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How can the Community of Enquiry (CoE) methodology be used to help make the decision making processes of a school management team (SMT) in South Africa more inclusive, democratic, effective and collaborative?

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Abstract

An authoritarian and bureaucratic ethos adopted by South African Schools prior to 1994 continues to be adopted in many schools. It may be assumed that with the advent of the new South African democratic government in 1994 there would be more freedom given to schools to adopt different leadership styles that were relevant to their school context. Given the top-down culture and authoritarian leadership structures of schools that were designed and developed during the apartheid era, secondary school principals and school management teams have struggled to adopt a more democratic approach to running a school since 1994. In the previous dispensation, school decision making was mostly not a collective effort, and involved a minimum of consultation and sharing of ideas, with staff not being seen as having the role or potential to positively influence significant school decisions. The national Department of Education (2003) refers to this as "… the entrenched bureaucratic and hierarchical management practices inherited from apartheid traditions." However, greater choice and autonomy of thought are part and parcel of the democratic paradigm.

A comprehensive literature review on the Community of Enquiry (CoE) methodology, a resource developed by Matthew Lipman, revealed a more open and inclusive approach to thinking together and embraces the principals of choice and autonomy. It is proposed that this methodology could be used to help school management teams (SMTs) become more collaborative and democratic in their approach to decision-making. Particular attention will be paid to the democratic values that underpin a CoE, in particular the values of equality, justice and freedom will be discussed with specific reference to the South African context.

Bureaucratic, autocratic and democratic leadership styles may be adopted by the SMTs in various schools and each leadership style could influence the decision making process as well as the culture within a school.

The CoE methodology could work in conjunction with a democratic leadership style to allow SMTs to be more collaborative and inclusive in the decision making process.

Key words : *Community of enquiry, democracy, distributive leadership, lasting leadership*

CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Prior to 1994 South African law divided the population into four distinct racial categories: Africans, whites, coloureds, and Asians. This law adopted segregationist social and education policies which allowed white minorities to choose where they lived while black[1] South Africans were required to live and work in areas prescribed by the Government under the Native Land Act of 1913, the Native Affairs Act of 1920, and the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 (Johnson, 2004, p. 119). This law was abolished and in 1994 South Africa became a democracy. With the new democracy in government came in principle more freedom for schools to adopt different leadership styles that are relevant to their school context. Schools are struggling to cope with a democratic approach as the leadership styles adopted previously were more authoritarian and hierarchical, especially since little professional development and training has been given to principals and school management teams (SMT) on how to adopt a more collaborative, democratic and inclusive way of leading. The SMTs in the various schools where I have worked have been made up of a principal and the deputy principals. Sometimes, heads of departments, phase heads or specialists may be part of the team as well. These teams meet at least once a week and, amongst other duties, they draw up policies, make decisions and discuss the general running of a school.

The SMTs have a direct impact on the leadership and leadership potential of the rest of the school as well as the pedagogies that are used in the school as decisions are made by the SMTs. Much of the SMT's attitude is determined by the leader and the leadership style that is adopted or practised within a school. In a democratic society, like South Africa aspires to be, the pressure is on the principal to model a democratic, inclusive, collaborative leadership style. Robin Sharma

[1] Black refers to South African citizens who are of African , Asian and Coloured origin.

(2011)[2] maintains that the main job that a leader has is to develop new leaders. If this is done, then the leadership of the school is more sustainable, the power and authority is shared and the culture of leading, no matter what your title, could pervade the whole school. The SMT meetings, if run democratically, including the various voices of the SMT members could be the forum to develop leadership capacity within the school.

The South African education environment is one of diversity and complexity. It will take a lot of work to transform schools into caring, creative and collaborative environments. For a democracy, this kind of thinking needs to be developed. I suspect that developing this kind of thinking depends on the leadership styles and this needs to be researched. As a teacher and a member of the SMT I began to question the leadership styles that were used by the SMT in the various schools that I worked in. I felt the need for a change in the leadership style of my school, from a relatively authoritarian approach to leadership to a democratic, collaborative approach. I did not feel as though my contributions were heard enough and I felt that decisions were made unilaterally. For example, the discipline policy of the school was changed by the principal. The SMT members, teachers, parents and learners were informed as to what the changes were. We were not asked for suggestions or our opinions and I felt that the process was undemocratic and the changes did not consider the moral implications of such changes. Many would argue that the principal is ultimately responsible for the decisions taken and I would agree to an extent, but decisions that have been critically explored with others are bound to be better thought through and have taken into consideration more perspectives and therefore arguably of better quality. However, such a shift in power might not be welcome by everyone.

[2] I heard Robin Sharma present in CapeTown on the 24th February 2013 on "Lead without a Title". Sharma is an American motivational speaker, coach and writer who travels the world speaking about leadership.

A school is a site of power struggle, but as Murris and Haynes (2011, p. 287) argue change is possible through critical pedagogues who "…value freedom of expression for students and seek an active role for learners in the social production of meaning in the classroom". They suggest Philosophy for Children (P4C) as a possible approach to teaching and learning to address change also beyond classrooms to include staffrooms and boardrooms, in fact to all situations where people make decisions. I was introduced to the pedagogy of P4C pedagogy in 2010, as part of a Masters degree. The pedagogy is called the community of enquiry (CoE) method and focuses on engaging learners in critical, caring and creative thinking as part of a democratic process of decision making. The process was enlightening in many respects. For example, the answers and conclusions reached were always open to further discussion in the light of new thinking or evidence. There was openness to it and there was a lack of authoritarianism even though the lecturer was fully in control of the process, ie she was in authority. Instead, the method focussed on the *process* rather than the *product* in the first instance, although the product is certainly also important. However I learned that democratic and well thought through decisions can take time. The learning environment of this Masters course encouraged critical thinking, and encouraged ethical decision making with a clear values base. I began to think that the SMTs in which I worked could benefit from such a methodology, with its emphasis on inclusivity and diversity – so important for democratic organisations. I started to speculate that the CoE might help address some of the inequalities of the past. The CoEs that I engaged in during the Masters course, I experienced as real communities with people working and thinking together, often in disagreement, but respectfully enquiring into the philosophical issues of the topics at hand. We were more than a collection of individuals working towards consensus or compromise. Instead we explored the values and principles that members of the community brought to our enquiries and deeper conversations took place about the moral issues, and reflexively about the decision

making processes involved and the impact these decisions might have on the various stakeholders.

The CoE seemed to put relationships right at the top of the agenda rather than working on them in a haphazard way. There was a real sense of shared authority in a CoE, which impressed me, and I began to think of the possibilities of this approach to transform the authoritarian style of school leadership I have so become accustomed to in my professional career. I also speculated that if a school management team makes decisions everyone believes in, they will also be longer lasting and more effective.

National Context

As mentioned previously, the new democracy in government brought with it more freedom for schools to adopt different leadership styles that are relevant to their school context. Schools are struggling to cope with a democratic approach as the leadership styles adopted previously were more authoritarian and hierarchical. School management teams (SMTs) are expected to adopt a more collaborative, democratic and inclusive way of leading, with little or no training.

The South African education environment is one of diversity and complexity. It will take a lot of work to transform schools into democratic, caring, creative and collaborative environments. For a democracy, this kind of thinking needs to be developed. I suspect that developing this kind of thinking depends on the leadership styles and this needs to be researched.

Problem Statement

Given the history of South Africa and the education system in South Africa, I decided to research new ideas and methodologies to create teams that are more creative and collaborative. As I was not in a position at the time of starting my research project to test this possibility empirically, I decided to do a conceptual study of these issues.

Research Questions

To explore this idea, my main research question is:

How can the CoE methodology be used to help make the decision making processes of a school management team (SMT) in South Africa more inclusive, democratic, effective and collaborative?

My main sub questions that my conceptual research will answer are:

- What is the CoE methodology and how do its democratic values link with the decision making process of an SMT?
- What is the purpose of the SMT and what are the different leadership styles that are currently operational in South African Schools?
- What would a thought experiment look like to investigate the limitations, challenges and benefits of using the CoE for SMT meetings?

Structure of the Report

In order to answer my questions I will in chapter two, review some key literature on the CoE methodology that focuses on decision making process and its democratic and other moral values. In chapter three I will engage in a literature review on the various leadership styles that could be operating in South African schools at present. In chapter four, I will engage in a thought experiment to see whether the CoE methodology could be used by SMTs in South Africa. In chapter five I will explicitly revisit the questions in these introductory chapters and summarise my findings.

CHAPTER TWO: The Community of Enquiry

Introduction

This chapter will serve as a literature review of the Community of Enquiry (CoE). A brief history of Philosophy for Children (P4C) will be described which was a substantial project that Matthew Lipman began where he looked at using the discipline of philosophy as a resource to help children become more curious, critical, creative and reasonable. He developed an entire curriculum for 3-18 year olds consisting of specially written novels and manuals for teachers (Fisher, 1998). He further developed with colleagues at the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) the CoE methodology, which he suggested should be used in classrooms to teach philosophy to children.

Particular attention will be paid to the democratic values that underpin a CoE, in particular the values of equality, justice and freedom will be discussed with specific reference to the South African context. In a CoE the teacher moves away from her traditional role and is rather a facilitator of enquiries that evolve around topics of interest raised by the learners themselves. The importance of this role cannot be overemphasised as the skills of the facilitator to facilitate enquiries well are key to a successful CoE.

The types of questioning that are encouraged in a CoE are also discussed at great length in this chapter and connections are made with the notion of reasonableness, in the context of decisions and behaviour.

The chapter will finish with the practise of a CoE focusing on the democratic values and the different thinking and other tools that the facilitator has at her or his disposal to help members of a community of enquiry build on each other's' ideas.

Origins of the community of enquiry

Philosophy for children

In the late sixties, at a time of social, cultural and political unrest in America, Matthew Lipman taught philosophy to university students at Columbia University. He noticed that these students generally had problems with thinking critically, inquiring about philosophical questions and forming reasonable judgments. Lipman deduced that although children were capable of thinking critically, schools did not encourage and nurture their capabilities, but instead were creating passive learners who expected to be told what to think (Lipman, 2003).

A South African teacher educator and vice chancellor at the University of Free State Jonathan Jansen argues that,

> when students initiate a question, the familiar impulse of the educator is to anticipate and correct, respond and direct an answer toward the goals of the lesson. This representation of the teacher as the authority who knows all and who controls the classroom is routinely presumed in texts and manuals on classroom management and student discipline. It is especially the case that when controversial questions or difficult subjects emerge, the teacher is even more attentive to 'managing' the classroom situation lest things get out of control (Jansen, 2009, p. 263)

Despite our new democratically elected government, teachers were and still are afraid to lose control of their learners and encouraging critical thinking would not help maintain control. Similarly much earlier in the US of the early 70s, Lipman launched the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) at Montclair State University in response to the lack of critical thinking skills apparent in graduates from the American education system (Ndofirepi, 2011). Lipman began thinking of using the discipline of philosophy as a resource to help children become more intellectually energetic, curious, critical, creative and reasonable (Fisher, 1998). In his experience as a professor of philosophy, he thought that the discipline of philosophy encouraged questioning, open mindedness and critical thinking. Lipman was convinced that philosophy was a rich resource for education and for self-sustainable thinking because it enables thinking around the relationships between facts and values and encouraged questioning of values of democracy, equality, social justice, freedom and fairness as well as responsibility. Lipman's aim was not to turn children into philosophers necessarily, but he wanted to help children become more reflective, reasonable and considerate human beings (Fisher, 1998). These concepts and ideas will be explored throughout the chapter.

Philosophy for children, or P4C for short, was the title Professor Matthew Lipman gave to his specially written curriculum that uses the discipline of philosophy as a resource to help children think for themselves in a time of social conflict, where they were surrounded by competing values (Fisher, 1998). Lipman's aim was to establish P4C as part of the curriculum in US public

schools. This goal has not come to fruition in USA ,but there is growing interest in practising P4C in Australia, Europe and Latin America (Vansieleghem and Kennedy, 2011, p. 171). They base this opinion on the fact that there is a growing number of curriculum materials published on P4C as well as the numerous workshops and teacher training courses that are dedicated to the implementation of P4C in schools.

The Community of Enquiry

The concept 'community of inquiry' was originally coined by Charles Saunders Pierce and referring then to scientific enquiry only (Ndofirepi, 2011). Following Pierce, John Dewey expanded the idea of a community of inquiry to teaching and learning (Morehouse, 2012). Lipman, influenced by the philosophy of Socrates, Dewey and Pierce, suggested the community of inquiry as the correct pedagogy of P4C, because of its *experiential* dimensions. The classroom is seen as a community that *practices* creative and critical thinking whilst encouraged children to think collaboratively in a caring manner.

In P4C, three kinds of thinking are central. Phillips (2011, p. 27) draws on Lipman's explanations of these three 'Cs'. Lipman states that to think *critically* we need to apply to our thinking the rules, standards, reasons and criteria that are reasonable and appropriate to it. When thinking *creatively* we are looking at different ways of expressing ourselves, going beyond the way we used to think in the past and propose unprecedented, innovative ideas. Lipman considers *caring* thinking as attending to and valuing what we consider to be important. With this caring comes a strong link with responsibility. The members of a CoE are responsible for their own actions, and for the consequences of these actions. They would need to behave responsibly towards the other members of the community, towards the CoE process and for the philosophical quality of the results of the collective enquiry. They would also be responsible for the possible effects deriving from the practical fulfilment of specific decisions taken at a collective level (Tibaldeo, 2010, p. 7). Responsibile means to be accountable for the decisions one makes.

The community would include participants who are caring yet critical, a creative group of collaborators who would be participate in a dialogue, not merely a conversation or discussion. According to Lipman (2003, pp. 87, 88), in a conversation there is a reciprocity of thoughts and ideas without necessarily challenging ideas or perceptions. It can include an exchange of feelings and understanding. A dialogue on the other hand is an exchange of ideas where disequilibrium is

encouraged. With every argument there is a counter-argument. There is a mutual exploration, investigation and enquiry.

Lipman (2003, pp. 20,21) elaborates on this by clarifying that a CoE is not a mere discussion but in fact follows a particular procedure whereby:

> 'Students listen to one another with respect, build on one another's ideas, challenge one another to supply reasons for otherwise unsupported opinions, assist each other in drawing inferences from what has been said, and seek to identify one another's assumptions'.

In discussions and dialogue one needs to make judgements, where members of the CoE would need to weigh the pros and cons of any particular position or idea and make decisions according to the amount of evidence they have gathered. Splitter and Sharp (1995, p. 13) suggests that this ability to make well-reasoned judgements require us to examine our attitudes, values and behaviour. They suggest that making judgements involves reflecting on our experiences and we need to alter our thinking where necessary- a process that they suggest may be called an 'enquiry'. Fisher (1998, p. 55) claims that becoming a participant of a community of enquiry boosts a participant's self-esteem, intellectual confidence and helps them participate in a reasoned discussion. He says that it achieves this by creating an environment where learners feel free to investigate personal issues of concern, develop their own views, explore and challenge other people's views. It also helps them be clearer in their thinking, reasoning and judgements while respecting and listening to each other. It seems then that by engaging with one's peers in a respectful, meaningful way, engaging in a deliberative enquiry around issues that are relevant to the community, participants may become secure enough to make well-reasoned arguments and judgements.

