

Quality Education News

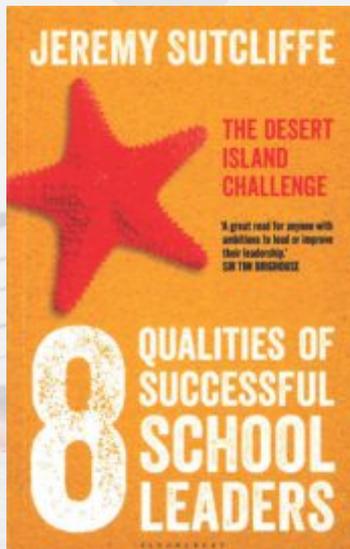
Tel: 012-349-5006 ♦ Fax: 012-349-1232 ♦ www.saqi.co.za

Issue 30

May 2014



A quarterly publication issued by the South African Quality Institute in the interest of promoting educational excellence.



Which eight would you choose?

Dear Supporter of Quality Education

In England there is a BBC radio programme titled 'Desert Island Discs'. The programme host invites a celebrity guest to imagine that they are marooned on an island far from civilisation. One of the few items that they are allowed to have while waiting to be rescued is a selection of their favourite music discs. During the programme their music is played and one question is asked: 'Why did you choose that particular piece of music?'

Jeremy Sutcliffe, is a freelance education writer who adapted the 'Desert Island Discs' idea to a school situation. He spoke to about thirty highly experienced and respected principals. Each principal was to imagine that they were cast adrift on a desert island together with a school full of children in desperate need of a great principal. Which eight qualities would they would take with them to run their desert island school?

Their answers were given in a fascinating book titled, *The desert island challenge: eight qualities of successful school leaders*. The selected principals came from a wide range of schools: highly disadvantaged primary and secondary schools, well-resourced state schools and those from prestigious schools in the private sector.

From the answers given by the principals, Sutcliffe realised that there were many different qualities that make for great school leadership. As the author, Sutcliffe had to make the decision on the final eight essential qualities. Here is his final list:

1 Vision

Successful school leaders are visionaries with a clear sense of moral purpose. They can see and shape the future.

Most schools have Vision and Mission statements. They are often put on prominent display in entrance foyers and published in the school prospectus. These statements can have a 'feel-good' factor about them. Yet they can also be fluffy meaningless statements placed in beautiful frames on school walls.

A powerful vision contains definite principles and values. Alison Peacock took over a primary school that was in 'special measures' (the lowest possible inspection grading for a British school). In three years the inspectorate catapulted the grading to 'outstanding'. From her job

interview at the school and onwards, she 'walked the talk' of her vision firmly:

- A happy learning community
- High academic standards
- Achievement for all
- Partnership and learning
- School as a centre of excellence
- Broad and balanced curriculum

It's good that the principal has vision but what about everyone else in the school community? Do they make input into the vision too? Do they agree? Are there areas where they would like to 'tweak' it a bit? The leader's vision has no impact if it's not a shared vision. The vision has to be a shared one which is accepted by learners, parents and staff. The vision should be in the 'hearts and minds' of everyone.

2 Courage

Successful school leaders are courageous and determined, with the willpower and patience to see things through.

The leader is on the bridge of the ship keeping it on course no matter how tumultuous the seas. Professional courage is needed to keep it afloat and steering it in the right direction. How does the leader get that courage? Many leaders claim that they have a strong moral force. Inner ethical values give them the courage to make the tough professional calls.

Courageous leaders take chances. They don't timidly put a toe in the river of change; they're prepared to immerse themselves fully into it. Crucially though, they're good listeners willing to take advice. When they sometimes make mistakes – which happen to every leader – they accept responsibility and adjust their plans.

One of the toughest leadership challenges is dealing with underperforming staff members. Obviously, there are the discussions and professional guidance given to such individuals. Yet that isn't always enough and underperformers might need to go for the sake of the school. Courageous leaders take the necessary decisive action.

3 Passion

Successful school leaders are passionate about teaching and learning and show great commitment to children and young people

Is teaching a job or a vocation? The job mentality is that it's a seven-hours-a-day duty. There's no commitment beyond the job description requirements. If extra tasks have to be done, extra rewards (usually monetary) are expected. The leader who sees education as a vocation is passionate beyond a pay packet about what is being done for all in the school.



This newsletter is edited by SAQI and distributed to those schools benefiting from their participation in the MySchool programme. MySchool acts as a conduit which raises and delivers essential funding for education and social development on a sustainable basis. This enables members of the community to participate in the future development of our nation.



MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet
EVERY SWIPE COUNTS

There's the true sobering story of a girl who stopped a gentleman whom she had never seen before walking past her classroom door. The girl presumed that he did not know the way to the administration office. Politely she offered to take him to the principal's office. With a sense of mild shame, he gently told her that he was in-fact, the principal.

Being visible helps the leader nurture the whole-school passion. There are the chances to talk, share and get to know everyone. The leader should be an essential part of assemblies, be seen (even if for only a few minutes) at the many school events and functions. There's the need to pop into classrooms often and daily walk the corridors. Your presence grows enthusiasm as well as passion for the school!

4 Emotional intelligence

Successful school leaders are team builders. They understand the importance of relationships, empower those around them and show great empathy.

Leadership experts such as Daniel Goleman who wrote *Emotional Intelligence*, believes that for leaders, emotional intelligence is more important than being very intelligent, being tough and being a great visionary. Goleman stated that the successful leader shows emotional intelligence in five ways: through self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.

Roger Pope, principal of a Devon college, expressed the opinion that relationships matter more than anything else in creating a happy and successful school. When the relationships are sound across the school, there's a common understanding of core values that unite everyone. There's mutual trust.

A way of building trust is for the leader to find the time – and plenty of it – to be a good listener. Through listening, the leader grows in empathy; crises can be defused and loyalty nurtured. Emotionally intelligent leaders empower others. They want every staff member to achieve their full personal potential. Every positive encouragement is given to them.

5 Judgement

Successful school leaders show great judgement. They make the right calls and are wise leaders.

Sound judgement happens when making wise decisions after being confronted with many competing demands. The leader is a focussed thinker and doesn't get side-tracked. It's the ability to identify the core essence of a matter and follow up with action.

Making the right judgement for a school is a 'complex mixture of instinct, experience, self-awareness and being honest enough to acknowledge and correct one's own mistakes.'

Good leadership is a collective process. Get the team around the table to unpack an issue before making a final decision. Have the humility to be willing to change tack or drop a decision if the judgement call is a poor one.

The getting of wisdom takes time. Through experience in the leadership role, the person develops that quality. Whatever the leader's age, much is learnt by simply listening to the opinions of others. Watch what other successful leaders do. Wise leadership is a reflective practice – a practice of much inner reflection before doing anything.

6 Resilience

Successful leaders are optimistic and resilient. They are energetic and positive; they remain calm in a crisis.

There's no such thing as a normal school day. Expect the unexpected ... every day! Also accept that there'll be times when the leader's plans and vision for the school are challenged. Challengers could be in the form of staff members, education department officials, parents and the learners. The leader has to have self-belief. There's the need to have steely determination and the strength to keep a positive attitude.

How does one develop resilience? Many leaders realise the need to be physically fit. Have the stamina to get through the day. There are leaders who often go to gym, go walking or go long-distance running. They play various sports.

Catherine Paine was 28 years old when she became one of the youngest principals in Britain. One of her techniques to become resilient was to do daily meditation. She spoke of the importance of, 'faith, or something close to it, leading to deeply held views about human flourishing ... You have to believe in something for yourself and have some kind of ongoing

journey. Whether that's the Christian path, the Buddhist path or the humanist path doesn't really matter as long as you believe in something.'

Work-life balance is crucial to grow resilience. When one drives out the school gates, try and 'switch off'. Have a life outside school with family and friends; have time for hobbies and interests. If there's still an urgent need to talk about school matters at home, such discussions can give the leader moral support and give new perspectives on dealing with difficulties.

7 Persuasion

Successful school leaders are confident communicators and storytellers. They are great persuaders and listeners who can get their message across to any audience.

The best plans can be still-born if there's no 'buy-in'. Leaders have to be good communicators. They need to be able to positively influence others. Public speaking can be challenging but the leader needs the skill. Through coaching, practising and actually talking to an audience, the leader masters this skill.

At the daily or weekly assemblies there are chances for everyone to understand the core school values. Assemblies are times to also speak about expectations of what can and should be done to realise the school vision. Other times when the leader verbally communicates include parents' evenings, prize-giving and open days.

Much persuasion happens on a one-on-one basis. It might happen in a conversation with a teacher or School Governing Body member. Then there are those small-group situations such as the senior management or subject team meetings. Whatever the level and whoever the audience, the leader is a good listener. By so doing, the leader understands the concerns of others. The leader can persuade by appealing to what is important to them. Persuasion should be open and honest and never manipulative.

Effective leaders communicate well in writing. They use the power of the pen powerfully through ways such as the annual letter in the school magazine, termly analyses to the School Governing Body, weekly newsletter and daily memos to staff.

8 Curiosity

Successful school leaders are outward-looking and curious. They are excellent networkers, great opportunists and in touch with events.

