



The Contribution of a School Principal in fostering a School Culture in line to Effective Management and Academic Performance

Sharon Matama Gichaba, Fred Sunda and Erick Nyakundi Onsongo
Kisii University, Kenya.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 14 February 2015;

Received in revised form:

12 July 2015;

Accepted: 20 July 2015;

Keywords

Fostering,
Management,
Performance.

ABSTRACT

School culture is a pervasive element of schools, yet it is elusive and difficult to define. Understanding school culture is an essential factor in any school initiative. Any type of change introduced to schools is often met with resistance and is doomed to failure as a result of the reform being counter to this nebulous, yet all encompassing facet of school culture. Principals scoring high on this index frequently work with teachers to improve weaknesses and address pedagogical problems, and also to solve problems with teachers when there are challenges to learning in school. Also, they often inform teachers about possibilities to update their curricular knowledge and instructional skills, these principals report being vigilant about disruptive student behaviour in schools. In general, principals performing on this indicator spend significant amounts of their managerial time in attempting to improve school instruction methodology and foster co-curricular activities. School culture is not a static entity; It is constantly being constructed and shaped through interactions with others and through reflections on life and the world in general (Sarason, S.B. 2000). School culture develops as staff members interact with each other, the students and the community. It becomes the guide for behavior that is shared among members of the school community at large. Culture is shaped by the interactions of the personnel and the actions of the personnel become directed by culture. It is self-repeating cycle.

© 2015 Elixir All rights reserved.

Introduction

Every organization has a culture, that history and underlying set of unwritten expectations that shape everything about the school. A school culture influences the ways people think, feel, and act, being able to understand and shape the culture is key to a school's success in promoting staff and student learning (Hersch, D. 1998) argues that although hard to define and difficult to put a finger on, culture is extremely powerful. This ephemeral taken-for-granted aspect of schools, too often overlooked or ignored, is actually one of the most significant features of any educational enterprise. Culture influences everything that goes on in schools: how staff dress, what they talk about, their willingness to change, the practice of instruction, and the emphasis given student and staff learning (Hellnan, M. Ed. 1994). Culture is the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that have built up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges. This set of informal expectations and values shapes how people think, feel, and act in schools. This highly enduring web of influence binds the school together and makes it special. It is up to school principals, teachers, and often parents to help identify, shape, and maintain strong, positive, student-focused cultures. Without these supportive cultures, reforms will wither, and student learning will slip (Koski, M. 1993)

Hess, F. M, (1999) posits that School culture is the set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the "persona" of the school. These unwritten expectations build up over time as teachers, administrators, parents, and students work together to solve problems, deal with challenges and, at times, cope with failures. For example, every school has a set of expectations about what can be discussed at staff meetings, what constitutes good teaching techniques, how willing the staff is to change, and the importance of staff

development (Sashkin, M. & Walberg H.J. eds, 1993). Schools also have rituals and ceremonies or communal events to celebrate success, to provide closure during collective transitions, and to recognize people's contributions to the school. School cultures also include symbols and stories that communicate core values, reinforce the mission, and build a shared sense of commitment. Symbols are an outward sign of inward values. Stories are group representations of history and meaning. In positive cultures, these features reinforce learning, commitment, and motivation, and they are consistent with the school's vision (Rosenholtz, 1982)

Newmann, F. (1995) observes that School culture is an all-encompassing element of schools, yet it is elusive and difficult to define. Understanding school culture is an essential factor in any reform initiative. Any type of change introduced to schools is often met with resistance and is doomed to failure as a result of the reform being counter to this nebulous, yet all encompassing facet school culture. Culture influences all aspects of schools, including such things as how the staff dresses (Murphy, 1994), what staff talk about in the teachers' lounge (Meier, D. 1996), how teachers decorate their classrooms, their emphasis on certain aspects of the curriculum, and teachers' willingness to change (Levine, E. 2002). As Hargreaves, A. (1994) states, "If culture changes, everything changes".