The CoE approach focuses on refining participants' powers of detailed analysis and their ability to reach judgements through communication and collaboration. The process of CoE focuses on fostering the art of speaking, questioning and reasoning where one takes responsibility for one's actions as well as one's thoughts. As mentioned previously, this is considered as caring thinking.

There is an understanding that power or authority is shared more equally amongst all members of the community as a result of strengthening the processes of communication and cooperation (Vansieleghem and Kennedy, 2011). So by belonging to such a community, the authors believed that participants could learn from one another, authority is more shared and the idea is that the skills and knowledge gained from the process are internalised and called upon in other situations – the external dialogue (enquiry with others) becomes internal dialogue (enquiry with oneself).

There is a need for a greater sharing of power and authority in order to enable more of an equal opportunity for people to participate in CoE (Brubaker, 2011). The conventional notion of a teacher being the authority is altered and in an effective CoE, the role of the teacher is to facilitate a process, in which everyone takes responsibility for their behaviour and the process, as well as the philosophical quality of the results of the CoE. It is therefore possible for each CoE to shift and negotiate authority (Brubaker, 2011) – not every CoE is the same as the political and moral character of the group will influence the levels of participation and negotiation of the individuals in each group.

This sharing of power is necessary as it encourages contributions and participation by the members of a CoE. Participation may consist of a combination of reasoning, inquiry, concept formation, and translation (Echeverria, 2007, p. 242). Oddleifson (1994) when referring to the need for art education in schools agrees with Echeverria and adds that knowledge is not acquired passively but constructed actively. So instead of simply listening to a teacher teaching and informing their learners, or engaging in a conversation, Oddleifson claims that they would learn much more by doing, experimenting, experiencing and engaging in a rigorous dialogue with peers rather than accepting knowledge from the teacher.

Democratic Values focused in a community of enquiry

Sheppard, Ashcraft and Larson (2011, p. 70) refer to Carr's metaphor of a 'thin' and 'thick' democracy where the former refers to a democracy where the people vote for someone who will represent them whereas the latter is a deeper level of participation. A participatory democracy means that people are actively involved in challenging the current state of affairs. Barber (1984, p. 147) makes further distinction between a 'liberal democracy' and 'participatory democracy'. Barber is critical of liberal democracy on two accounts "(a) that the only

participation of the people is during voting and (b) that certain individual rights are beyond deliberation and discussion. Barber argues for a 'strong' democracy where individual rights need to be examined, discussed and deliberated upon. John Dewey (1916, p. 87) made his own distinctions between the political and social dimensions of democracy. He thought that democracy was more than a form of government; it is a style of living together, a conjoint communicative experience, which was the notion that Lipman used when developing Philosophy for Children and in particular, the community of enquiry.

Pablo Cevallos-Estrellas (2000) argues that there is a general consensus amongst people who work with the COE methodology that it fosters democratic dispositions in children. As mentioned earlier, Kelly (1995) argues that one of the most important outcomes of education in a democratic society is to prepare learners for their role and responsibilities that they have to take on once they reach maturity and to get them to understand that participatory democracy includes moral principles such as freedom and equality of opportunity. Fisher (1998, p. 55) agrees with Kelly but goes further to indicate that a community of enquiry would help participants develop the skills that will enable them to "play their full part in a pluralistic and democratic society". Drawing on Banks's work Sheppard et al (2011) suggest that educators should help learners to be become more active citizens, who would take action and responsibility for promoting social justice which may include challenging existing authorities. A CoE challenges the traditional power play between learners and teacher. It follows, therefore, that if we have this expectation for learners, this will only work if the adults in this context are democrats as well. So are adults prepared for their democratic role and responsibilities? Do they know that participatory democracy includes moral principles and do they understand what this means in practice? Are they willing to hand over power to their learners? These and other questions will be discussed in chapter 4. First, we need to look at the values that are assumed, encouraged and developed in a community of enquiry that could enable a democratic society. In a Deweyan sense, a CoE is a democratic society at a micro level.

Cevallos-Estrellas (2000, p. 53) states that the basic building blocks of the CoE are respect, empathy, participation and equality. There are various ways that a participant can show respect for each other but a simple way would be to listen to each other without interrupting and by not using language that would cause the speaker to shut down and not participate. To empathise

with one another would be the ability to see a situation from the other person's point of view. This can be done by various members helping to clarify certain concepts or to encourage the speaker. Participation is not the same for everyone. Some people are more verbal and can articulate what they are feeling and experiencing whilst others are more contemplative. To be quiet may not always be seen as not participating as the person could be rethinking their original opinion or may be participating more than she usually does. She would need to trust the community and this could be a good indicator of how well the CoE is working. Equality could mean different things, it could mean ensuring that every members' vote on a matter counts the same or, more deeply, encouraging deliberation and debate and allowing many voices to be heard. The right to equality usually has to be coerced from the advantaged by the disadvantaged. Traditionally the role of the teacher serves to give her more authority and time to speak and her opinions could be taken as fact. The skill would be for the teacher to take on a role of facilitator and for her to encourage the participants to to direct their responses to other members of the community. Equality between the sexes, different race groups and religious groups and cultures are difficult to achieve in practice but the community would need to work really hard to adhere to this value as well as the others. These values help to create a moral culture in the community and help to create a safe place where they can share what they think and feel.

In addition to the building blocks in a community, the values of an enquiry should also be considered. Cevallos-Estrellas (2000, p. 54) includes curiosity, creativity, reasoning, freedom, fallibilism and pluralism as values to be considered. One may argue that it is not possible for these values to be obviously present at all times but may often be lying underneath various forms of social interaction.

Democratic Values focused on in a community of enquiry in South Africa

Prior to 1994, South African law divided the population into four major racial categories: Africans (black), whites, coloureds, and Asians. After much struggle and political unrest this law has been abolished. Many South Africans, however, still seem to view themselves and each other according to these categories. Black Africans comprise about 80% of the population and are divided into a number of different ethnic groups. Whites comprise just over 9% of the population. Coloureds are mixed-race people that comprise about 9% of the total population. Asians are descended from Indian workers brought to South Africa in the mid-19th century to

work on the sugar estates in Natal. They constitute about 2.7% of the population. Under the apartheid system schools were segregated, and the quantity and quality of education varied significantly across racial groups (Meintjes, 2005). The laws governing this segregation have since been abolished, but the long and difficult process of restructuring the country's educational system is continuing. The present challenge is to create a single, non-discriminatory, non-racial system that offers the same standards of education to all people.

The importance of values in a community and during an enquiry especially in education is stressed in a manifesto that was proposed by Kader Asmal and Wilmot James and a team of diverse thinkers (2001)[3]. The manifesto summarizes sixteen strategies for instilling democratic values in young South Africans in the learning environment. The authors reiterate that the intention is not to impose these values on the community, but rather to generate discussion and debate, and to acknowledge that "discussion and debate are values in themselves". Fisher (1998) would agree, but emphasises that these values cannot be taught didactically as, if this teaching methodology is used, the values may not necessarily become internalised. He suggests that these fundamental values can only become intrinsic if people are regularly involved in a CoE.

The strategies proposed in the above manifesto are too detailed and beyond the scope of this research, but I will comment on the values that the authors deem necessary in South African schools, as it is key to my discussion. In their vision of a society based on equality, justice and freedom for all, Asmal and James, like Kelly (1995), assume a notion of a democracy that needs to engage critically with itself, with social justice and equality where the belief exists that access to education is crucial to alleviate poverty. Just like Kelly (1995) they insist that schools need to produce citizens that are educated in their role and responsibilities to themselves, their families and the country. Children would need to contribute positively to the economy and in doing so, help alleviate poverty. Although it is true that democracy flourishes in societies that are economically viable (Klinker, 2006), it is unrealistic to expect schools to alleviate poverty. Schools can attempt to educate children in an environment that is largely democratic where the values

[3] A group of people consisting of Wilmot James, Frans Auerbach, Zubeida Desai, Hermann Giliomee, Pallo Jordan, Antjie Krog,Tembile Kulati, Khetsi Lehoko, Brenda Leibowitz and Pansy Tlakula, produced a short monograph by the title of Values, Education & Democracy in mid-2000 for Professor Kader Asmal.

of a democracy are explicit in the teaching methodologies and curriculum followed but cannot be solely accountable for creating democratic beings. This task needs to be shared between schools, the government and the community.

The manifesto refers to the value of equality where non-racism, non-sexism and Ubuntu (Human Dignity) are pivotal, especially in the South African Schools context with our complex history. Enslin and Horsthemke (2004, p. 547) cite Makgoba as saying that Ubuntu is unique in that it fosters a respect for the environment, individuals and others; it transcends race and culture and it must deliver freedom with opportunities while addressing values and cultural systems. CoE values equality fosters respect for all and attempts to transcend race and culture.

In summary as argued in this chapter so far, a CoE fosters democratic skills and attitudes that are appropriate for the building of a more democratic society. An environment that is conducive to this kind of interaction is necessary to ensure participation from the various members. This means that it would be imperative that care is taken to structure and adopt boundaries that extend rather than limit participation in dialogue (Haynes, 2007).

The Practice of CoE

Role of the facilitator

A community of enquiry is difficult to define, especially as each CoE is unique – it is shaped democratically by the participants who are guided by the facilitator, who is at the same time co-enquirer. There are some regulating ideas that help describe a CoE. For example, participants strive to establish a 'community' that is characterised by a sense of trust, cooperation, safety, care and a sense of purpose – and 'inquiry' which suggests finding out more about an issue or situation that is ambiguous and vague and eventually culminating in some kind of judgement (Splitter & Sharp, 1995, p. 57). Although it was suggested that people would modify the process of running a CoE to suit their own context, some guidance, in the form of tools is given to someone who wants to run a CoE. There are numerous resources and courses available that help to guide people who would like to engage in a CoE with teams they work in or with children in their classes.

Once the facilitator is trained in running CoEs she may attempt to run one of her own. The children (in this case) would sit in a circle facing each other. This arrangement allows every person to see every other person, their faces, their gestures, and their body language. This arrangement also ensures that all members are equal in terms of position and authority. In a classroom CoE, the learner achieving the highest marks is indistinguishable from the ones not performing as well as others. There is an equal opportunity to contribute, participate and share ideas. An astute facilitator would try to draw out the learners who are usually shy and subtly restrain the learners who are constantly contributing. This would help ensure that everyone feels as though they are being heard and not restricted by the louder, more articulate members of the CoE. A circle does not have a beginning or end and there is no hierarchy. The teacher also sits in the circle, reinforcing the lack of hierarchy amongst its members. Initially, the teacher takes on the role of a facilitator. As the CoE progresses and learners become more confident, they will become co-facilitators.

The facilitator plays the essential role of *enabler*. Brubaker (2012, p. 245) states that,

> Facilitation is very complex. It's not just about coming in and doing what you want to do, if you want to do it really well, and you want people to be excited, you have to be sensitive to what they're actually saying, and what they're bringing to the discussion.

The facilitator by not insisting on fixed answers and predetermined conclusions could encourage and allow participants to think creatively and be open to ideas that they may not have thought about or previously approved of. The facilitator would need to explicitly address the problem of criticizing as this could be a major deterrence to contributions being made by the members. When interviewed by Steve Williams (2004, p. 9), Guy Claxton insists that one must criticise the idea, not the person. This is important if we want to ensure that participants in the community will continue to be open and honest and continue to share ideas with each other.

The facilitator could focus on certain skills and attitudes that would build the cooperative character of the community of inquiry. These skills and attitudes are: listening to others; building on the discussion points of the previous speaker; identifying and questioning assumptions;

recognizing contradictions; making distinctions and connections; correcting one's own thinking; caring for the procedures of inquiry (Lipman, 2003). To allow these skills and attitudes to come to the fore, the facilitator would need to help the community draw up a boundary agreement. CoE boundaries and ground rules are set at the beginning of each enquiry and one key rule is to respect each other, by allowing a participant to speak without any interruptions. This creates a safer environment for each person to contribute and participate in the various activities and discussions that would ensue. Boundaries and ground rules are essential in any discussion so as to create a space that will be conducive to growing as individuals and sharing. This together with shared values and vision as well as a shift in authority and power could encourage deeper thinking and strengthening of the community (Brubaker, 2011). Of course in all groups there are power differences. Sharp (2007, p. 9) argues that "in all communities there is power – but not necessarily the coercive power of dominance. At its best, the CoE is characterised by creative, distributed power, the kind of power we associate with liberation". With this liberation comes a freedom to think for oneself. It encourages creativity and a curiosity that could bring about critical thinking and questioning.

Questioning in a CoE

Socrates' believed that the posing of questions was just as important as finding answers, and that knowing the answers, this certainty, reduces the chances of us finding better answers (Fisher, 1998, p. 147). Haynes (2007, p. 12) also claims that questioning is important and challenges the convention of the adults or teachers posing questions, and suggests that as children gain confidence they move from posing a question privately to an adult, to addressing the question to a community.

Whilst in the circle, people may discuss their thoughts and opinions in pairs or in little groups. They move around, so the seating arrangement is not permanent. It may be easier to talk in pairs when discussing issues that require in-depth deliberation and discussion, as controversy may arise. The discussion may be less guarded and more thorough as it is more intimate and those members that are less confident would more likely contribute. Haynes (2007, p. 12) brings to our notice a similar approach called 'circle time', which has been adopted by many primary schools in the UK, which has a similar physical setup. The emphasis during circle time is to build relationships in the class and create a space where problems that exist within the class can be talked about and dealt with constructively. So if controversies in a class arise, circle time

encourages participants to discuss the problem and attempt to find solutions to them. Thus some kind of resolution can be reached. The important differences between circle time and a CoE though is that in a CoE there is not just an expression of opinions and beliefs, but also a critical testing of ideas by asking questions, asking for clarifications and justifications.

Fisher (1998, p. 163) describes four kinds of questioning used in a community of enquiry. These are conceptual, empirical, logical and evaluative forms of questioning. The conceptual questioning or discussion will involve discussing the meaning of some concepts such as 'understanding', 'knowledge', 'meaning' and 'truth'. Often disagreement can ensue just because there is confusion or because people may have a different understanding of words. The empirical questioning requires evidence and fact. Data needs to be collected before inferences are made. Then the inferences and deductions would need to be questioned as to whether they were arrived at logically. To evaluate a deduction would be the judgements we have made about what is right or believed to be right. This brings in accountability and responsibility. What are the implications of this decision? What do we do now?

There are basically two types of questions one could ask in a CoE depending on whether one wants to ascertain facts or prompt a dialogue. They are 'closed' and 'open' questions (Fisher, 1998, p. 153). Closed questions are used when the facilitator knows the answer and is checking whether members are listening, for example. Closed questions could also be used to seek clarity. An example of closed questions would be "Do you understand?" or "Why did you do that?"