Sutcliffe warns in his book that one danger of school leadership is of becoming too inward-looking. One gets caught up in one's own school. There's a need to keep in touch with what's happening in the immediate area but also nationally as well as internationally.

Successful school leaders build up a network with professional colleagues and educational organisations. Teacher unions help the principal to be aware of major education issues. Just as the good leader builds up the teamwork within the school, there's also a need to build up alliances and connections beyond the school gates. Those contacts can become friends who share concerns and support one another in challenging times.

When the leader has the spirit of curiosity there are the potential opportunities for growth. The school is keeping up with modern professional trends. New ideas and influences can add further stimulation to the teaching and learning.

Although Sutcliffe's book has focussed on the qualities chosen by school leaders, those and other qualities apply to every staff member. Every teacher is a leader. The first-year teacher, for example, is also a visionary albeit for a smaller group of learners.

Sutcliffe ends the book by citing other qualities mentioned by successful leaders. They include: charisma, clarity, commitment to social justice, honesty/integrity, humility and organisational skills. Imagine that you are invited by Sutcliffe to select eight qualities. Which eight would you choose?

Sutcliffe, J 2013. *8 Qualities of successful leaders – the desert island challenge*. London: Bloomsbury. ISBN 978-1-4411-9750-4 (Amazon £ 15.69)

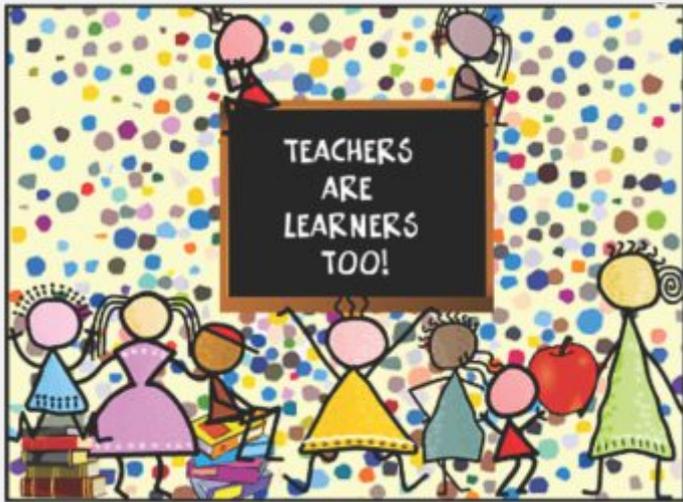
Sincerely

Richard Hayward

Teachers are learners too

This year sees the start of the CPTD (Continuing Professional Teacher Development) system. Public schools have already been informed by SACE about the need for deputies and principals to take part in professional development activities. A time-span for the accumulation of a set number of PD (Professional Development) points has been given. Next year and 2016 will see Heads of Department and teachers being brought into the system. Every SACE-registered teacher in the country is required to accumulate PD points.

The quality school is already doing continuing professional development activities with their own staff. It's easy to recognise such schools. They are beacons of what excellent teaching and learning is all about; they are in a state of continuing professional growth.

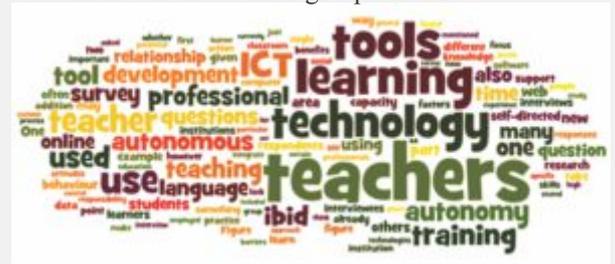


A teacher's day is a long and exhausting one. One can therefore understand the annoyance of any teacher who has to attend a staff development activity which is a waste of time.

To help make teacher development activity worthwhile, pay attention to these points:

- **Meet staff needs:** Senior management should avoid falling into the trap of it deciding what's best for the rest of the staff. Ask them what would be of value to them. Get 'buy in' before they 'sit in'.
- **Use your own staff:** Most schools already have experts in different aspects of the curriculum and learner development issues. There are also those teachers who have expertise outside the school setting which can be adapted. Think, for example, of the teacher who is a counsellor for a religious or youth organisation.
- **Choose professionally qualified people:** Too many outside organisations promote their programmes which have little relevance in the actual classroom or school. Presenters should have professional credibility. If they're talking about teaching, their expertise should be based on what they've personally experienced with young people. There should be chalk dust on their hands! Teachers are experts at exposing wearisome waffle and glib gobbledegook.