This underlying stream is the culture of that particular school. Culture is the stream of "norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals built up over time" (Hess, F. M, 1999). It is a set of tacit expectations and assumptions that direct the activities of school personnel and students. School culture is not a static entity. It is constantly being constructed and shaped through interactions with others and through reflections on life and the world in general (Koski, M. 1993). School culture develops as staff members interact with each other, the students,

Tele:

E-mail addresses: erickonsongo@rocketmail.com

and the community. It becomes the guide for behavior that is shared among members of the school at large. Culture is shaped by the interactions of the personnel, and the actions of the personnel become directed by culture. It is self-repeating cycle and to introduce change would necessitate an interruption of this cycle.

Murphy, J. (1994) argues that schools are shaped by cultural practices and values and reflect the norms of the society for which they have been developed. Just as hydrogen is a major element of water, so are societal values a major ingredient of school culture. The general ideologies of society at large and the communities surrounding individual schools become reflected in the culture of schooling. In Anyon's study of inner city schools (1995), she identified three factors that vitiated reform efforts in the schools involved in her study: sociocultural differences among participants, an abusive school environment, and educators' expectations of failed reform. These three factors combined to create a school culture that negated any attempt at reform. Efforts at reform continually failed in those schools because the underlying stream of values and norms was indicative of the poverty, negativity, and abuse of the surrounding community. Anyon's study suggests that in order to reform the schools, the community's expectations and values would have to be reformed which will be reflected in the culture of the schools.

The governance of schools also shapes culture (Rathbone, C. 1998). The hierarchy of leadership at the state, district, and school levels creates the parameters within which cultures can be created. In other words, teachers are expected to follow the dictates of the principal and other administrators regardless of other cultural aspects of the school. Furthermore, students are expected to follow the dictates of teachers and all other adults in the school as well. This hierarchy contributes to the culture of schools heedless of individual teaching or leadership styles. The rituals and procedures common to most public schools also play a part in defining a school's culture (McLaughlin, M.W & Talbert, J. 2001). For example, having children stand or walk in lines, ringing bells to move children from one place to another, organizing the students and curriculum by age and class level (Heck, R. Marcoulides, G. 1996), and systematically rewarding or punishing children for behaviour and/or academics (Hersch, P.1998) all add to the confluence of the culture of schools. These are examples of traditional ways of manipulating time and activity.

School culture affects the lives of all school personnel, including and especially teachers in their classrooms. Sarason, S. B. (1982) assessed the outcomes of efforts of educational change over several years. Among other things, they noted that a great deal of educational mandated reforms failed due to the school organizational climate and leadership, characteristics of schools and teachers. They are indicative of the effect of school culture on the change process. Their findings reinforce the above-mentioned findings of Hargreaves (1994) as well. Of particular interest here are their findings about teacher attributes regarding proposed reforms. They noted three teacher characteristics that had an effect on the outcome of the projects: years of teaching, sense of efficacy, and verbal ability. They discovered that number of years teaching had a negative effect on the change process since the longer a teacher taught the less likely the change was to improve student achievement and the less likely the project was going to achieve its goals. They also discovered that teachers with many years of experience were less likely to change their practices and more likely to abandon the reform project once education funding ran out. They found that teacher

efficacy, the belief that a teacher can help even the most unmotivated student, had a positive effect on all outcomes. The study also concluded that teacher's verbal ability had a strong correlation with improved student achievement only (Klonsky, M. 1995).

Lieberman, A. (1985) argues that this is easier to say than it is to do, because schools are not businesses and students are not adults. Schools are far more complicated institutions, socially and politically. Urban schools, particularly those serving highly diverse populations, harbor many conflicting cultures, each of which affects student learning in different ways, whether students are dependent or independent learners, whether they see scholars as role models, whether they think boldly or enjoy debate or disagreement. To begin with, students bring numerous ethnic cultures, languages and habits of mind to the school, each of which is associated with varying child-rearing and educational traditions. Layered on these are class cultures, each of which can likewise be distinguished by distinctive kinds of formal and informal communication. Lightfoot, S.(1983) is only the latest in a long line of socio-linguistically oriented educators who have shown that the cultures of the impoverished, the middle class and the wealthy differ markedly in ways that affect literacy acquisition and attitudes toward schooling (McNeil, L. 1986).