There are 'open procedural questions' where the facilitator and other participants would need to push for depth, understanding and deeper meaning by asking questions like "Could someone restate that in some other words?", "What else?", "How would that be?", "What would that situation/ behaviour look like?". 'Open substantive' questions on the other hand, are used as an invitation to the members to be creative in their replies. These are probing questions that require reasoning and judgement. An example of open questions would be "How do you know that God exists?" or "What do you think happens to you when you die?"

Open questions serve to encourage us to 'dig deep' and add rigour to the dialogue taking place in the COE. There is an underlying agreement that there is no "right" answer and that there may actually be a variety of solutions or suggestions depending on how diverse the group is. This

diversity and freedom of expression could mean that the core values of the community may be questioned in these discussions. The presumption exists that we are all ethical, moral human beings and that we will nurture each other. However, reciprocity is not automatic which means the facilitator needs to be constantly monitoring and if necessary intervening to encourage more reciprocity. Open questions also encourage members to make judgements based on reasoning and would ask people to justify their judgements and opinions.

The notion of 'reasonableness' in a community of enquiry

A democracy differs from other political systems in that the participants are actively involved in the decision making process and hence take some ownership in the decisions that are made. Participants are not just consulted, but actually participate in the decision-making. In order for a participatory democracy to work the citizens ought to be properly educated, hence the close relationship between democracy and education. Sheppard et al (2011) and Kelly (1995) suggest that education can be used to develop more active citizens who could be able to contribute to a democratic society by challenging the status quo, constantly engaging with others for the betterment of society. Sheppard et al (2011, p. 70) stress that the central features of a democracy is challenge and controversy and in understanding the virtues of controversy one has the potential to develop "democratic habits of mind". Educators who wish to engage their learners in a democratic way, who aim to foster values of democracy, should consider developing these virtues which fall into four categories. These are "conceptual virtues", "psychological virtues", "epistemic virtues" and "political virtues" (Sheppard, 2011, p. 76). Burbules (n.d, p. 86) describes virtues as being "flexible aspects of character, expressed out of our sense of self and integrity, but also fostered and encouraged by the communities and relations with others that provide the context in which we choose and act. Conceptual virtues refer to language distinctions that help us clarify concepts. Psychological virtues serve to deepen our understanding of the emotional context that we are faced with. They examine the children's and educators emotional response to a particular situation. Murris (2009, p. 16) argues that emotions are neither fixed nor can they be controlled but should rather be seen as complex judgements. She also concludes that they can be extremely informative as "our emotions are constructed through our language, our morals, our history, our culture and our thinking, and they are in constant flux". The third category is epistemic virtues which are concerned with gaining knowledge, the need to know more and this is obtained through questioning, enquiring,

researching and reading of literature that is pertaining to a particular concept. Discussions aimed at these virtues question the difference between opinion and fact, for example. They also analyse concepts such as “truth”, “right”, “moral” and “wrong”. Political virtues are concerned with the attributes of a good citizen.

Arguably, democratic citizens should be very comfortable with discussions that are controversial. In a democratic environment there is bound to be various people with various interests and views. In a democracy, there is a fostering of open minded questioning and with this will come disagreement and controversy and in working together to deal with these disagreements comes the learning. Tolerance of diversity leads to controversy which is normalised in a democracy.

Aristotle also argues that diversity and differences make a democracy richer in terms of ideas. This implies that controversy is something not to be feared, but rather should be embraced as a key component of any CoE that is democratic. Controversy forces people to justify their beliefs with strong reasons and a clarification of arguments. It provokes a more robust discussion that could generate more creative solutions and reasonable ideas.

However, it is also necessary to be clear as to what controversy means. Sheppard et al (2011) agree that an idea is only controversial if there are two conflicting reasonable views. This suggests that people may believe issues to be controversial when in fact they are not if the opposing view is unreasonable. Of course this leads to the question ‘What counts as reasonable?’ The idea of reason and reasonableness is central to the idea of a CoE. Gregory (2007, p. 161) argues that an immediate goal of a CoE is for participants to arrive at one or more reasonable judgements with regard to the question or issues they were engaged in. He also specifies that in order for a judgement to be reasonable it has to be well-informed, well-reasoned, and personally meaningful. For Gregory to be ‘well-informed’ means that information has to come from a variety of sources, from a diverse group of people who have engaged in a communal dialogue. Assuming that the CoE is made up of a diverse group, information can be gathered from the group and they could be engaged in a communal dialogue or a community of enquiry. He relies on Lipman’s triadic construction of critical, creative and caring thinking to describe well-reasoned.

For a judgement to be personally meaningful, means that the participants must have been self-critical, self-reflective and have used their own experiences and contexts to make judgements.

They would be required to question their values and morality as well. Burbules (1991, p. 90) on the other hand, selects four traits that he thinks are central to reasonableness which are objectivity, fallibilism, pragmatism, and judgement. He states that to be objective means that one has listened respectfully, sympathetically and appreciatively to alternative views, and recognizes one's own bias and limitations. To be fallible is to be open to the fact that we will make mistakes and realize that these mistakes and errors in judgement shape who we are. Gregory (2007, p. 162) talks about being fallible as well saying that individual thinking is capable of error and would be strengthened by being made accountable to a community of peers. Once we realize we are fallible we may find it easier to accept criticism and self-reflect. As seen previously, Cevallos-Estarellas believes that this a key value of an enquiry. The community in their questioning and asking for clarity would be holding its members accountable for their opinions and would require justifications. If found lacking, this opinion could be considered unreasonable.

The next trait Burbules (1991, p. 91) refers to is maintaining a pragmatic attitude which suggests a tolerance for uncertainty and imperfection and at the same time recognizing the need to confront problems and unanswered questions with intelligence, creativity and care. Judiciousness is named as an essential trait as well, as it requires a reasonable person to make judgements in various situations with varying amounts of knowledge. All of these qualities of reasonableness speak directly to what is required of members of a CoE.

Both Burbules and Gregory recognize the limitations of their theories. They also realize that the criteria are essential but may not all be met to the same degree in different situations. This means that one criterion may be fully observed whilst the others may be observed to various degrees, to a lesser extent. Burbules (1991, p. 83) state that Rorty and other pragmatists warn that it is extremely important to consider context when deciding whether a judgment is reasonable or not. Rorty also points out that a scientific approach to reason excludes the moral and political dimensions of an enquiry. Henderson (2005, p. 184) agrees that context is important and argues that the environmental, social, personal and situational contexts will influence a person's moral reasoning. This means that something that may seem reasonable in one situation may not be as reasonable in a different context or they could chose to behave morally in one situation but not in another. Henderson (2005, p. 190) reminds us that the ability to reason well does not guarantee morality. She distinguishes between an act of reason and an

act of character. An act of reason is the ability to recognize a 'right' choice and to judge our own and others actions, whereas an act of character is to choose to value morality and make a 'right' choice.

Gregory (2007, p. 160) refers to Douglas Walton's analysis of the different types of dialogue that are practiced in philosophy for children and CoE. Walton describes an enquiry as one where the participants engage in dialogue collaboratively and get together to collect and organise all the relevant information. The information is then used to prove whether a particular proposition is true or false. There is then dialogue, to gather further knowledge from each participant. This involves a questioning of each other and discussion to seek clarity. Eventually judgements are made by the various participants. The need for gathering of information is not to be underestimated as making decisions without all the relevant information could be seen as being irresponsible and detrimental to schools. The 'products' of such spiralling enquiries are 'reasonable judgments' and as such are never set in stone, but are understood as 'temporary resting places' (Lipman, 1991, pp. 17).

Progress is made in a CoE when new connections are made between something in our own experience and the meanings of central concepts in a CoE (Splitter and Sharp, 1995, p 71).

Experiencing a CoE

No two CoEs will be the same as its members, the contexts, the source material, questions will differ. However, the CoE does have a structure which arouses a spirit of challenge and debate (Splitter & Sharp, 1995, p. 6). An enquiry by nature encourages debate, dialogue, questioning, clarifying and justifying judgements and this is done in a community that is co-operative, trusting, and safe and there is a sense of purpose within this community.

As mentioned previously, the members sit in a circle facing each other. This allows all members of the CoE to be equal participants and behave democratically toward one another. The parents or teachers could be included in some of the CoE if the community wished or one could use an empty chair or two within the circle which would serve as a reminder to include the views of these stakeholders in the community. Another strategy would be to use a rope or tape to mark the space on the floor where the absent person would have sat if they were present. The facilitator will choose a stimulus, for example a story book, a picture or an article. She can

choose someone to read a paragraph at a time and go around the circle. This ensures that all members are participating as soon as possible.

The members of the community could be given a few minutes of thinking time to take in what they have just heard. They could discuss in pairs, or write on a piece of paper any feelings or thoughts that may have come to them as the text was being read. Alternatively, they could draw a picture that represents the story or the feeling that they want to express. In this way every member is actively engaged in the process.

They could then share with the rest of the community what they have said, read or drawn. With this sharing comes a generation of ideas and thoughts. The facilitator could then ask each member to write a question that they would like to work on, on a piece of paper. Participants could then be asked to work together in a group or a pair to discuss their question. They could then chose which is the question they would like to work on, thus reducing the number of questions but also practicing values of a CoE such as respect and equality. How do they respectfully decide who's question is more important? Don't they both have a right to have their question shared with the community?

Once the question is decided on, the chosen question would be written on an A4 piece of paper and placed in the centre of the circle. The members would then stand up and move around putting questions together that have similar questions or themes. This encourages debate, collaboration and discussion. People would need to justify their choices and reasons for placing certain questions together. The people who 'belonged' to those questions could work together to create a single question. The number of questions is now reduced.

The members of the CoE would be asked to vote in various ways for the question they want to work on. Participants can openly vote for the question they want to work on by a show of hands or by members standing next to the question they would like to work on. This transparent way of voting allows every member to know which question each of the others voted for. The benefit of this would be that one can quickly see or guess which values are most important to each of the members. The disadvantage is that some members may be irritated that they did not get to work on their question because their fellow small group members deserted them. The question that has the greatest number of people standing near it would be written on the board or chart and will be the focus of the enquiry.

The other method would be to face the outside of the circle placing their hands behind their backs. The facilitator would read each question and the members would vote by placing their thumbs up behind their backs for the question that they would want to work on. The advantage of this would be that the vote is confidential. The facilitator would count the number of thumbs up for each question and the one with the most thumbs up would be written on the board or chart and would be used for the enquiry. With 'blind voting' all participants of an enquiry have their eyes closed during the voting process. The idea is that students will feel less inhibited and constrained by peer pressure and will make more genuine choices. However, it also makes it possible for the teacher to change the final result of the voting process as there are no witnesses to who voted for which question.

Once the community decides on the question they want to work on, various activities follow such as talking in pairs or small groups, questioning, drawing, role playing and writing. This enquiry is more than a discussion and dialogue between participants. It is really engaging with others, questioning one's own and others' value systems. Participants build on the ideas of others and will follow the enquiry wherever it went, instead of directing it to a pre-established answer or solution. The questioning may be closed at times when definite answers are required for clarification or an explanation is required. For the most part though, the questions are open ended, shaped by logic and reasoning. Member of the CoE would need to be actively listening so as to build on the previous speaker's idea and as well as to scaffold the questions rather than redirecting the argument. Essentially, the work done in a CoE is continual; the notion of a result or final answer is of much less importance than the process; the moral and persuasive dimensions are prioritised over the primacy of facts: there is a building and deconstruction of ideas, a reconsidering and reassessment of these ideas, and then further rebuilding, drawing on new information (Splitter and Sharp, 1995, p. 19). Members are not afraid of being wrong as in being wrong one would be accountable to one's peers and learn from this 'mistake'.

Benjamin and Echeverria recognise that, not only is there interaction amongst learners, between the learners and teacher, but they are also interacting with the text and critically evaluating both the text and author (1992). Whilst doing this they could recognise or become aware of another dialogue, namely their own internal dialogue (the conversation they have with themselves whilst thinking). Participants begin to question their own beliefs, thoughts, morals, values and principles. This may lead to conflict within themselves as well as self-evaluation and self-

examination. For example a member could think that they would never abort a foetus under any circumstances. During the CoE some members would agree and others would take a different viewpoint. If the opposing argument is discussed, analysed, well-reasoned and logical, some of the members may change their opinion. This may not sit well with them as it could go against their religion, core beliefs and values and they would be reluctant to admit that they have changed their opinion. This requires a safe, encouraging environment (that of a 'community'). Otherwise participants would be reluctant to voice their opinions, let alone change them. It does not follow, however, that participants in a CoE have to agree with each other. A CoE is not a community of 'conformity'. Participants are encouraged to disagree with the others and to put forward conflicting points of view as this is what makes a CoE rich and democratic as democracy is built on controversy and challenge (Sheppard et al, 2011, p. 70)

Summary

Matthew Lipman started the project called the Philosophy for Children to attempt to teach children to be critical thinkers and ethical decision makers. In doing this he developed the methodology called the CoE which allowed children to sit together in a circle and discuss issues of concern. Whilst collaborating with each other in a critical, creative and caring manner, they would learn to think. This is very different from the traditional method of teaching where children were passive acceptors of knowledge rather than active gathers of knowledge.

CoE fosters democratic values such as equality, justice and freedom and helps to build a democratic society which attempts to make reasonable judgements and quality decisions. Chapter 3 will look at the various leadership styles and discuss which of these styles would be conducive to run a CoE.

CHAPTER THREE: Leadership

Introduction

Schools are organisations which are made up of people and people need to be organised and led. The SMT are key players in any school, affecting the level of professionalism and morale of teachers and learners, the school's relationship with the community, and the overall climate of learning. A strong and sustainable leadership development and support system for the SMT could make a significant contribution to providing South African children with a meaningful education.

Who makes up the School Management Team and what is its purpose

The South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 called for the formalization of School Management Teams in South African schools. This decentralisation of decision making in schools enabled broader participation in the decision making process by those who worked within the school. The SMTs in the various schools where I have worked have been made up of a principal and the deputy principals. Sometimes, heads of departments, phase heads or specialists may be part of the team as well. These teams meet at least once a week and amongst other duties they draw up policies, make decisions and discuss the general running of a school. The members of this team are tasked with managing the staff as well as lead the team to work towards fulfilling the vision of the school.

The terms 'management' and 'leadership' are often used interchangeably even though they mean different things. Using these terms interchangeably diminishes the separate attributes and responsibilities that these roles may have. The duties and responsibilities of leaders and managers differ and they may look at their role in the school through different lenses (Clarke, 2007). While the terms 'management' and 'leadership' are related, they serve different purposes in a school environment. Kotter distinguishes management from leadership by saying that management is about coping with complexity, whereas leadership is about coping with change (2001, p. 86). Henry Mintzberg (2008) further describes a manager as someone who would 'develop peer relationships, carry out negotiations, motivate subordinates, resolve conflicts, establish information networks and disseminate information, make decisions with little or ambiguous information and allocate resources'. These skills that managers have differ but are complementary to the skills of a leader. Leaders should also have these responsibilities but do not need to *control* the team but rather *influence* them. Alban and Alimo Metcalfe describe

leaders as people who are inspirational, able to motivate, can facilitate change and build a shared vision (2003). In short, an effective manager deals with operational matters and is able to create a stable environment in which learners and teachers are able to achieve learning. By comparison, a leader is a facilitator, looking to improve, change and set the direction in which they think the school ought to go.

