



DIE VERANDERING IN ONDERWYS
THE CHANGE IN EDUCATION



"MINI – MBA" IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

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MENTORING FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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WHAT IS THE REALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA?



- In South Africa there is no formal preparation for principalship.
 - Educators move through the ranks.
 - Promotion is linked to the educator's results in the academic and extra-curricular areas.

WHAT IS THE REALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA?



- The assumption is that tertiary qualifications and training programmes are sufficient preparation.
 - The expectation is that principals will be able to manage challenges and demands of principalship.
- Emotional, social and intellectual intelligence is challenged.
- Pressure is placed on the individual to meet all these demands.

WHO IS THE BEGINNER PRINCIPAL?



- “Beginnership” spans almost the first three years of the period of appointment of the principal.
- Practice confirms that some experienced principals view themselves as incompetent to bring about big changes or to manage certain incidents outside the framework normal educational practice.
- The link of a general timeframe to a beginner principal is problematic.

CHALLENGES FOR BEGINNER PRINCIPALS



WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE?

Principals should:

- meet high expectations,
- apply performance management and
- cope with increasing responsibilities.

CHALLENGES FOR BEGINNER PRINCIPALS



Emotional
survival

Social
support

Skills

CHALLENGES FOR BEGINNER PRINCIPALS



EMOTIONAL SURVIVAL

- The principal is the only person who can within the school perform the specific role of headship.
- Complicated problems have to be resolved in isolation and within a short period of time amidst regular interruptions.
- Some principals struggle to adapt to this isolation.

CHALLENGES FOR BEGINNER PRINCIPALS



SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Good networks and social contact with governing bodies, educators, unions and the community should be sustained.
- This occurs while problems with the previous principal's approach to tradition, practices and management styles come to the fore, especially when changes are mentioned and if staff members are (already) accustomed to the *modus operandi* of the predecessor.
- The beginner principal is left to his or her own devices in a phase where new routines, new relationships and new responsibilities are being experienced.
- The community have high expectations of the beginner principal.

CHALLENGES FOR BEGINNER PRINCIPALS



SKILLS - Professional and management skills:

- Leadership
- Interpersonal skills
- Relationship networks
- Contact with learners
- Discipline
- Communication with staff and educational roleplayers
- Maintenance and development of facilities
- Management of under-achievement
- Improvement of the public image of the school

CHALLENGES FOR BEGINNER PRINCIPALS



SKILLS

- Beginner principals fail as leaders because of lacking interpersonal skills, accessibility to new ideas and initiative.
- Principals are often appointed on the basis of their skills as educators and not as principals.

THE MENTORING PROGRAMME



PHASES OF MENTORING PROGRAMME ALIGNED TO THE INDUCTION PROGRAMME

Appointment

Immersion in job description

Reform programmes

Consolidation

Refining of strategy

THE MENTORING PROGRAMME



THE NATURE OF MENTORING

- Mentoring is the support provided by a more experienced colleague (mentor) at a high level to a beginner or someone newly appointed to the position.
- It is a partnership between people and is based on mutual respect and trust.
- It comes about through counselling, support and the provision of opportunities to develop.
- A large premium is placed on the selection of an appropriate mentor, because the mentor provides support, career development and psychological support.

THE MENTORING PROGRAMME



PHASE 1: Appointment as principal (first 6 months)

- Period of introduction to demands of principalship. Intensive learning takes place in this phase.
- The principal develops an overall perspective of the school and the focus is on orientation.
- The mentoring programme places emphasis on the corrective actions for developing problems and reverse actions for serious problems.

THE MENTORING PROGRAMME



PHASE 2: Immersion in job description (6-12 months)

- Deeper knowledge and diagnosis are revealed.
- Few organisational changes take place.
- Become accustomed to basic concerns, challenges and causal problems.

THE MENTORING PROGRAMME



PHASE 3: Reformation programmes are implemented (12-21 months)

- Structural changes are implemented.
- Organisational improvements and implementation take place.
- Utilise external support if needed.

THE MENTORING PROGRAMME



PHASE 4: Consolidation (21-27 months)

- Evaluate the changes.
- Evaluate the outcomes of the changes introduced.
- Corrections.

THE MENTORING PROGRAMME



PHASE 5: Refinement of strategy (27-36 months)

- “Fine tuning” is the focus.
- New principal is now in full control.
- Power base and credibility is affirmed or not.
- Relative calm / acceptance if the previous phases were well executed.

FORMS OF MENTORING



- Formal: structured,
- Informal: spontaneous

Formal
and
Informal

- Several mentors and beginner principals as team

Multiple

Needs
driven

- Focus on several aspects

Team

- A mentor with various principals

VALUE OF MENTORING



“What new principals learn must be based upon best practice. If not, new principals will form approaches and habits that will be difficult to unlearn or rethink. In addition, if principals make serious mistakes in their first year, they may suffer the fallout for many years to come.”

Schumaker and Sommers

VALUE OF MENTORING



- Establishes a stable environment of learning and support for the beginner principal through the transmission of knowledge and skills in the pursuit of the goals of the schools.
- The mentoring can be duplicated to the school management team, heads of subjects and educators in the school – establishing a culture of collaboration.

CONCLUSION



- Beginner principals receive insufficient preparation and training and therefore they find it challenging to address the demands of the new position.
- They are isolated and receive limit or no social support.
- They experience a lack of experience and knowledge in how to address the challenges of principalship and in being a successful principal.

CONCLUSION



- A need for support exists – formal and informal – in the form of a mentoring programme.
- Clear guidelines for the mentoring programme are needed and support to beginner principals is necessary.

IN CLOSING



- A definite need exists within the South African context for mentoring to ensure the effectiveness of the school principal's leadership and to improve learner performance.



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Thank you