Meier, D (1996) Indicates that the formal education system is itself a product of middle class assumptions and traditions, several of which are in a democratic community, individualism, and corporate capitalism for example conflict in important ways when it comes to values, myths, cardinal virtues, tales of heroism and norms. Finally, layered on the system's general culture is the culture of bureaucracy, the method the education system has employed to carry out its institutional mission. (Jackson P.W & Bosstron R.G & Hensen, D. H. 1993) Bureaucracy is not a neutral form of organization. It, too, carries with it a host of values, beliefs, assumptions, forms of communication and processes for making decisions, prioritizing issues and spending time and resources. It is itself a powerful culture as it would have to be, given all the other cultures that have to be managed somehow, and given the political environment within which the system exists.

Howard E.R & Keefe, J.W (1991) observes that all these interacting cultures and cultural influences converge upon the schoolhouse, where they are mediated well or poorly, with fortunate or unfortunate consequences for teachers' and students' abilities to do their work successfully. When we say that we want a better or a different organizational culture in our schools, we are asking that the people caught up in this complex, highly compromised environment somehow develop a set of values, beliefs, stories and means of operating that will transcend all these other influences and tensions and focus everyone more on the central tasks of learning. Clearly, this is a daunting task. Like all organizations faced with multiple tasks and influences, schools develop a homeostasis, an equilibrium that both stabilizes them and makes them extremely resistant to change. Only the boldest system-wide actions could get anyone's attention, let alone inspire him or her to act differently for any length of time.

Purpose of the study

The word "culture" describes a wide range of influences on how people behave in organizations, communities and even nations. In general, it refers to a set of common values, attitudes, beliefs and norms, some of which are explicit and some of which are not. People in a particular culture may or may not be conscious of its influence and may or may not be able to

articulate its elements. They do what they do and say what they say because that is the way things are commonly done or said. They tell certain kinds of stories and extol certain kinds of behavior and mythologize certain kinds of events, and the sum total of all these actions and conversations becomes the context they need for finding meaning in their lives and establishing relationships with others. This paper deals with the characteristic of teachers that can facilitate academic performance through a well netted school culture despite the fact that teachers tend to teach the way they have been taught. The school culture reflects to some extent the aspects of other educational cultures to which the teacher has been exposed. Changes that are introduced that is foreign to a teacher's lived experiences is likely to be met with resistance hence this paper specifically focuses on the Contribution of a School Principal in fostering a School Culture in line to Effective Management and Academic Performance

Literature Review

Successful schools are the ones that foster both academic excellence and ethics and have positive, effective school cultures. We define a positive school culture broadly to include the school wide ethos and the culture of individual students, high expectations for learning and achievement, a safe and caring environment, shared values and relational trust, a powerful pedagogy and curriculum, high student motivation and engagement, a professional staff culture, and partnerships with families and the community. Because a positive school culture is central to student success and holistic school transformation, we must help all schools acquire the tools needed to develop and assess such cultures. Schools must also be held accountable for assessing the quality of their school cultures (Levine, E. 2002)

Lightfoot, S. (1983) observes that a positive school culture broadly conceived includes the school's: social climate, including a safe and caring environment in which all students feel welcomed and valued and have a sense of ownership of their school, intellectual climate, in which all students in every classroom are supported and challenged to do their very best and achieve work of quality; this includes a rich, rigorous, and engaging curriculum and a powerful pedagogy for teaching it rules and policies that hold all school members accountable to high standards of learning and behavior. traditions and routines, built from shared values, that honour and reinforce the school's academic and social standards, structures for giving staff and students a voice in, and shared responsibility for, solving problems and making decisions that affect the school environment and their common life ways of effectively partnering with parents to support students' learning and character growth, norms for relationships and behavior that create a professional culture of excellence and ethics (Heck, R. Marcoulides, G. 1996).

Lieberman, A. (1988) observes that some schools have over time become unproductive and toxic. There are schools where staffs are extremely fragmented, where the purpose of serving students has been lost to the goal of serving the adults, where negative values and hopelessness reign. For example, in this school, disgruntled staff came to staff meetings ready to attack new ideas, criticize those teachers concerned about student achievement, and make fun of any staff who volunteered to assist the students without an extra gain (Meier, D. 1996) Teachers who support academic performance talk about the meetings as battlegrounds of education, where snipers and attacks are the norm. Negative culture makes staff to effectively sabotage any attempts at student improvement. Even good schools often harbor toxic subcultures, oppositional groups of staff or parents who want to spread a sense of frustration,

anomie, and hopelessness. Toxic schools are places where negativity dominates conversations, interactions, and planning; where the only stories recounted are of failure, the only heroes are anti-heroes. No one wants to live and work in these kinds of schools. But it takes leadership, time, and focus to rebuild these festering institutions. Happily, most schools are not this far gone, though many have cultural patterns that do not serve staff or students (Murphy, J. 1994)