Bearing this in mind, I will refer to the SMT members as having responsibilities for both the leadership and management of their schools. SMT's include people who manage and lead and I make the assumption that each member will assume roles of *both* manager and leader, depending on what is required of them in different situations.

In past 19 years, since the establishment of universal suffrage and a new democracy, schools in South Africa have needed to undergo radical change caused by changes in philosophies and politics, amongst other things. Heller (1998) maintains that in order to gain advantage one needs to take a proactive approach to change, which is difficult for most people but especially people who have been working in schools during the apartheid era where people were used to being told what to do and how to do it. This is perhaps true of other countries as well but in South Africa there were many policies and laws forcefully imposed on us.

What is the history of school leadership and management decision making in South Africa?

The struggle facing South Africa after 1994 has been to deal with the remnants of the apartheid era, which adopted segrationist social and education policies. These policies allowed white minorities to choose where they lived while black South Africans were required to live and work in areas prescribed by the Government under the Native Land Act of 1913, the Native Affairs Act of 1920, and the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 (Johnson, 2004, p. 119). According to Johnson (2004), these three Acts were the foundation of white supremacy and therefore of black marginalisation in South Africa. He goes on to say that they have had lasting effects on both educational and social infrastructure which included ineffective leadership and management practices in many public schools, especially those in historically black areas. In addition to the subjugation of blacks, Williams (2011) adds that female teachers were excluded from fulfilling meaningful roles as leaders at school level. In this same article the African National Congress Education Department stated in 1994 that the main purpose of the education system prior to

1994 was to reduce and restrict participation to ensure political control. The general consensus amongst various authors is that the schools were characterised as hierarchical, authoritarian and bureaucratic systems that mirrored the various education departments (Atkinson, Wyatt & Senkhane, 1993, p. 4). As a result of this approach to leadership, school leaders learned by "trial and error" (Ramdass, 1987, p. 169) and by emulating other school leaders (Theron and Bothma, 1990, p. 86) thus continuing the hierarchical, authoritarian and bureaucratic leadership styles of the time. This meant that most if not all decisions were taken by one person as opposed to a more collaborative and democratic "team" approach. This hierarchical, top down approach to leadership could be a major obstacle in running a CoE in SMTs as a bureaucratic non-leadership mind-set might persist in those expected to lead. More will be said about this in chapter four.

One of the most significant events that occurred after the 1994 election of Nelson Mandela was the drawing up and adoption of a new constitution which called for democracy, equal citizenship and the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms. As Education is the backbone of any country and the foundation for creating competent citizenship, one of the major Acts to be adopted was the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996. This act brought about the formalization of SMTs in South African schools as well as the creation of School Governing Bodies (SGBs). This devolution of decision making in schools in South Africa enabled broader participation in the decision making process by those who worked within the school. In this same year a national task team made deliberate proposals for education management capacity, including a self-management approach to schools supporting the idea of teacher leadership for the new dispensation (Department of Education, 1996). There was a further deliberate move from the belief that principals were solely responsible for the leadership and management of the school to a more collaborative, democratic team approach. Many of the policy documents drafted, including the South African Schools Act (1996) and the more recent Draft Policy Framework: Education Leadership and Management Development (undated) stress a more democratic, collaborative team approach to leadership, management and decision making. It should be stated that this Draft Policy Framework has been written more than ten years ago but is still a draft. It is accessible to anyone who wants to read and implement the ideas it contains but is by no means a working document.

Schiavo, Mille and Busey (2008) tells us that teacher leaders may take on various roles where they would work independently or alongside members of the SMT and may assume instructional or managerial responsibilities. These roles can be separated into three categories namely: *Leadership of the instructional program* where teacher leaders may be called upon to lead the decision making process with regard to the design and planning of the school instructional program. The second category involves *collaborating* with the SMT where they may be viewed as an authority on subject matter content and classroom pedagogy. Lastly teacher leaders may assume responsibilities for *general operations* that would typically fall to the SMT.

Teams and new approaches to leading and managing schools?

The South African Schools Act has had numerous implications for schools. Stott and Walker (1999, p. 52) state that the major advantage of creating SMTs would be that the SMT and teachers to a lesser extent would have more control over the decision-making process as well as more control over their working environment. Stott and Walker also claim that teams can solve problems more creatively than individual leaders. Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008, pp. 229-230) concur and add to this the fact that it enabled the principal to share the load, empowered staff and encouraged their development and increased participation. Another remarkable feature noted by these two authors in their research was that this approach encouraged "site-based policy development" which would be unique and address the particular needs of the individual schools.

The disadvantages of this team management approach are not to be ignored. One such drawback is that there is a shift in the position of accountability. This could be problematic because even though the principal is ultimately responsible for decisions taken, it may be difficult to pin point where a problem began and therefore may be difficult to rectify the situation or prevent it from happening again.

Furthermore, working in teams is not unproblematic. When many people are working together there is an overload of information and the process of dealing with this information may be overwhelming. Processes need to therefore be put into place to receive, contribute and process this information. Moreover, working with many people increases the diversity in terms of race,

gender and cultural backgrounds. With this diversity comes numerous relationship problems and dealing with this could be time consuming and emotionally draining.

A change from a more traditional way of making decisions to one that has a more collaborative; team approach requires more than a group of people being in the same room at the same time, discussing an issue. Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008, pp. 229-230) argue that working as a team would therefore require major shifts in thinking and would need favourable conditions of both a structural and cultural nature to flourish. They suggest that "structural" refers to the logistical arrangements that need to be made to allow for this teamwork to occur and "cultural" refers to the culture and climate of the school.

These were important and long awaited policies but Principals and other members of the SMT felt bombarded with new documents and had the onerous task of making sense of these and then implementing changes. Add to this the fact that very little appropriate leadership development and training was offered to teachers and principals. This served to slow progress even more (Williams, 2011). In fact, Mangena (2002), the Deputy Minister of Education in South Africa at the time, admitted that:

> "No matter how progressive and globally competitive our education policies, they will remain meaningless if we do not have adequately trained motivated and dedicated personnel to implement at the point of service delivery."

This and many other factors such as addressing the educational legacy of the past, including ineffective education systems, attitudes towards school principals and, specifically, education management practices show that South Africa is on a path of transformation that is extremely slow (Moloi, 2007). But the Department of Education, in its recent attempts to address some of these problems, states clearly that,

> effective management and leadership, articulated with well-conceived, structured and planned needs-driven management and leadership development, is the key to transformation in South African education (DoE, 2004).

The process of developing SMTs is therefore on the agenda of the Educational Department and although the process is slow, it is moving forward. Working in a team as commented on previously has many dimensions and approaches and these approaches and leadership styles would have to be tailored to suit individual schools and its team members.

When investigating team leadership, Burke, Stagl, Klein, Salas and Halpino (2006, p. 289) suggested that there were two leadership styles that may be used. The first one is more task driven with a more functional approach to a problem. This approach would include the following broad categories: (1) information search and structuring, (2) information use in problem solving, (3) managing personnel resources, and (4) managing material resources (Fleishman, Mumford, Zaccaro, Levin, Korotkin and Hein, 1991). The leader would follow the categories mentioned above and make a decision, usually independently without consulting the other members of the SMT as the focus is on the task not necessarily on inclusivity and relationship building. In fact these decisions are often decisions which relate to the daily operations of an organization (Bass as cited in Williams, 2011). The numerous interactions that take place on a daily basis is the result of operational decisions, which have measurable results, and could therefore make a school ineffective. To prevent this, operational decisions should be consistent with strategic decisions. Operational decisions should not be made all the time because it is time consuming. They should therefore be made after the SMT and other key people agree on strategic plans for the school. This leads us to strategic decisions which consider the entire organization. Strategy involves making major changes for the organization and recognizing that the school environment is dynamic and will continue to evolve. Williams cites Bass as undertaking that the objective of making strategic decisions is to implement policy that aims to move the organization toward its long-term goals while taking into account an organization's resources, threats to it and available opportunities. Making strategic decisions is always risky because these are decisions that will affect the future and its effect cannot be monitored immediately. It is of paramount importance then that the task approach described previously, not be used.

An alternative approach proposed by Hackman and cited by Burke et al (2006:289) is a team and process driven approach whereby the leader takes the role of *enabler*, through the creation of conditions conducive to team effectiveness. These conditions were described by Burke as follows: teams must be “real” and he suggests that a real team is one that has a task with clear

boundaries, specified authority to manage work processes, and some degree of membership stability. The team must have "compelling direction" which refers to a direction which is seen as challenging, clear, and significant. The team requires an enabling structure, ie a structure that is encouraging and pastoral rather than discouraging and punitive. In the next chapter I will analyse in much detail a critical episode from my practise to illustrate the difference between these approaches more clearly.

As the South African education system is in the process of transformation, let's consider the various styles of leadership adopted in schools from both an international and South African perspective.

What are the various styles of leadership adopted in schools from both an international and South African perspective?

In the UK, successful leadership is seen by many researchers and practitioners as being a key constituent in achieving school improvement (OFSTED, 2000). School improvement refers to the operation of the school, the environment of the school and ultimately the results achieved by learners in the school. Harris states that her research, which included schools from diverse countries and different school contexts, have revealed the powerful impact of leadership in securing school development and change. From this research she also concludes that a range of leadership styles are usually used by a single principal depending on the situation and issues that are being faced at the time.

Ron Boehme (1989) says there are two types of leadership in the world: the leadership of domination and the leadership of servant hood. Leadership of domination refers to leading by controlling, manipulating and perhaps even coercing people into doing what the leaders wants. Servant hood operates out of different motives, and are based on equality, justice and freedom which, according to the constitution and the manifesto mentioned previously, are the core values that needed to be focused on in schools.

A principal who for example makes the majority of the decisions on her own, without consulting others, who dissuades others from challenging the decisions, who in fact would get angry if challenged operates as a dominating leader. On the other hand, a leader who serves others would be more capable of allowing collaboration, encouraging rigorous debate and make reasonable, moral judgements.

Of course this only works if the members are moral at all and if they share core goal which are aligned to the schools values. This is an extremely simplistic view and does not take into account the different contexts that exist in schools or the fact that different situations may call for a different leadership style. Also making decisions more collaboratively will not necessarily result in a moral decision.

Fullan (1993, p. 8) argues that managing moral purpose is imperative if one wants to produce educational change. Fullan utilises Sirotnik's list of moral requirements in his argument which are: a commitment to enquiry, knowledge, competence, caring, freedom, well-being and social justice. We can take this further by looking at how SMT's make decisions. Do they encourage enquiry? Do they gather sufficient knowledge before making a decision? Are they making competent decisions allowing equal opportunities to all members of the SMT to contribute? Are the decisions that are taken fair to the various stakeholders? What processes are in place to ensure that this list of moral requirements is fulfilled? Does the leadership style of the principal, especially when it comes to the process of making decisions, grounded in domination or servanthood?

In looking at Boeheme's two types of leadership we can further consider different leadership styles that exist that could represent either a dominating or serving type of leadership. In this paper, I refer very briefly to three leadership styles that are of particular relevance. These are bureaucratic and autocratic leadership styles which are more dominating types versus more democratic leadership styles such as distributive and lasting leadership styles that fit in with a more serving nature. I will be looking at the relationship between the leader and his / her followers and their approach to decision making.

Bureaucratic leadership style

The word bureaucracy has different meanings. In the technical sense it means a system of administration carried out continuously according to set rules, by trained professionals (Weber, 1968). Weber further defines bureaucracy as having the following characteristics: hierarchy, impersonality, continuity and expertise. He argues that if these characteristics are in place, a system will work to maximum efficiency. A leader that follows a close set of standards and everything is done in an exact, specific way would have a more bureaucratic leadership style. They have a set of rules and procedures and expect everyone to follow them. Coopers and

Lybrand (1988) in a report written for the government noted that the bureaucratic approach was strongly advocated in South African Schools. They say that management units (schools) were to be identified, goals and objectives needed to be set and resources allocated. The Department of Education would allocate resources and would expect the schools to manage itself using the resources to reach their objectives. The performance of the school would then be monitored and held accountable for its performance and use of funds.

The shortcomings of this approach are numerous. It assumes that all stakeholders in the school are committed to the same set of objectives, but in reality, there are likely to be conflicting aims. South African history suggests that allocation of resources in schools was unequal. 'White' teachers and learners had a substantially greater amount of resources than the 'black' schools (Atkinson, Wyatt & Senkhane, 1993 p. 4). The bureaucratic approach also assumes that the assessment of these objectives is straightforward and easy to measure while in practice this is extremely difficult to measure especially if one is aiming to develop the child holistically. It also seems to focus on procedure at the expense of education which has been strongly criticised by many educationists (Bush, 1999). Bush believed that when objectives are set by an external source, it reduces the amount of debate as to what should be taught and why. Furthermore this could disempower teachers as well as the SMT as they expected to follow the instructions and policies set by this external source and there is little room for new and innovative ideas. This could slow down the process of developing teachers as leaders. A bureaucratic leadership style is also ineffective in teams and schools that rely on flexibility, creativity and innovation.

There are few advantages to this style of leadership. The SMT that takes a more bureaucratic approach has efficient means of controlling the work of large numbers of people. Furthermore this form of leadership leaves very little room for inequality, inconsistencies and discrimination as there are firm rules and policies in place that need to be followed by all members of the SMT.

Autocratic Leadership style

Ngara (2004) describes the autocratic leader as a self-serving leader who has a myopic view of things. This leader is seen to possess absolute control of power and cannot be questioned and is inclined to be repressive and tyrannical. The autocratic leader is not accountable to the people and will be surrounded by people who are afraid to question, people who will say only those things that the leader wants to hear. This leader rarely asks for, or accepts advice from others

(Ngara, 2004). Autocratic leadership can be beneficial when decisions need to be taken quickly and efficiently. It allows other members of a team to focus on the specific tasks for which they are accountable rather than worrying about making decisions for the larger organization. Research has shown that authoritarian forms of leadership are most prevalent in schools that have serious weaknesses, particularly in its early stages of development, meaning a newly established school (Gray, 2000). Another example of this could be a school where teacher and pupil absenteeism is high or there is an extremely high failure rate. An authoritarian leader could come into the school and put programs, strategies and policies into place in order to get the school on the right track. This style would also be appropriate for guiding beginning teachers in the school setting as they tend to need more direction because they are inexperienced.

So it seems as though the authoritarian approach is preferable to a democratic one for the achievement of tasks. It can be said that in a democracy there can be too much discussion and less productivity and little accountability and decisiveness. An authoritarian leadership style is thus well suited in a very structured environment, where the lives of people are stake, and where the level of professionalism is also low.

