incorporating these ideas into the review, I hoped to build enthusiasm, confidence and energy.

In structuring the questionnaire I started with several narrative questions so that the participants would relax and become comfortable with the kind of discussion this

project was anticipating. The middle questions focussed on less concrete concepts, such as things which provide challenge, give life and demonstrate caring. The final group of questions are forward looking and ask the participants to suggest things which they would like to change in order to make the school even better.

The questions had an element of idealism and asked about values and qualities which are not often explicitly discussed in the context of organisational planning. It was anticipated that some of the respondents may feel uncomfortable with the "touchy feely" nature of the task, but by adopting a relaxed, informal and encouraging manner it was hoped that this would not be a significant issue. It was important that the staff being interviewed felt that they were being taken seriously. They were encouraged to think creatively, use their imaginations and take the opportunity to contribute to the kind of school they want to teach at in the future.

In summary, this project was designed to elicit deep and meaningful input from a sample of teachers using a questioning technique which was unexpected and open ended. The goal was to gain fresh, new, positive and creative insights for inclusion in the strategic planning review being carried out in the school. The interviews created an opportunity to learn a considerable amount about the views of teachers in order to identify some ways to better facilitate a strategic review within the school.

Bringing about change in a school is all about identifying and clarifying the school's goals, developing capabilities within the school and matching them with the social and educational environment in which we operate. The key application of this appreciative inquiry project was to create improved capabilities within the school.

To manage change within a school there is a need to change teacher's mental models. This can be done by using the appreciative inquiry method to invite all of the staff to see the need for change, explore new ways of doing things and contribute to the changes. By talking and asking questions about positive aspects of the school, these things become the dominant images, rather than the negative, problem orientated conversations which so often dominate. There should be an acknowledgement that each teacher is an essential part of the organisation and that each person's contribution is vital. It is also essential to value equality so that everybody is able to contribute and their ideas are valued and considered equally.

There is a need to mobilise support for change by persuading other staff that change is necessary and that initiatives can be put in place that will be effective in bringing about the desired results. By using concepts of liking, reciprocity, social proof, consistency, authority and scarcity, the level of support for change can be maximised.

It is vital that supporters are identified, the "irrevocably opposed" are neutralised, robust debate is encouraged and strategies such as framing, altering incentives and using social influence are implemented. These all have the effect of changing mental models and mobilising support so that the change initiatives have the greatest chance of being successful.

There are some quite specific insights which can be gained from the interviews which were carried out in this study. Firstly, the key to making teaching enjoyable is in developing positive relationships with students and this can happen not just with the "good" students. All types of student can become more co-operative, interested and motivated when their teacher takes the trouble to develop a positive relationship with them. Secondly, staff enjoy having a challenge in their work and get a huge sense of satisfaction when they succeed. Staff feel very much valued and more confident

when they receive positive feedback, recognition and appreciation for their work and this may come from colleagues, parents, management or students.

The staff interviewed felt supported by each other and by the school's management. They also felt that the staff were a very caring and considerate group of people toward each other. The strength of community feeling within the school and the support provided to the school by the local community were also notable issues to come out of the interviews. A further notable point was the very genuine desire that staff had for the school and students to have the best environment in which to work and the best resources possible.

These things are core strengths of the school and as such have considerable potential to bring about change. These ideas have power to refocus people's energy and imagination so that the future direction of the school can be reshaped during the review process. It was interesting to notice the effect the process of undertaking an interview had on the staff involved. As each interview progressed, staff became more animated and excited as they discussed their achievements and successes. It seemed that nobody had bothered to ask them about the things they felt good about before. It became a very enjoyable and satisfying experience to discuss and celebrate with each teacher as they took pleasure in telling me about the things they enjoyed and gained satisfaction from.

The following key points came from the interviews.

- Enjoyable teaching depends on relating well to the students.
- Staff enjoy a challenge especially if they are recognised for their efforts.
- There is a strong feeling of caring and support among the staff.
- Community support for the school is seen as a strength.
- Staff want the very best for the school and its students.

These key findings now form the basis of a review of the strategic direction of the school.

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