Newmann, F. (1995) observes that in contrast to the poisonous schools many schools have strong, positive cultures. These are schools where staff have a shared sense of purpose, where they pour their hearts into teaching where the underlying norms are of collegiality, improvement, and hard work, where student rituals and traditions celebrate student accomplishment, teacher innovation, and parental commitment where the informal network of storytellers, heroes, and heroines provides a social web of information, support, and history; where success, joy, and humor abound (Sarason, S. B. 1982) Strong positive cultures are places with a shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, and a shared commitment to helping students learn.

School leaders from every level are essential to shaping school culture. Principals communicate core values in their everyday work. Teachers reinforce values in their actions and words. Parents bolster spirit when they visit school, participate in governance, and celebrate success. In the strongest schools, leadership comes from many sources (Sashkin, M. & Walberg, H. (eds.) 1993) School leaders do several important things when sculpting culture. First, they read the culture its history and current condition. Leaders should know the deeper meanings embedded in the school before trying to reshape it. Second, leaders uncover and articulate core values, looking for those that buttress what is best for students and that support student-centered professionalism. It is important to identify which aspects of the culture are destructive and which are constructive. Finally, leaders work to fashion a positive context, reinforcing cultural elements that are positive and modifying those that are negative and dysfunctional. Positive school cultures are never monolithic or overly conforming, but core values and shared purpose should be pervasive and deep (McNeil, L. 1986)

The school leaders shape culture through communicating the core values in what they say and do. They honor and recognize those who have worked to serve the students and the purpose of the school. They observe school rituals and traditions to support the school's heart and soul. They recognize heroes and heroines and the work these exemplars accomplish. The eloquently speak of the deeper mission of the school. They celebrate the accomplishments of the staff, the students, and the community. They preserve the focus on students by recounting stories of success and achievement (Mc Laughlin, L. 1986)

School culture enhances or hinders professional learning. Culture enhances professional learning when teachers believe professional development is important, valued, and "the way we do things around here." Professional development is nurtured when the school's history and stories include examples of meaningful professional learning and a group commitment to improvement (Jackson P. W, Boostrom R.E & Hansen D. H, 1993) Staff learning is reinforced when sharing ideas, working collaboratively to learn, and using newly learned skills are recognized symbolically and orally in staff meetings and other school ceremonies. For example, in the school staff meetings begin with the story of a positive action a teacher took to help a student with a ceremonial school coffee cup is presented to the teacher and a round of applause follows.

The most positive cultures value staff members who help lead their own development, create well-defined improvement plans, organize study groups, and learn in a variety of ways. Cultures that celebrate recognize, and support staff learning bolsters professional community. Negative cultures can seriously impair staff development (Sarason, S.B 1982) Negative norms and values, hostile relations, and pessimistic stories deplete the culture. In one school, for example, the only stories of staff development depict boring, ill-defined failures. Positive culture experiences are attacked and do not fit the cultural norms. Teachers are socially ostracized for sharing their positive experiences at workshops or training programs. At this school's staff meetings one is allowed to share interesting or useful ideas learned in the place of work. Positive news about staff development opportunities goes out for those who still value personal learning (Roseholtz, S. 1998).

Koski, M. (1993) observes that in schools professional development is valued, teachers do believe they have anything new to learn, or they do not believe the only source for new ideas is trial-and-error in one's own classroom anyone who shares a new idea from a book, workshop, or article is not laughed at. In these schools, positive views of professional learning are normal cultural. Those who value learning are not criticized. The positive individuals may either not leave the school (reinforcing the culture) or become outcasts, seeking support with like-minded staff