The disadvantage of this style of leadership could be that the leader is seen as being unapproachable, dictatorial and if others have new, interesting and creative ideas, they would rarely share these with the leader. This could be detrimental to the community as old ideas do not usually work in new situations. It is also very easy for the leader to abuse his or her power and this could lead to resentment growing in the school community.

The leader in an autocratic system takes decisions with little or no consultation or collaboration with others. In both the bureaucratic and autocratic styles of leadership, there is little dialogue, relationship building, debate, discussion and collaboration. Marks and Printy (2003, p. 393) when focussing on leadership relations between principals and teachers concluded that schools that have the benefit of integrated leadership, that is leadership shared between principal and other members of the SMT and teaching body, learn and perform at higher levels. Teachers themselves can be barriers to the development of a school. Sheppard (1996) in exploring instructional leadership agrees with Marks and Printy. Sheppard suggests that when teachers are involved in the decision making process and agree with the leadership style of their leader they

would be more willing to commit to a decision that was made by the leaders and the team and would more likely come up with new and innovative ideas.

Democratic Leadership styles

Numerous educational leadership researchers or practice-based research projects (Bush and Glover 2003; Harris 2005) have explored the idea that school leadership may be "shared" successfully. Murris and Haynes (2011, p. 287) realise that schools are places of struggle and social change and critical teachers value freedom of expression for learners and would encourage them to actively participate in various aspects of the school including the decision making processes especially when these decisions. This could be true of members of the SMT as well as other teachers and sometimes parents.

The approach advocated by researchers varies but points to a movement away from a hierarchical to a more vertical shared leadership. Leithwood et al (1999) refer to "participative" leadership as an approach to leadership where the leaders, instead of making autocratic decisions, would seek to involve other people in the process. Murris and Haynes (2011, p. 287) state that "participatory democracy implies that people rule—not through representation, but through participation".

Harris and Muijs (2005) as well as Grant (2006) stress the importance of "teacher leadership". Grant insists that when looking at teacher leadership in South Africa one needs to be aware that we are viewing it from the context of a new democracy. Teachers would need to have courage and a vision for the future. Grant quotes Hayes argument that 'if people are given responsibility and autonomy, they will rise to it: if they are trusted, they will be trustworthy. The information on these two leadership styles (participative and teacher leadership) will not be discussed further as it is beyond the scope of this report except to say that it shares many similarities with "distributed leadership" (Gronn, 2003; Harris and Chapman 2002; Spillane 2005) and "lasting leadership" (Lambert, 2007). While the four types of leadership have distinct differences that will not be discussed here, the major similarity is that they encourage collaboration through actions and constant support, valuing people's inputs in decision-making and encourage a greater commitment and willingness of the members of the SMLT to do more than is expected.

According to several authors, allowing people to participate in decision-making increases their levels of commitment to the organization (Conway 1984, Bacharach *et al.* 1990, Kushman 1992,

Dunham *et al.* 1994, Balfour and Wechsler 1996). Alma Harris states, "Contemporary educational reform places a great premium upon the relationship between leadership and school improvement" (2004, p. 11) and there is more evidence within the school improvement field that the way forward would be to move towards capacity building as means of sustaining this improvement (Fullan, 2001). There seems to be a common idea that permeates the literature that "good" leadership needs amongst other things, a significant change from a single person making a decision to a group of people collaborating and coming up with solutions. With these similarities in mind, I wish to explore more deeply the distributive and lasting leadership models.

Necessary preconditions for democratic leadership

It can be argued that humans are naturally curious, creative and want to learn. It is no longer enough for one person at the top of an organisation to gather information, to learn for the entire organisation. Schools could be seen as one such learning environment, where every member of the school community is learning. The focus is no longer on the head of the organisation being the sole leader or gatherer of information and implementation of ideas (Senge, 1990). Peter Senge has done most of his research on corporate senior executives, but soon realised that the basic disciplines such as systems thinking, personal mastery and shared vision are equally relevant to teachers. Systems thinking according to Senge are looking at the system or organisation as a whole and not at the individual parts. Humans are bound to each other by their interactions and the effects of these interactions may not be immediately apparent. So in working together making decisions one needs to be aware of previous interactions and the possible repercussions it may have on the outcome of the decision.

Senge also suggests that personal mastery could be the cornerstone of any organisation. Individuals involved in personal mastery are constantly learning, clarifying their personal vision. Barrett (1998, p. 4) referred to a survey done on the performance of 99 businesses where two-thirds of the results were mediocre. He concluded that these poorly performing businesses did not support and encourage its employees to "tap into their deepest levels of productivity and creativity by finding personal fulfilment in their work". So it seems that a leader would be wise to encourage the personal development of each member of the leadership team order that the vision of the organisation could be applied by all SMT members due to a greater sense of

ownership by each of them. There is a strong connection between this personal development and distributive leadership. Distributive leadership as described by Spillane (2005, P. 64) is about leadership *practice* where the interactions between leaders and their situations leads to personal development and a shared vision.

Senge is adamant that having a shared vision for an organisation is imperative. Many leaders have personal visions but these are not shared with the rest of the team. On the other hand the leader's vision could become the organisations' vision. This omits the key skill and process of working together to discover common values and goals. Working together could foster commitment rather than compliance and obligation. In working together as a team to discover a common vision, members of the SMT would be expected to suspend assumptions and inquire together to discover insights not attainable individually. Fullan agrees with Senge with respect to the team approach and points out that principals need to be more aware of the big picture and more "sophisticated at conceptual thinking and transforming the organisation through people and teams" (Fullan, 2002, p. 410).

There has been a paradigm shift in terms of leadership and the reason for this varies according to different researchers. Williams (2011) cites Sergiovanni's reason for this shift to disillusionment with the "superhero images of leadership" whilst Fullan (2001, p. 2) states that charismatic leadership can at most result in "episodic improvement" and eventually "frustrated or despondent dependency". To Harris (2003, p .7) this shift represents a shift from the "traditional transactional versus transformational". This supports the shift from individual charismatic leadership to a collaborative team approach.

Marks and Printy (2003) recognise that principals, in an attempt to improve academic performance have decided to enlarge their leadership capacity by involving educators in continuous dialogue and the decision making process within the school. The principal would continue to be the agent of change but would draw on others when discussing educational matters. Educators possess critical knowledge about their learners and how they learn and this information would be crucial to the decision making process. Both distributive leadership and lasting leadership styles seem to encourage this inclusion.

Distributive Leadership Style

Harris (2005) states that distributed leadership provides exciting possibilities for schools in that it promotes the development of shared norms amongst the SMT which could contribute to school effectiveness. By allowing the SMT to work together, coming up with new ideas and strategies, collectively, could provide them with an authentic source of authority. Williams (2011) perceives distributive leadership as a form of leadership that should be seriously considered by all South African schools. He suggests that leadership should not exist in the domain of one person but rather should be distributed amongst different authorities within the school. This could give teachers the opportunity to discard the obstructions that prevent them from becoming self-actualizing professionals. This could lead to the increase in the numbers of teachers that can and will lead.

Spillane's (2005, p. 149) ideas of distributed leadership differ to an extent from Williams'. Spillane is adamant that distributive leadership is not a "cure-all" for everything that is wrong within a school. In fact he states that distributive leadership is merely a concept that can be used for thinking about school leadership rather than a prescription for how school leadership should occur in schools. Spillane (2005, p. 144) argues that distributive leadership is about leadership *practice* rather than the leaders and their roles, functions, routines and structures. He views leadership practice as a product of the interactions between the leaders, the followers and the situation rather than the leaders' knowledge and skill. Distributive leadership is not merely many individuals taking responsibility for different leadership roles within a school but includes the way that they react to each other, collaborate with each other, bearing in mind the values and mission of the school.

Spillane's focus on the merits of the practice of distributive leadership clearly echoes the character and merits of CoE with its focus on process rather than product. CoE is also process-driven, relatively flat in terms of hierarchy, not prescriptive in terms of structure, characterised by a fair distribution of power and airtime, and is fed by the particular dynamics and perspectives of those individuals involved, as they engage with each other through the various ideas put forward.

Williams draws on Woods' work consistently where Woods' maintains that the values and purpose of the organisation plays a key role when adopting a distributive leadership style (2011). Woods' also believes that this style of leadership allows for flexibility which allows for changing circumstances, interaction and dialogue where authority is shared within the organisation. Furthermore, educators are no longer mere passive recipients and implementers of revealed knowledge as contained in official policies and as provided by the principal but can be involved in the decision making process and generate their own knowledge (Williams, 2011). This works on the premise that all teachers can and must lead.

There are limitations to a distributive style of leadership in South Africa. Leaders may see the advantages of adopting a different approach to leadership but may be reluctant to hand over power and authority to others. Although policies have been drafted to democratise the decision making process, the authoritarian attitude still exists in South African schools (Williams, 2011). The National Department of Education (2003) refers to this as "… the entrenched bureaucratic and hierarchical management practices inherited from apartheid traditions." Distributed leadership can only be realised in a well-structured organization which has shared values and beliefs and a common purpose. These school principals should also be empowered enough not to feel threatened by the perceived loss of status, authority and power (Williams, 2011).

The second limitation would be the lack of leadership development and training for teachers. This is often due to lack of funding. There is also an assumption that those teachers or principals that do obtain training will disseminate the information to the rest of the staff but this is not always possible due to time constraints or lack of resources (Williams, 2011). So although there are numerous teachers who could take on leadership roles in schools, the conditions necessary for distributive leadership is not apparent and teachers do not feel sufficiently empowered to take on the role of leader.

Working together effectively does not always occur naturally in schools, the leaders would need to encourage this collaboration. Time needs to be set aside for the SMT to engage in discussions and dialogue that interrogate various aspects of the school such as its vision, core values, and decision making practices. In chapter four the CoE methodology will be discussed as a possible way to encourage collaboration in a creative, caring and democratic way.

Lasting Leadership Style

Linda Lambert (2007, p. 422) studied fifteen school, one of which was in Canadian and the others were from the USA It was a study of high 'leadership capacity' schools and those that were moving to become such schools. The term 'leadership capacity' refers to "broad-based, skilful participation in the work of the leadership". Figure 1 below represents the depth of leadership skills and understandings and the level of participation.

Figure 1 Leadership Capacity Matrix showing Level of participation

Low	Low Quadrant 1 Principal as autocratic manger • Limited flow of information; no shared vision • Rigidly defined roles • Norms of compliance, blame and superficial • Lack of innovation in teaching and learning • Student achievement poor	High Quadrant 2 • Principal as "laissez faire" manag many teachers developing unrelated programs • Fragmentation and lack of coherence of information and shared purpose • Lack of collective responsibility • Undefined roles and responsibilities • Student achievement static
High	Low Quadrant 3 • Principal and key teachers as purposeful leadership team • Limited use of school wide data • Polarised staff • Designated leaders act efficiently, others serve traditional roles • Strong reflection, innovation • Student achievement static	High Quadrant 4 • Principal, teachers, parents and students leaders • Shared vision • Inquiry based use of information • Roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration and collective responsibility • Reflective practice consistently, leads to innovation • Student achievement high or improving steadily

Source: L. Lambert, (2007)

A comprehensive discussion of the results obtained in the fifteen schools is beyond the scope of this research report but a few key aspects will be discussed. Quadrant one showed that the low depth of leadership skills and understandings together with a low level of participation contributed to poor learner achievement as well as poor teaching and learning. On the other hand in quadrant 4, a high depth of leadership skills and understandings together with a high level of participation contributed to high or improving learner achievement. There was a high level of collaboration and collective responsibility and presumably a high level of democratic behaviour as well. This is similar to the distributive leadership style where a high level of collaboration amongst the various members of the SMT leads to a sense of responsibility. According to Lambert (2007) school improvement would involve people working in teams, instead of individually. These teams would engage in conversations about learners' performance, problem solves questions of practice in classrooms, in preparation for lessons. These conversations centre on visions, beliefs and values which guide the development and implementation of initiatives that are consistent with the overall mission of the school. In chapter 4, the CoE methodology will be discussed as a possible way of directing these conversations and in doing so, possible move schools from quadrant one to quadrant 4.

The willingness of the leader to be vulnerable and relinquish power and authority would be imperative in order to allow this process to occur. The role of the principal would vary in different schools depending on where they are in their transitional phase.

Summary

An authoritarian and bureaucratic ethos adopted by South African Schools prior to 1994 continues to be adopted in many schools. The national Department of Education (2003) refers to this as "… the entrenched bureaucratic and hierarchical management practices inherited from apartheid traditions."

Distributed leadership represents a major paradigm shift and many constraints would need to be overcome in order to effectively bring distributed leadership to schools. Williams quotes Woods in identifying these as context, people and practice (2011). He describes the context as being not conducive to democratic leadership. Woods goes on to say that "where people are concerned, resistance is due to self-interest of those who want to retain power or those who want to remain free from responsibility, traditional deference, belief in the superiority of hierarchy,

apathy and reasoned scepticism as well as capacity problems. Woods regards the following practices that are problematic: ineffective democracy, unauthentic democracy, the reduction of interests as a result of competition and limited resources — especially time.

The Lasting Leadership style focuses on a team approach to leadership where the teachers, parents and learners have a shared vision for the school. The roles and actions of these people reflect broad involvement, collaboration and collective responsibility. This reflective practice leads to innovation and this approach helps to achieve better academic results of learners.

CHAPTER FOUR : The Thought Experiment

Introduction

Chapter two examined the literature on the community of enquiry pedagogy and chapter three explored the different leadership styles used currently in South African schools. This chapter builds on these different literatures and will present a thought experiment to explore the following hypothesis: If the CoE methodology is used in the discussions and processes of SMTs in South Africa, then the decision-making process will be more inclusive, collaborative, effective and democratic. The assumption would also be made that the inclusive, collaborative and democratic nature of the methodology would enable the decisions arrived at to be more moral and therefore of a better quality. As seen in chapter two, when embracing the CoE methodology, participants ask questions that challenge the morality of the members of the community as well as their opinions. The exploration in this chapter is conceptual and speculative, not empirical but it is my hope that future research will centre on the empirical testing of the hypothesis. For now I will use my understanding of the literature and critical incidences drawn from my experience as a member of the SMT to ground my argument. Finally, I will draw attention to the constraints that will be placed on the thought experiment as well as the benefits and challenges of using CoE for the facilitation of SMTs.

While accepting that principals carry overall responsibility for decisions taken, the argument I am putting forward has to do with the extent to which principals need to embrace collaboration and teamwork – as key elements for running a CoE as part of the decision-making processes. Considering as many factors as possible, having considered the rights and interests of as many stakeholders as possible, engaging in rigorous and creative discussion with relevant people could lead to the SMT making good quality decisions. Many may argue that other methodologies may achieve the same goal, but I would argue that the CoE affect the *moral* quality of the decisions that are in keeping with the core values of a school.

It is important to qualify that all meetings will not be run using a CoE methodology as this would be time consuming and impractical. The CoE methodology would be used to enquire about 'big issues'. A big issue could be the process of decision making and the resultant decisions, and whether these are in aligned to the vision, mission and ethos of the school and the South African Constitution. The CoE could be used to interrogate the values, biases, prejudices of the individual

members of the SMT and how these interfere or contribute to the manner in which the members function as a team.

The SASA attempted to address the issues of the apartheid by introduce SMTs and SGBs[4]. There were new policies drawn up, some training was given to leaders and managers to help them deal with this change. In 2008 the ACE program was initiated to help empower school leaders to lead and manage schools effectively in this time of great change. Members of an SMT were expected to change from being told what to do (usually by the education government or the principal) and what to think, to a more distributive approach where leadership was more distributed amongst different teachers in the school.

The CoE methodology could be one way of bridging this gap between the traditional method of leading to a different model, which is somewhat in line with the Lambert's lasting leadership style, where the opinions of various members of the SMT and the other stakeholders in a school are taken into account. This inclusion and enquiring about member's biases, backgrounds and value system could lead to a heightened sense of dealing with the moral issues surrounding the decisions and decision making processes.

There is a limit to how much we can learn by ourselves. Fullan (1993, p. 17) suggests that "collaboration is becoming one of the core requisites of post-modern society". He also argues that personal mastery as proposed by Senge (1990) and group mastery feed on each other in an organisation. This suggests that each member of the SMT be involved in improving their critical and creative thinking skills and clarify their personal vision. This process could lead to a more ethical SMT that thinks critically and works together in a caring manner, toward the vision for the school, especially if they are engaged in a CoE, with a focus on ethical decision making. As discussed on chapter two, when members work and think together in a CoE they discover differences, but also common values and goals. The CoE fosters commitment to the values and vision of the school rather than compromise, compliance and obligation. In working together as a team to create a common vision, members of the SMT would be expected to suspend their own assumptions and prejudices and to inquire together in order to come to insights usually not attainable to the individual.

[4] SGB is a school governing body made up of parents, teachers and in some cases learners

For many years South Africa has been rejected nationally and internationally for its gross violations of human rights, the inequalities of its laws and discriminatory policies (Bray, 2004, p. 1). The very progressive South African Constitution drawn up in 1996 brought about a legal revolution in South Africa. It committed the nation to a set of values and principles that were in many ways the opposite of that which existed prior to 1994. The Constitution explicitly commits itself to the attainment of an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom (Govender, 2004, p. 4). It should be said that the South African Constitution is new, has been amended numerous times and our politics and society are striving to live up to it but are far from reaching the goals that it set out for our country. Like all policies and documents its implementation to the extent that is noticeable and satisfactory will take many years to accomplish.

The adoption of a new Constitution had an effect on the education system in schools as the policies that existed prior to 1994 were the foundation of white supremacy and therefore of black marginalisation in South Africa. This prior status quo went against the values of human dignity, equality and freedom. These policies had lasting effects on both educational and social infrastructure which included leadership and management practices in many public schools, especially those in historically black areas. White schools were also run in an authoritarian manner but their education system was far superior and did not have a negative impact on white learner's education, in terms of content. The effects of apartheid are still felt and present when decisions are being made in teams, but the idea is that this could be discussed by the SMT when working together on a common vision as well as at the same time addressing issues of injustice and inequality in the school. The SMT would not only *talk* about human dignity, equality and freedom, but also *practise* human dignity, equality and freedom by including diverse stakeholders in the decisions that are made on their behalf.

What is the purpose of the SMT and CoE

In most schools the SMT meet at least once a week and amongst other duties they draw up policies, make decisions and discuss the general running of a school. In more recent times, the SMT is also expected to be an agent of effective change. Harris (2001) states that the challenge of improving schools has been to ensure that the efforts and implementation of change should cascade through every level of the school rather than remaining in isolated groups. Robin

Sharma (2013) in a presentation stated that a leader's main job or focus should be to develop more leaders. In this way leadership is shared and sustainable. In order to do this the leader of a school would need to be open to the idea that other members of the SMT be given equal opportunities to contribute to the meetings and the meetings would need to be run more inclusively and democratically than they may have done in the past, in order to ensure greater participation. In this decision-making process and in being effective agents of change, the SMT would need to collaborate and participate whilst being aware that the values of equality, justice, truth, freedom and responsibility are upheld. The SMT would therefore need to make reasonable judgments. Gregory (2007, p. 161) argues that in order for a judgement to be reasonable it has to be well-informed, well-reasoned, and personally meaningful (*see chapter two*).

The purpose in a CoE is not necessarily to come up with a solution or a decision. The purpose of each enquiry is decided on democratically by its members. The process is much more important than the product or decision that comes out of the enquiry. An enquiry may not culminate in a single "right" decision, but helps creating a more ethical culture within the community which consistently bears in mind virtues such as respect, in this case for other members of the SMT, and open-mindedness (Fisher, 1998, p. 57). A CoE slows the decision making process down, it allows the community to interrogate the situation that they are dealing with from various angles. The skills and character developed by the members as they are working collaboratively with each other is salient. As mentioned in chapter two, the thinking that is developed in a CoE is not only critical, but also creative and caring. When involved in discussions, the members of a CoE are encouraged to be reasonable and make moral judgments by asking critical questions, testing their opinions and the opinions of others. They may change their own opinions based on the enquiry. The members would persuade people in terms of reasoning to come to certain conclusions and make judgments. With this judgment comes a sense of responsibility towards the other members, and the effect the decision and the judgment will have on the rest of the school. Spillane (2005) states that distributed leadership involve many leaders and the level of responsibility and number of people involved depends on the subject area being deliberated on. The responsibility in a CoE is shared and will depend on the experience of its members in running and being part of a CoE as well as the amount of training they have had. A CoE is a means of

building an SMT's capacity to lead, to reason. It is a means of producing a better decision *now*, as well as being a strong developmental tool.

The benefits of the CoE approach would be numerous. When working together in community, members would be actively involved in something more meaningful as they are actively involved in the process, are giving of themselves and are being creative. The more they are involved, the more they will have a sense of belonging, because what they say, do and think makes a real difference to what happens in the school. They will feel part of something instead of being on the 'outside' being told what to do. Of course, the members would need to be active listeners and would need to participate and contribute. The barrier to this might be people's negative beliefs about themselves as well as others. They may be fearful of being less knowledgeable than their team members. However the more they participate in the CoE the more trust would be built amongst its members and self-confidence will grow when they realise that individuals are valued in a CoE for their unique perspectives and that each person is tolerated in the sense that their ideas are listened to and taken seriously, though not necessarily agreed with or accepted. With this right to be counted and heard comes a responsibility to contribute in a caring and critical way. As well as a responsibility to be accountable for the decisions taken, to evaluate these decisions and to help make ideas and thoughts a reality.

These people, who have negative attitudes towards themselves and others, usually have low self-esteem and are often the same people who are 'energy consumers' (*ACE manual*, 2008, p. 27). The have a negative view of the world, resent change and practice blocking strategies. They are usually unable and unwilling to examine themselves. By involving people in a CoE and asking them to be creative, to feel more energised and part of something more meaningful could create an energy shift. They could become energy creators rather than energy consumers. This is important for a SMT as energy creators are generally enthusiastic and positive. They stimulate others and more importantly, are willing to scrutinise their practice and question their values.

Fullan (1993) describes these energy creators as people who have a strong moral purpose. He goes on to say that people who have a strong moral purpose have a commitment to improving standards, they believe in doing work for the common good and treat people ethically whether they are adults or children.

Being involved in a CoE builds a culture of sharing ideas; contributing one's own ideas to a 'pot' of questions and being prepared to have one's ideas subjected to critical scrutiny, but in a caring way. There is a give and take and exchange of information as well as trust. The CoE can therefore be seen as a merging of various perspectives and ways of thinking and doing attached to different personalities. People build on each other's ideas and construct new, better ideas as a result of the collaborative work. The possible obstacle to this sharing could be people's insecurities and power inequalities. We cannot be naïve about the challenge of power differences in any group of people, but especially in management teams of schools in post-apartheid South African schools. As a result of race, gender or class, some members could feel as though their contributions are not worth sharing. However, in a CoE these inequalities and sensitivities can also become the subject of an enquiry and handled with tact could provoke profound change in group dynamics. Another block could be a lack of generosity where members would focus on the loss of *their* idea rather than the communal creation of new ideas. The skilful facilitation of the abundance of ideas and perspectives, from as many stakeholders as possible could effect change, which is necessary for the growth in terms of having a more inclusive and democratic school where various voices are heard in the decision making process. The CoE approach is a slower process than discussing problems and finding solutions, but the richness of the enquiry and debate will most likely lead to better decisions.

How do schools in South Africa make decisions currently?

In 1994, the African National Congress Education Department stated that the main purpose of the education system prior to 1994 was to reduce and restrict participation to ensure political control. As previously stated the general consensus amongst various authors is that the schools were characterised as hierarchical, authoritarian and bureaucratic systems that mirrored the various education departments (Atkinson, Wyatt & Senkhane, 1993, p. 4).

This meant that prior to 1994 schools' decision-making processes were determined strongly by its hierarchical structure, such that only a limited number of people were involved in decisions within the school. The decisions were made by the government and policy makers who would expect the school to act on these decisions with little or no input by the school's principal, SMT or teachers. Many public schools are still run this way and have a long way to go to change this. As mentioned in the introduction, I am focussing on private schools where the school principal,

SMT, teachers and school governing bodies have much more say in what is taught, how it is taught with a little input by the Education Department.

There has been a conscious effort to move away from the process of decision making where people implementing decisions would have little input in the decision making process. Barrett, (1998, p. 3) when commenting on corporate leadership, realises that in order to transform an organisation, leaders and other people in authority need to be focussed on values that are for the common good rather than for those characterised by self-interest. This is not to say that all authoritarian leaders are self-centred. They may feel that having a strong leader who is able to make decisions is important for a school. I would argue that the democratic values of freedom and equality are more important than making decisions quickly and efficiently, and that these values and behaviours should be fully integrated into the school. This could lead to quality decisions being made rather than quicker decisions being made.

This integration of values and behaviours into the school could require a cultural transformation within a school and this is not an easy task. Traditionally, change programs within an organisation would be discussed at the top of an organisation, decisions would be taken and the rest of the organisation would be expected to implement the change. There was more of a bottom line approach. Bottom line thinking focuses on things like results, profit, and survival of the school that is, ensuring that the numbers of learners in the school can sustain its future. The CoE adopts a more 'top line' approach where the enquiry and focus is on the mission of the school and include the values of freedom, inclusivity and equality that are characteristic of democracy as a moral and political framework. In my experience, people do not want to be told what to do. Instead, they would appreciate having input into the implementation of ideas or strategies.

The CoE methodology needs to be used regularly for members to take ownership as it takes time to shift authoritarian means of communication and to experience as a member of a team the benefits of being listened to respectfully and also having to listen to others that is inclusive and constructive. The facilitation of such meetings requires complex skills and attitudes that need time to develop through training and practice, but when it works SMT members would start to apply the method in other meetings (a subject team for example). Ultimately, the CoE could

influence a positive change in the school's organisational culture and make it more inclusive, collaborative, creative and critical.

In the preceding two chapters when CoE and leadership were discussed, it became apparent that the key values of equality, justice, truth, freedom and responsibility were common to the CoE methodology and aligned to the distributive leadership model as well as to the lasting leadership model. Shields (n.d) argues that a CoE is not a method that can be just implemented but rather provides the fertile ground for methods to be developed and tried, for the sprouting of new ideas. Spillane (2005, p. 64) agrees with this and stresses that leadership is not about the leader's knowledge but the interrelationships and interactions of the various leaders of the school. Lambert (2007, p. 424) concurs and argues that "leadership is understood as a reciprocal, purposeful learning in a community). In a CoE members are thinking out aloud, testing their ideas and learning from and with each other – often making 'mistakes' and changing their minds. This in itself could be a challenge for most SMTs as in authoritarian cultures not many people are tolerant of mistakes or wish to be seen making mistakes.

Possible challenges when implementing a CoE

Teachers in schools prior to 1994 were not prepared for the role of leader. After 1994 there were a few workshops designed for new principals to help school leaders to fulfil managerial and clerical functions. Very little attention was given to developing teachers to fulfil a leadership role. As a result of this, school leaders learned by "trial and error" (Ramdass, 1987, p. 169) and by emulating other school leaders (Theron and Bothma, 1990, p. 86) thus continuing the hierarchical, authoritarian and bureaucratic leadership styles characteristic of that time. This meant that most, if not all, decisions were taken by one person as opposed to a more collaborative and democratic 'team' approach.

To change this would require a major paradigm shift. The leaders or initiator of the CoE approach could use two different strategies. She could try to overcome many constraints in order to effectively bring a democratic approach, such as CoE, to schools. She could engage the SMT in a CoE to discuss the members opinions, their fears and reservations surrounding change and the implementing the CoE methodology to make certain decisions. The alternative would be to make organisational and cultural changes first. An example of an organisational change would be to ensure that there is at least an hour a week set aside for a CoE. This could be on the timetable,

or a Saturday morning so that the academic day is not interrupted. I am not suggesting that a CoE be used to make all decisions, but there needs to be a time set aside for when the SMT would come together in order to discuss issues and make decisions without unnecessary interruptions.

A cultural shift would be more difficult to achieve as some people might resist due to self-interest. They may want to retain power or remain free from responsibility. They may believe in the superiority of hierarchy, or perhaps be indifferent altogether. Some might also argue that there are 'born leaders' and 'born followers' and that they are quite happy to follow others and be told what to do. In a sense, this is the other side of the democracy coin. With increased responsibility and participation comes what might be seen as the burden of responsibility of decisions taken and with it accountability and possibly stress. One has to be aware that when possibly presented with apathy and resistance that one has to resist an authoritarian urge possibly cull those in the SMT, to put down or even remove colleagues, but at a deep level this would undermine the possibility of any real change as such actions are not participatory or inclusive and therefore deeply undemocratic. For any profound transformation, at all levels and in all areas, decisions need to be negotiated and thought through together. There is always the possibility that one might be wrong or mistaken. In Chapter two we have seen that reasonableness entails such qualities and dispositions that as I am suggesting here can and should be cultivated in an organisation such as a school. Being tolerant of difference includes accepting that some people in the SMT are people who have vision, who are willing to work hard, accept responsibility, and are passionate about changing things that do not work. But at the same time, tolerance also means accepting that some people are not like that and that their views count just as much when pooling ideas about difficult decisions that the SMT needs to make.

At first I believed that some kind of 'culling process' would be difficult but inevitable as part of transformation. I also believed that it would need strong leadership to accomplish this. now learned that with 'strong leadership' I meant authoritarian leadership. Being 'in' authority in a CoE requires a very different approach. Authority is distinct from strong leadership in that it "incorporates an element of voluntary submission and obedience that is quasi reciprocal rather

than coercive" (Brubaker, 2011 p. 241). This authority would need to be negotiated with the community.

It is true that those in the SMT who believe in the superiority of hierarchy would need to develop a different approach for the sake of social justice. But in many ways, people in South Africa need time to adjust to the demands of democratic ways of working together. They have had their ideas systematically ignored in the past. They were expected to obey people in authority and had to do as they were told in family, school, church or any public affairs (e.g. politics, police, law, hospitals). Any planning for a change to more democratic ways of being and working together would need to include great tact and sensitivity, including long-term encouragement and support for people to develop and voice their own ideas. What might assist this process is changing some of the language we use in SMTs to include more positive language when being critical of each other's ideas. Members of the CoE need to feel that people do not reject them as persons, but that they interrogate and investigate the ideas.