Culture as a center Stage for student intellectual development

The school culture shapes a student mental development and this one undergoes a number of models to describe students' intellectual development in school (Murphy, J. 1994) although they have slightly different emphases, all the models describe a similar progression, described here with vocabulary borrowed. Dualism: In early stages of intellectual development, students tend to see the world in terms of good-bad, right-wrong, black-white distinctions. Knowledge, to their mind, is unambiguous and clear, and learning a simple matter of information-exchange. Students at this stage believe the teacher's job is to impart facts and their job is to remember and reproduce them. At this early stage of intellectual development, students may be frustrated when the teacher provides conditional answers (e.g., "It depends on the context") or introduces more questions rather than giving "the right answer" (Murphy, J. 1994)

The next stage according to Murphy, J. (1994) is Multiplicity, this stage of intellectual development begins when students realize that experts can disagree and facts can contradict one another. To students at this stage of development, everything becomes a matter of perspective and opinion, with all opinions accorded equal validity. They feel more empowered to think for themselves and question received wisdom, but they are not necessarily able to evaluate different perspectives or marshal evidence to support their own. They may also view instructor evaluations of their work as purely subjective.

Murphy, J. (1994) observes that Relativism is a more sophisticated stage of development, students begin to recognize the need to support their opinions with evidence. They accept that reasonable people can disagree, but understand that some perspectives have more validity than others and that even the word of authorities should be analyzed critically, not swallowed whole. Like students at the dualistic stage they may have strong views, but these views are grounded in examination and reflection. They begin to perceive the role of the teacher differently: as a knowledgeable guide or conversation partner, not an infallible authority but also not "just another opinion".

Commitment is the last stage in Murphy, J. (1994) this does not involve a jump in intellectual sophistication so much as the application of knowledge gained in the relativism stage. Here, students make choices and decisions in the outside world that are informed by relativistic knowledge (Murphy, J. 1994) It is important to note that students do not necessarily move through each of these stages in lock-step. Some students might take longer to move out of dualism than others; some might get comfortable at the multiplicity stage and never reach relativism. By the same token, students do not necessarily move through the stages sequentially: when students encounter new intellectual challenges for example, material that fundamentally shakes their beliefs or assumptions) they may "retreat" to earlier stages temporarily.

Principals and other school leaders can and should shape school culture. They do this through three key processes. First, they read the culture, understanding the culture's historical source as well as analyzing current norms and values. Second, they assess the culture, determining which elements of the culture support the school's core purposes and the mission, and which hinder achieving valued ends. Finally, they actively shape the culture by reinforcing positive aspects and working to transform negative aspects of the culture (Howard, E.R & Keefe, J.W. 1991).

Meier, D. (1994) point out that Principals can learn the history of the school by talking to the school's storytellers (they are the staff who enjoy recounting history), looking through prior school improvement plans for signals about what is really important, not just what is required, or using a staff meeting to discuss what the school has experienced, especially in staff development, over the past two decades. It is important to examine contemporary aspects of the culture is a series of exercises can determine the core norms and values, rituals, and ceremonies of the school, and their meanings. For example, asking each staff member to list six adjectives to describe the school, asking staff to tell a story that characterizes what the school is about, or having staff write metaphors describing the school can reveal aspects of the school culture.

Cultures the principals may inculcate and lead effectively

At the heart of any culture are attitudes toward time and commonly accepted norms about how to spend it. Anyone who has observed classes in an inner-city high school can see immediately that many students' attitudes toward time differ markedly from their teachers' attitudes and from the assumptions about time embedded in the bloated curriculum. Adults feel a sense of urgency; students do not. Some of the students' attitude can be attributed to adolescence, no doubt, and some of it to the influence of a culture of poverty wherein long-term planning is rare and delayed gratification almost non-existent. Whatever the causes of student languor, teachers tend to slow down to the students' pace. Almost everything takes longer than it seems it should Time in school is insufficiently allocated and wastefully used, especially considering the needs of the under-prepared, unmotivated student. It is also inadequate for teachers either to do what they are currently doing or to learn and practice how to do something more efficient and effective. If schools are going to be reformed, we will have to rethink the relationships between culture, organization and time (Hersch, D. 1998)

Hess F.M (1999) observes that all other things being equal, a school that knows where it wants to go and knows what it needs to do to get there will be more successful than a school that is just treading water. Most schools have no vision of a future any different from the present. Their managers may speak

of better results in the future, but they foresee no changes in the structure of the institution that might bring about improvements. Apparently, better results will come from somehow working harder or coming into more money. Lacking a vision of anything different, they tend also to lack specific missions. They exist to “provide educational opportunity for all,” or to “educate each child to his or her potential,” or “to create good citizens” the noble, but vague sentiments. This is like a business saying its mission is “to make money.” True enough, but not sufficiently detailed to inspire or rally employees around improvements. Schools’ efforts to do almost anything for almost anyone guarantee that they will be unable to focus their precious little time and energy on what’s most important, and they will have no chance to create a special culture of learning that might compete with all the other cultures milling about in the school. Like shopping malls, to which they have often been compared (Newmann, F, 1995), comprehensive schools are just large, culturally neutral buildings where strangers assemble to make what they can of the experience. Shoppers with the most capital make the most of it; the rest just hang out.

Koski, M. (1993) observes that organizations without clear, concrete purposes tend to be inefficient and always disappointing to a substantial number of their customers. Well-managed conversations about purpose, vision and mission revitalize schools in three ways. First, they create new and deeper relationships among people who care about the school. Second, serious inquiries into matters people have come to take for granted build a sense of community that begins to mold school culture around common values, ideas and hopes. People tend to “buy in” to the school and think of it as theirs. Thirdly, of course, agreement about vision and mission leads to practical criteria for making decisions about what is most important, what must be set aside and what to do when unpredicted situations arise? (Mc Laughlin, M.W & Talbert, J.2001) Ultimately, the needs generated by such “super-conversations” the need to make choices as a group, the need for decision-making criteria, the need to define limits and constraints and relevant data set the tone and lay down the habits for a coherent organizational culture that supports learning.

Sarason, S.B (1982) observes that Coherence about purpose cannot be achieved by top-down fiat requiring everyone to be on the same page at the same time. It comes, rather, through consistency of relationships and conversations, as well as repetition of a limited number of processes and values over a range of different circumstances. No matter whom you talk to in the organization, or what documents you read, you hear and read similar themes. Everyone seems to know why they are there, what they are doing as individuals and what their organization is contributing to some greater good. Everyone is proud, everyone feels him or she “belongs” there.

Lightfoot, S. (1983) observes the school principals should inculcate a culture that fosters the truth is, the curriculum is way out of control, “a mile wide and an inch deep,” incoherent and in need of serious pruning. If the stakeholders in a particular school want to create a new vision and mission for the school and tailor it to their students, they will have to eliminate something from this curriculum, focus their offerings on the school’s new purpose, develop interconnections among units and courses, and link the formal curriculum to an informal curriculum that extols the virtues necessary for success. They must be free to do that or they will not be able to create a new culture, schools are often reluctant to grant this freedom, because they have come to believe that all students are entitled to the

bloated curriculum and departures from it would be “inequitable.”

Hallinan M. eds. (1994) indicate that principals should have a pervasive focus on student and teacher learning. When educators look at disappointing student achievement indicators, they often say, “I taught it; they just didn’t learn it.” This evasion of responsibility is a consequence of a certain kind of culture wherein it seems perfectly natural to blame students for their failures. Students themselves even buy into it. This “I Taught It” culture is not conducive to maximum learning. It must be converted into a “They Learned It” culture. The shift from a teaching focus to a learning focus may sound simple, but it actually requires profound changes in curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, management, organization and leadership. It turns the school on its head. Instead of beginning with what the school offers, you have to begin with what the student requires. You have to know your students—their learning capacities and paces, their interests, their concerns, their hopes—first; the curriculum comes second. The job of the teacher is to know the student and draw him or her toward the curriculum.

Conclusion

The shift from traditional school structures to more open systems for learning is difficult and time consuming and loss of school culture. As Hess F.M (1999) point out, the approach involves short-term inefficiencies; and, because learning communities do not lend themselves to centralized control and are somewhat unpredictable, they try the patience of bureaucrats and others who may be rule-bound or in a hurry. Teachers, too, may be reluctant to change their current roles, for fear of losing some measure of control and satisfaction. The best way to bring teachers along is to create professional learning communities first, with a view toward spreading the model throughout the school once teachers have experienced its benefits.