Too few members involved in a CoE will limit the diversity of ideas are and too many members could make the process hard to manage. Therefore the number of people who make up the SMT and who are therefore involved in a CoE is also important. If there are too many people involved in the CoE members may become frustrated as they may feel that they are not being heard enough, although including small group or pair work may help. The constitution of a team is imperative to the success of any process and this is no less important in a CoE. The people that make up the team could be people that love to discuss issues but are reluctant to make decisions. They could also be the kind of people that are not discussion-orientated people and like to be told what to do. The transition process is therefore essential to discuss these issues at a 'meta' level. At this higher-order level and without condemnation, people can discuss the rules of discussion and any possible obstacles for participation. The inclusion of other modes of representing ideas (e.g. concept maps, images) might include some members who otherwise remain silent when all communication is oral. Also, the constitution of the SMT itself could become the topic for discussion at meta-level. For example, the inclusion of learners as stakeholders should become the topic for discussion without pre-empting the outcome.

The person who introduces the CoE method should be well informed and have training in this process. The idea is that gradually they would convince the other members of the team to use this approach to decision-making simply through their participation. They would *experience* and value being respectfully listened and notice that their ideas make a real difference to how the school is run. Of course, their knowledge about the CoE methodology could be deepened by reading and exploring some key literature together as part of their professional development. For such sessions about the CoE, the CoE methodology itself would be used. At some stage, it would be useful to review the use of the CoE for SMT meetings and invite members to volunteer ways of improving the process. Of course, introducing a new way of working together is often not easy. One way of doing it might be to initiate a discussion about current decision-making and whether the team sees a need for a change in the way decisions are taken. The difficulty here is that without knowing what might be possible, it is unlikely that unhappiness with current processes will be expressed – especially considering the power differences within a SMT and anxiety about possible repercussions (e.g. promotion). It might well be the case that the CoE needs to be introduced by the person in charge of the school ironically in an authoritarian manner as the process can only be properly evaluated after the SMT has experienced the process regularly over a certain period of time.

One needs to be aware that teachers often feel as though they are overworked, especially with new policies, curriculum developments and changes that are regularly being expected to be implemented. It is therefore unlikely that they can or will commit themselves to special training sessions that are time consuming. In a sense that is also not necessary as they will learn about the CoE simply by doing it – as children in a classroom do. As described earlier, the method was developed for teaching and learning in classrooms (see Chapters 1 and 2). If members of the team are eager and willing to learn, it could serve them in numerous ways, not just to help them make higher quality decisions. It could reignite a passion for the profession, it could serve to motivate and inspire them to try new things. They would feel greater self-worth and a sense that their ideas matter for which they also will feel more responsible. The change would be noticeable, not only in the process of decision making, but if done sincerely, it could affect the way members think, reason, deal with conflict and therefore will affect other relationships in the school. (This is what was meant earlier by organisational cultural change.)

One should also remember that principals also feel overworked and overburdened by the responsibility for leadership functions. The CoE methodology is in line with Spillane's response that with distributed leadership, this responsibility can be distributed and shared, hence diffusing this burden of responsibility.

Limitations that would need to be placed on CoE implementation

It would need to be decided which types of decisions would warrant the use of the CoE methodology. It would not be practical to use the CoE to make every decision. For example a CoE cannot be used to make urgent decisions, especially if someone's safety is involved or at daily morning staff meetings that are usually designed for managing daily operational issues or a disciplinary processes. However, after having made such decisions and at a later stage the SMT could use the CoE to explore such a decision and its effect, for example, on the environment and the various stakeholders. The decision could then be re-evaluated and perhaps changed, or if it was a decision that they would stand by, the SMT could make it policy. It would also make more sense to use the CoE methodology to make decisions that would affect a large number of people rather than a few individuals due to the fact that the process can be time consuming. The CoE methodology would be appropriate when reviewing certain policies such as the admissions policy which in my experience is a controversial issue in the schools in which I have worked as there are many differing views regarding this and would be worth exploring in a CoE. One could also use the CoE to discuss strategic planning, to review matric results or results of the other grades in the school, to look at curriculum development, implementation and to review current practices. The way in which such meetings are facilitated is likely to make a difference however on how all meetings are run as over time members will probably feel more confident to express their own viewpoints and will start to listen differently to colleagues.

What would need to be done prior to practising CoE

The first step in this process would be to assess the climate in the school. By this I mean, one would need to see whether the school as an organisation is ready for an innovative idea such as the CoE methodology. The climate of a school refers to recurring patterns of behaviour, attitudes, and feelings that characterize life in the organization (Depasquale, 2012)[5].

[5] I obtained this information at a presentation at a creativity and innovation conference by DePasquale on the 23 November 2012. She is a researcher from the American University of Washington DC.

DePasquale suggests using the Situational Outlook Questionnaire (SOQ) which is a web-based questionnaire that assesses the climate on nine dimensions using 53 questions (Part A); and general issues using three open-ended questions (Part B). DePasquale defines an innovative educational organization as an organization in which everyone deliberately and productively

- Enables teachers to think, collaborate, and make better decisions for the school and learners;
- Creates a motivating workplace climate where teachers can perform at their very best thus improving productivity by designing an environment that supports creative 'wins'.
- Aligns processes that are most appropriate for the type and level of innovation required to enable the most creative outputs.

If it turns out that the current climate in a school is stagnant, various strategies can be used to move a school from a stagnant state to an innovative state. Discussion of these strategies is beyond the scope of this research report.

It would be advantageous to begin a CoE in an innovative, trusting environment climate but it is not absolutely crucial, as not many South African schools operate in such an environment. The CoE could help create such a climate. When reflecting on the defining features of an innovative educational organization one can see how a CoE methodology could help fast track this change process. For instance a CoE encourages and enables its members to think, collaborate, and make quality decisions for the various stakeholders (teachers, parents and learners). One of the benefits of a CoE is that it creates an environment that is caring and creative and motivates its members. So in adopting the CoE methodology in SMTs it could help change the climate within the school.

It is imperative that the leaders identify potential change agents in the SMT as well as amongst the general staff. These people's role would be to influence others regarding the value of the CoE approach. One of the merits of doing this is that the CoE approach wouldn't appear to be coming solely from one person.

As discussed previously, people are often resistant to change so the leader would need to tread carefully. By this I mean that the leader could not impose the idea of CoE onto the SMT, as this

defeats the democratic purpose of a CoE, although as mentioned before at some point a more authoritarian approach may be necessary. The instigator would have to relinquish some power; this will be a problematic as it would make sense that people with power would like to hold on to that power. As mentioned previously this negotiating of authority and power can be addressed in a CoE. It is important that the person in charge indeed 'walks the talk'. It would therefore make sense to involve the SMT as much as possible in the decision and not present the CoE process as though its implementation was a fait accompli. That is, ideally the SMT should be included in the discussion of the appropriateness of CoE implementation and in the weighing of the pros and cons of implementing this process in the school. If the SMT are involved in the process from conception, they would more likely contribute openly and would have a sense of ownership of the idea. This could be done by giving the members readings for them to take home with the expectation that they would take responsibility for ensuring that they have engaged with the literature. In my experience the SMT members would not be inclined to do this, but once again the instigator would need to convince the members of the importance of being informed. They would not be able to make informed decisions if they are not informed. The literature should involve the history of CoE, how it has developed, how it works, its benefits etc. The learning could also take the form of workshops run by an experienced trainer.

As we have seen in Chapter two, the CoE methodology places emphasis on the art of communication, questioning and reasoning where one takes responsibility for one's actions as well as ones' thoughts. This requires openness and trust. This willingness to be open and trusting of each other takes conscious effort and practice and a commitment to examine old habits with a view to developing healthier ways of working with colleagues. Including more ideas in the decision making process could lead to fairer decisions as the various points of view would more likely be represented. The CoE also creates a more critical forum for the testing of one's own beliefs and opinions and could cause people to change the way they think leading to changes in their opinions. Being included in the decision making process could makes one feel that one's ideas matter and therefore reduce stress levels in the workplace, thus leading to healthier relationships, including the relationship with oneself. An effective way to enable this process would be for the SMT to give themselves sufficient time to collectively examine their individual attitudes, core beliefs, values and behaviour. They should also consider to what extent their values coincide with each other's and the values of a CoE, which according to Cevallos-Estrellas'

(2000) are curiosity, creativity, reasoning, freedom, fallibilism and pluralism. Such discussions would help to surface individual members' differences. Making everyone more conscious of each other's differences would hopefully make the SMT more sensitive to each other's needs and therefore more accommodating when making decisions together. Such discussions would give the CoE methodology a better chance of succeeding. However the nature of the CoE methodology is such that it would over a period of time address differences of belief and values, while also leveraging the potential benefits of having a diverse SMT.

Example of a critical incident and CoE approach

In a school where I worked, there is a computer centre which is advertised as being open from Monday to Friday between 2pm to 5pm. The principal and deputy principal made a decision to close the centre on Tuesday afternoons because we did not have a teacher to supervise the learners in the centre. At the time, I felt that the decision was wrong and moreover that this decision making process was neither democratic nor collaborative. I judged the decision to be a quick fix and not very reasonable. The people directly affected were the learners, parents and teachers who were merely informed of the decision and had no part to play in the decision making process. As a result, the rest of the SMT and the teachers could not take responsibility for the decision and many of them actually opposed it. The result of this decision was that learners could not complete their homework, assignments and research. Parents, teachers and learners became angry which led to unprofessional outbursts from all concerned toward the SMT. A detailed description of the incident can be found below.

This situation could have been a good opportunity to work together, to examine our attitudes, values and behaviour and to make well-reasoned judgements. Two approaches could have been taken. The principal could have closed the computer room as there weren't teachers to supervise, but inform the learners and teachers that it is not permanent and would give the necessary space to meet with the teachers and to explore a solution. The SMT could have then met and used a CoE to discuss the issue and come up with a decision together.

The second possibility assumes that training had been done in the CoE methodology and that the members of the SMT are in agreement that the CoE approach adds value to the decision making process. The SMT could meet and have an enquiry about the principal and deputy principal's decision to close the computer centre on Tuesday afternoons. The other assumption here is that

the members of the SMT trust not only each other, but also the process and that a contract or boundary agreement would have been drawn up previously. Someone in the community could perhaps quickly run through the boundary agreement in order to refresh people's memory, for example to remember to build on ideas or contribution of the previous speaker and not go off on a tangent, respect the other member's opinions. The facilitator would need to draw attention to the mission statement of the school, as well as the South African Constitution which called for democracy, equal citizenship and the protection of fundamental human rights and freedom.

The team would sit in a circle and decide on a facilitator for the process. This can be done by nomination or someone could volunteer to facilitate. Two empty chairs could be placed in the circle which would represent the learners and the parents. Learners and parents are not usually part of the SMT and the decision making process as it is not practical to include everyone in every decision. These decisions do, however, affect both learners and parents so it is important to keep their rights and interests in mind when making these decisions. Instead of two empty chairs, the community could use a rope on the floor to create the shapes of two humans which would represent the parents and learners and everyone would be requested to help voice their possible perspectives by using their imagination. The facilitator could choose someone to read the following scenario out loud, which will serve as the text for this enquiry[6].

The computer centre at school has 40 computers and is used on a regular basis by learners for various reasons, among which would be to email work to their teachers, to type assignments for the various subjects, for research for the various subjects, to research university courses and their entrance requirements. All teachers at our school expect these assignments to be typed out and not handwritten. Some learners have a laptop or computer of their own or at their home. Most of the learners, however, come from disadvantaged communities who do not have computers or access to computers. These learners therefore rely heavily on access to the computer centre at school. This computer centre is expected to be open during breaks, which are only 20 minutes and 30 minutes long, as well as from 2pm to 5pm in the afternoon.

Each teacher is expected to run an activity for two out of the five afternoons per week until 5 o'clock and the other three afternoons they would leave school at 2 o'clock. In drawing up the afternoon program, it was discovered that there were no teachers available on Tuesday

[6] In P4C we generally start with a text

afternoons to supervise the computer classes as most teachers chose Tuesday as their early afternoon. It was policy that a teacher has to be in the room whilst learners are in there and as no teachers were available, the principal and deputy took the decision to close the computer centre on Tuesdays. The decision was relayed to the academic staff and the learners.

The facilitator would give the SMT some time to think about what they have just heard and perhaps write some of their thoughts down or even make a quick drawing. They would then be given five minutes to discuss in pairs the thoughts that emerged whilst they were listening to the narrative. The facilitator could ask each pair to come up with two questions, one practical and one philosophical/ moral and write each question on a separate A4 paper and place it in the circle. The practical questions will be collected and stuck on a wall in the room. Examples of some of the practical questions are: “Why do we need the computer room to be open from 2pm to 5pm?” “Why are we understaffed in the afternoons especially a Tuesday?” and “What would the short term and long term repercussions of closing the computer room be?” These are regarded as closed questions as they have definite answers. They are important questions as they will have some bearing on the decision making process but should be ‘parked’ and either answered immediately or referred to later in the CoE process.

The moral or philosophical questions which are in the centre of the circle can then be scrutinized. The facilitator would ask various people to pick up a question, read it aloud and ask the community to see whether this question is similar to other questions lying on the floor in the circle. Questions that are related or seem to be similar will be placed together in a pile on the floor. Some examples of philosophical questions that could pose a moral dilemma would be “Are we doing our best to ensure that all our learners, especially the poor ones, are treated fairly and given an equal opportunity to reach their goals in our school?” “We want to help the poor learners but is this not at the expense of the teachers?” “Why are we not included in the decision making process?” “Why do we have high expectations of our learners but not very high expectations of our teacher?” The facilitator would ask every alternate member in the circle to stand and swop places with each other. This is to ensure that the exchange of ideas is happening between various members and not the same people all the time.

Depending on how many different groups of questions there are, the facilitator would divide the people in the community into that number of groups. For example, if there were 12 members

and 3 piles, four people would work together with a pile of questions. The facilitator would then give the groups about eight minutes to work with the questions and come up with ONE question per group. This question will then be placed on the floor separated from the other questions. One member per group will read out loud their question. In order to decide which question to work on the facilitator could do one of two things. She could ask the members to vote with their feet. This means that they will walk towards the question that they would like to work on. This is a transparent way of voting and every member will know which question each of the others voted for. The benefit of this would be that one can quickly see or guess which values are most important to each of the members. The disadvantage is that some members may be irritated that they did not get to work on their question because their fellow small group members 'deserted' them. The question that has the greatest number of people standing near it would be written on the board or chart and will be the focus of the enquiry. It might also be possible to start with the other philosophical questions in subsequent enquiries as they are generic and worth exploring anyway for a SMT as people's ideas about such questions affect future decisions. For example, how much we take account of learners' socio-economic backgrounds or how much we can expect from teachers outside teaching hours.