Culture is rooted in relationships within the school system and principals should embrace better relationships in the school setting. Hill, P. T., Foster, G. E., & Gendler, T. (1990) what people talk about, how they talk about it, how often they talk. How much they trust each other, share with each other or forgive each other. What stories they tell each other, what heroes they extol, what virtues they praise. These things determine the patterns of behavior that become distinctive features of an organization. Organizational structures can increase or decrease the amounts of connectivity and communication among the people in the building and between the people in the building and the outside world. “If moral purpose is job one, relationships are job two, as you can’t get anywhere without them,” Hill, P. T., Foster, G. E., & Gendler, T. (1990) anyone who has tried to change relationships in an organization can vouch for the complexity of the task. Relationships involve emotions. Teachers who have worked in the same building for a long time have arrived at certain emotional compromises with their colleagues and students; it will feel risky to re-negotiate them. New teachers may feel too vulnerable to be as honest as they need to be. Some teachers and managers possess a good deal of insight into them and can accept constructive criticism; some barely know themselves and shatter when asked innocuous questions about what they are doing. Some students possess more empathy, responsibility, flexibility and social skillfulness than others (Hill, P. T., Foster, G. E., & Gendler, T. 1990)

Teachers can praise students in groups or as a whole class, rather than individually in front of others. Hargreaves, A. (1994)

observes that the teachers can also stress how an individual child's performance contributes to the success of the class. In individual student—teacher conferences or while assembling items for a portfolio or self-evaluation, praise can be balanced with suggestions for improvement. Praise for helping another student may be more acceptable than praise focusing on personal achievement. Students also get important feedback in the form of grades and comments on their work, and positive statements can certainly be a part of such feedback. Hill, P. T., Foster, G. E., & Gendler, T. (1990) during class discussion, students who are not comfortable volunteering may be willing to talk if the teacher calls on them, although some will still prefer not to be singled out

References

- Hallinan, M., ed. (1994). *Restructuring Schools: Promising Practices and Policies*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994) *Changing Teachers, Changing Times: Teachers' Work and Culture in the Postmodern Age*. London: Cassell.
- Heck, R., & Marcoulides, G. (1996). School culture and performance: Testing the invariance of an organizational model. *School Effectiveness and School Development*, 7(1), 76-79.
- Hersch, P. (1998). *A Tribe Apart: A Journey into the Heart of American Adolescence*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Hess, F.M. (1999). *Spinning Wheels: The Politics of Urban School Reform*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution.
- Hill, P. T., Foster, G. E., & Gendler, T. (1990). *High Schools with Character*. Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation.
- Howard, E. R., & Keefe, J. W. (1991). *The CASE-IMS School Improvement Process*. Reston, Va: National Association of Secondary School Principals.
- Jackson, P. W., Boostrom, R. E., & Hansen, D. H. (1993). *The moral life of schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Klonsky, M. (1995). *Small Schools: The Numbers Tell a Story. A Review of the Research and Current Experiences*. Chicago: University of Illinois.
- Koski, M. (1993). Change – From the grassroots up. *Educational Leadership*, (51) 1, 51- 52.
- Levine, E. (2002). *One Kid at a Time: Big Lessons from a Small School*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lieberman, A. (1988). (Ed.). *Building a Professional Culture in Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lightfoot, S. L. (1983). *The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture*. New York: Basic Books.
- McLaughlin, M.W., & Talbert, J. (2001). *Professional Communities and the Work of High School Teaching*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McNeil, L. (1986). *Contradictions of Control: School Structure and School Knowledge*. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Meier, D. (1996). The big benefits of smallness. *Educational Leadership*, 54:1, 12-15.
- Murphy, J. (1994). Transformational change and the evolving role of the principal: Early empirical evidence. In J. Murphy & K. S. Louis (Eds.). *Reshaping the Principalsip: Insights from Transformational Change Efforts* (pp. 20-53). Newbury Park, Calif.: Corwin.
- Newmann, F. (1995). *Successful School Restructuring*. Madison, Wis.: Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools.
- Rathbone, C. (1998). *On the Outside Looking In: A Year at an Inner-City High School*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Rosenholtz, S. (1989). *Teachers' Workplace: The Social Organization of Schools*. New York: Longmans.
- Sarason, S. B. (1982). *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Sashkin, M., & Walberg, H. J. (Eds.). (1993). *Educational Leadership and School Culture*. Berkeley: McCutchan.