The other method would be to face the outside of the circle placing their hands behind their backs. The facilitator would read each question and the members would vote by placing their thumbs up behind their backs for the question that they would want to work on. The advantage of this would be that the vote is confidential. The facilitator would count the number of thumbs up for each question and the one with the most thumbs up would be written on the board or chart and would be the starting point of the enquiry.

An enquiry is different from a discussion. In a discussion, different views are heard and there is a general idea that anyone can speak at any given time. During an enquiry the contributions must be centred on the question that was written on the chart and the focus is to build on each other's ideas, unlike discussion. For the purpose of the exploration of the case study we will use the question "Are we doing our best to ensure that all our learners, especially the poor ones, are treated fairly and are given an equal opportunity to reach their goals in our school?" The types of questions we select for an enquiry are crucial.

Fisher (1998) describes four kinds of questioning that can be used in a CoE. These kinds of questioning are conceptual, empirical, logical and evaluative questioning. The conceptual questioning or enquiry will involve investigating the meaning of the words. Often disagreement can ensue just because there is confusion or because people may have a different understanding of concepts. In this case, 'we', 'our best', 'poor', 'fair and equal' as well as 'goals' needs to be enquired into. An enquiry into who is being referred to in the 'we' could be very useful as it could be referring to the one or all of the following; SMT members, teachers, the parents and the community. It is often said that in African culture it is believed that the entire community should raise the child so wherever they can help this child they should. The term 'our' best, is a relative term. People say that they are doing their best but to what level? Are they really putting themselves out for others? Is there an abundant, generous mentality or is doing ones best just doing their job? When referring to 'poor', what are the members true feelings on this? Is it 'poor' in a financial sense or are we looking at the learners that come from an environment that may have money but very little care or love, and how do we make such judgments as teachers anyway? In a country with a history of apartheid where black people were treated differently and were not given access to basic human rights an enquiry could be dedicated to just unpacking the meaning of concepts such as 'poor', 'fair' and 'equal'. Is there some blame attached to the word 'poor'? By this I mean that the parents could be seen as being poor because they don't try hard enough to find work or they want a free ride. Or is it possible that the white people in the SMT are possibly holding onto some of their guilt around the oppression of black people during apartheid. The terms 'fair' meaning unbiased and objective and 'equal' meaning the same or identical, are terms that are in fact filled with emotions. These terms need to be unpacked thoroughly and with tact and sensitivity in a CoE as it speaks directly to the values of the members of the CoE as well as the values that are held by the school.

The concept 'goals' (of these learners) need to be addressed as well. Are we expecting to help these learners to reach their full potential or help them get through their schooling career with a certificate? And how do we assess 'potential' anyway? Inevitably, prejudices and biases regarding the capabilities of black learners from certain socio-economic backgrounds and what 'they' 'deserve' would surface in the enquiries. Using conceptual enquiries will show members the deep complexity of decisions that on the surface might seem straightforward. As I have shown, however, such decisions have moral and political dimensions that should not be ignored

if we want to make sure that the school's decision-making is process is attempting to align itself with the values mentioned in this relatively new Constitution, the school's faith and the school ethos.

In contrast, empirical questioning requires evidence and fact. Reflecting on the question "Are we doing our best to ensure that all our learners, especially the poor ones, are treated fairly and given an equal opportunity to reach their goals in our school?" The CoE would need to ask a few empirical questions as well, amongst which would be the following:

1. Is there another source for the learners to use to get their work done?
2. Is it necessary for teachers to insist that the learners type or email their work or can it be handwritten?
3. Can the learners not ensure that they use the computers in the afternoons of the other four days?
4. Is the lack of computers affecting their behaviour, results and attitudes?
5. Can we not use parents from the community to help supervise the classes, perhaps in return for a few lessons on how to use a computer?
6. Could the senior learners not be responsible enough to monitor these classes and ensure the safety of these computers?

The next step is to question the data, inferences and deductions made and question whether they were logically arrived at and whether the correct reasoning was used. So to use our example, the SMT could come up with the conclusion that the poor results, bad attitude, incomplete homework etc. was due to the computer centre being closed. The other deduction is that closing the computer centre can be seen as treating our learners especially our poor black learners unfairly. How did we come to this conclusion? Are our biases and prejudices playing a role in this conclusion? It is of course possible that the learners who do not have computers have found an alternative way to complete their work and the ones who are not doing this are the learners who actually have access to computer. The SMT would need to ask themselves questions like "what reasons do I/you have for saying this?" or "Can you prove that this is true?" Fisher is of the opinion one would be more likely to form better judgements if these four aspects of questioning or arguments are adhered to. This is quite systematic, almost clinical and does not

take into consideration emotions which could also play an important role when making decisions.

Plato regarded emotions as a mental state that needed to be mastered and controlled (Murris, 2009). Murris argues against this approach to emotions and has tried to show that emotions are neither fixed nor controlled but rather can be seen as complex judgements. She also concludes that they can be extremely informative as "our emotions are constructed through our language, our morals, our history, our culture and our thinking, and they are in constant flux" (Murris, 2009, p. 16). Arguably this is especially true in South Africa with its rich history and diverse culture. Emotions play an integral role in decision making process and make one aware of the moral dimension of a situation. It would be a serious oversight if emotions were not considered in a meeting of the SMT for example. For example, one might get angry, because one does not feel listened to or not being treated with respect. So emotions are good indicators and give information about the values and virtues involved in the collaborative decision-making of a SMT.

Throughout the CoE participants contribute when they have something to say, remembering to build on the previous person's comment. Each successive person may question the point of view or help develop that view. At key points in the enquiry when there seems to be too much tension, confusion or debate, the facilitator could ask that people discuss a particular point in pairs or small groups. This would allow more participation. Also people who may not feel comfortable opposing other people's ideas would feel more comfortable doing so in a smaller group. For example talking about our biases and prejudices about the poor or about black people is quite exposing and talking about this to an entire group would not be comfortable. Speaking in pairs would allow one to begin to address these issues more readily.

Another philosophical point to deliberate on would be the moral dilemma of choosing the rights of the learners over the rights of the teachers. On the one hand, the learners have a right to a good education and therefore should have access to resources such as computers. On the other hand, teachers are at school from 7am and are actively engaged with learners throughout the day. They too need to rest, rejuvenate and to spend time with their families, so how fair is it to demand of them to spend two afternoons at school a week?

This thought experiment in the context of a real critical incident shows how at the end of a CoE one may not come up with a solution but the work done in terms of individual and team reflection in terms of our morals, values, prejudices and biases is invaluable. The enquiries touch on concepts and ideas that at the heart of our profession. The meanings we bring to these concepts inform the decisions – often without even knowing that this is the case.

It is important to regularly review and re-evaluate decisions made by an SMT. The effects of these decisions as well as the policies need to be constantly monitored and re-evaluated. A CoE could be an important tool to do this.

I want to go back briefly to the responses of the learners and teachers when the computer centre was closed. The reactions of the learners and teachers were extremely emotional and quite aggressive. A CoE could be done with those teachers, learners and the SMT to discover why their response was so destructive and negative. Their response could be an indicator of the current climate in the school and a CoE could therefore be used to bring their true concerns to the foreground and perhaps find ways of dealing with these concerns. I presume that their angry response was because they were unhappy about the authoritarian way in which the decision was taken. They felt excluded from the decision making process especially since the decision directly involved them.

As stated in chapter 3 if people are actively involved in the decision-making process it would be easier to take ownership of the situation as well as the solution that were arrived at. In this way there is also continuous communication between all members of the team and members could not pretend that they did not know or were not told about the decision.

Summary

This chapter presented a thought experiment which explored whether using the CoE methodology in the decision making process would make this process more inclusive, collaborative, effective and democratic. The thought experiment included exploring the moral quality of these decisions.

The purpose of the CoE is not to make quick decisions which are effective but rather to slow the decision making process down. It is a process driven approach rather than a product driven approach. The CoE could be used to enquire about the quality of the decision, that is, where all stakeholders represented. Important questions are: ‘Will the decision stand up to the scrutiny of

the learners, parents and teachers?'. 'Does the decision coincide with the values and mission of the school'.

I have argued that there are many important things to consider before using a CoE to make decisions. One needs to see whether the present environment is conducive to this approach. One needs to get buy-in from the staff members and convince them of the value that a CoE approach has to offer. Numerous challenges would be faced and limitations need to be placed on the CoE methodology as it cannot be used to make every decision as it would not be practical.

Using the CoE method of decision making could initially be extremely time-consuming as consensus may never be reached as that is not the aim of a community of enquiry. As the members of the team get to know each other, building trust and engaging respectfully in these discussions, the decision making process may take less time. However, the CoE makes space for people to voice and test their opinions and to experience a process whereby they make a real difference to what happens in their school. Members of the SMT will learn about the CoE through participation in the process by a facilitator who has been trained to facilitate CoEs. Over time, more SMT members might get involved through reading literature and noticing the benefits of the process. It is then that other members can also start facilitating the SMTs.

A critical incident was discussed which showcased how the CoE could be implemented in schools to help make quality, moral decisions as part of the daily running of a school.

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion

Introduction

As a member of an SMT, making decisions that impact teachers, parents and learners is a huge responsibility. In a country like South Africa, where the struggle continues in an attempt to deal with the remnants of the apartheid era, this responsibility lies on many shoulders. Schools, in my opinion, could play a major role in addressing the inequalities, lack of freedom and justice of the past. However, in order to do this leaders of schools, their SMT's, teachers, learners and their parents, would need to be given pedagogical tools to help address these issues. I am suggesting that the CoE could be one such tool.

Summary of findings

I will look at each research question in turn by drawing on my findings.

What is the CoE methodology and how do its democratic values link with the decision making process of an SMT?

The CoE methodology is traditionally used in classrooms to encourage children to think critically, and in a creative and caring manner. If used in the decision making process of the SMT, the members would sit in a circle so that they can engage better with each other; there is a lack of hierarchy and members share authority. There are many pedagogical tools and practices that encourage participation in a respectful and democratic manner. These CoEs could be seen as miniature democracies where every member can have their say in the decision making process. The values of equality, justice and freedom are at its core and which could help to build a democratic team that strives to make reasonable judgements and quality decisions. In a CoE all members are given an opportunity to contribute and encouraged to participate so there is a sense of equality and justice in the process. There is a freedom to express what is felt, assuming the members feel safe enough to do so. All members are

The SMT however, would have to be open to the idea of using this methodology and would need to be trained on how to use it. The potential of the Coe method is limited by time limitations that are built into the structure of everyday school life? As the pedagogy slows down the decision making process it has to be carefully timetabled. Also, at a deep level the CoE can cause 'trouble' in that it is designed to question values and core beliefs that underpin the everyday running of the school as well as its philosophy. Philosophical scrutiny of key assumptions and practises might cause resistance and disturbances.

Furthermore engaging in philosophical and moral enquiries may seem as though we are questioning authority and this is not what many South Africans are used to. This CoE methodology therefore runs counter culture to the traditional culture found in many schools, including the leadership cultures used. There may be much opposition to the introduction of such a methodology.

The question could be raised "Are South Africans ready so early in a country's democratic evolution to adopt such a liberal philosophy?" Sustainable change in any organisation happens as a result of meaningful but small increments. Therefore this liberal methodology may represent too big a jump if not done sensitively to what already exists in a school. So it is problematic to introduce the pedagogy too quickly. Implementation should be done responsibly and cautiously otherwise it builds a culture of cynicism and scepticism and fear. Some members may feel as though they are not learning as quickly as others. They may feel left behind by the methodology and could lead to insecurities and they could sabotage the process.

What is the purpose of the SMT and what are the different leadership styles that are operational in South African Schools presently?

As argued in Chapter 3, prior to 1994 a more bureaucratic and authoritarian approach to leadership was used and this continues to be the case in many schools. This could be because this was the model that leaders observed and which seemed to work in the schools they worked in or that they currently lead. It could also be because even though South Africa became a democracy in 1994, very little training was given to leaders on how to themselves lead more democratically and allow for collaboration and inclusiveness without feeling as though they were losing control.

There are however, other leadership styles that could be used in South African schools that are more democratic in nature. These are what is called the lasting leadership style and the distributive leadership style. These leadership styles are more collaborative and inclusive but do not seem to focus much on the moral side of decision making. The CoE could be used to add this dimension to these leadership styles.

What would the thought experiment look like in terms of engaging the SMT in a CoE and what would the limitations, challenges and benefits be?

A critical incident from my own practice was narrated that required a decision to be made by the SMT. It was used as an imaginary case-study to show what the CoE would possibly be like in that situation. The CoE methodology was used to come to an imaginary decision and to interrogate the moral implications of the decisions.

It became clear in the experiment that the CoE cannot be used for all decisions. It simply would takes up too much time, and would therefore be impractical and possibly unnecessary.

The CoE methodology would be best used for making decisions that would involve policy making or change because it affects a large number of people and it would be imperative to get the opinions and ideas of as many stakeholders as possible. Then the policy is more likely to be effective as a collaborative and inclusive approach has been used and stakeholders will feel that they have been part of the decision and would therefore feel probably more responsible for its success or failure.

The CoE methodology could also be used to enquire around issues that are controversial, as these kinds of discussions could get emotional; people could be extremely sensitive and would easily feel judged. The CoE methodology operates in a safe environment and if practised well, people could still discuss those issues, but would feel safe enough to participate.

Finally, the pedagogy helps surface the substantive issues that often remain invisible. In my critical incident I analysed in chapter 4, it became clear that it could possibly lead into enquiries into the more philosophical issues for example "What are the limits on collaborative learning" and " is real democracy possible in a school?"

The aim of this research report was to engage in a conceptual study of Philosophy for Children, specifically the CoE methodology and how it could help make the decision making process that occurs in a school management team (SMT) in South Africa more inclusive, democratic, effective and collaborative. Lipman and Sharp were speaking of using the CoE to make *children* more critical, creative and curious and to allow them to make more reasonable judgements in the classroom. However, to limit the CoE approach to a classroom is doing this method a disservice as it can also be used in other contexts where quality, moral decisions are required.

Further Research

The aim of my research was normative in the sense that my intent was to show through an analysis of a critical incident how the CoE could be used to make the decision making process of the SMT more inclusive, collaborative and democratic and in doing so help make decisions that are better in terms of their moral quality and possibly also more effective in that they would probably last longer.

I am currently a member of the SMT of my school. The CoE methodology could be used by the SMT of my school to see whether the CoE methodology can be used as a tool to make decisions for our school. This could be the focus for a further empirical pilot research project. I would follow the progress of the SMT regarding the following:

1. How they make decisions prior to CoE and while using the CoE Methodology.
2. Is the decision making process more inclusive, collaborative and democratic?
3. Are the values of the school and the individuals the same or have they changed since the introduction of the CoE methodology?
4. Is the moral quality of the decisions better and do these decisions stand up to the scrutiny of all the stakeholders?

If successful, the CoE method could be tried out in other schools and evaluated on its success to make the decision making processes of SMTs more inclusive, collaborative and democratic.

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