- **Avoid late meetings:** For practical reasons, schools often hold development programmes in the afternoon. Try to schedule them early. Extra-mural activities could be cancelled for that particular day. Another idea is to have programmes on a non-teaching day such as at the start of the term.
- **Provide refreshments:** A thoughtful gesture is to provide refreshments. Teachers are hungry and thirsty at the end of a day in the classroom. A pre-workshop chat over refreshments amongst the attendees and with the presenter helps set a friendly tone.
- **Start and finish on time:** It's a courtesy to start and end a programme at mutually agreed-on times. Thereby, the presenter respects the audience's attendance and time. Start late and a negative impression has been created straight away; go over time and another negative message has been given. When those courtesies are ignored, notice how many attendees start coughing, looking at their cell phones and watches!
- **Be organised:** Programmes that start late often do so because of a technical hitch. You might have been at a workshop where a PowerPoint presentation is not working properly. Check the equipment beforehand. (It's a common practice these days for organisers to ask presenters to submit their PowerPoint beforehand to avoid such hiccups.) Make sure that enough copies of material have been printed beforehand.
- **Make it active:** Have you been at a staff development meeting where you've struggled to stay awake? I'm sure you have! If you're a presenter, keep the audience actively engaged. A passive audience runs the risk of becoming a dozing audience. Pose questions, make challenging statements and have small-group activities.



Teacher development can take place in groups such as the bosberaad, lekgotla, staffroom and teacher union meetings. Yet excellent professional growth can also happen through individual study. Every issue of *the Teacher* newspaper and the SACE website have advertisements from tertiary institutions offering courses. Where possible, a school might offer financial assistance towards covering tuition fees.

Yes, the good teacher does work – as in the words of the chocolate bar advertisement slogan – a '25-hour day'. Professional development courses can seem like an extra meaningless burden. Yet, in fact, they are the very opposite. They are must-haves. When training is good, the teacher becomes a better teacher and the learner a better learner. Every Quality teacher knows that it's critically important to be a never-ending learner.

This article first appeared in the Teacher.

Getting to the points

The wisest mind has something yet to learn.

George Santayana, philosopher.

Under the aegis of the South African Quality Institute (SAQI), Dr Richard Hayward does SACE-endorsed activities. They have been allocated Professional Development (PD) points. Certificates are issued by the Institute. Six endorsed activities are:

1 An introduction to Total Quality Education (TQE)

Duration: 8 hours PD points: 10

The workshop is an adaptation of the best principles and practices found in the business, industrial and other professional sectors. The TQE model identifies five core pillars common to Quality schools. The course shows the application of each pillar in the context of the school.

2 Challenges of leadership in a Quality School

Duration: 4 hours PD points: 7

In this workshop there is a study of different leadership styles as well as three major challenges that confront most leaders. The management of change, complaints and maintaining sound relationships with the School Governing Body receive attention.

3 Influential leadership levels and types

Duration: 75 minutes PD points: 5

An ability to adapt leadership styles to influence learner and staff behaviour is discussed. The programme looks at seven levels of influence. There is an analysis of the requisite skills and values of effective positive influencers.

4 'Klagtes! Complaints! How may we help you?'

Duration: 75 minutes PD points: 7

Even the best of schools have to deal with complaints and difficult parents! In the Quality school, complaints are seen as growth opportunities. The presentation looks at how Quality schools deal in a level-headed way with complaints. Attendees learn how to turn a complainant into a satisfied client.

5 'Should I leave teaching? I'm so demotivated?'

Duration: 75 minutes PD points: 5

There are teachers who have stayed in the profession for thirty or forty years ... and happily too! Ten self-motivation strategies used by happy and live-wire teachers are shared. The workshop will put the ENO-effervescence back into your teaching!

6 The kids are hell. 'What can I do?'

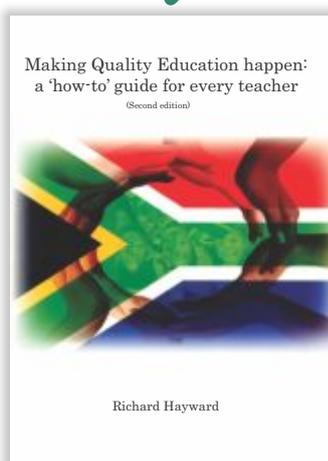
Duration: 75 minutes PD points: 5

There's no such thing as the class that is always perfectly well-behaved (unless it's under a reign of terror!). Yet there thousands of teachers who generally have happy, hard-working classes. Their simple yet most effective discipline strategies are discussed.

The presenter is a former principal of two public Gauteng schools. For more details, please contact him on rpdayward@yahoo.com or 011-888-3262. Poor schools are sponsored.



For you ... for mahala!



Free

Get a free 2013 edition of the book, *Making Quality Education happen: a 'how-to' guide for every teacher*. The book has been most generously sponsored by CTP Printers, Cape Town. To get your copy, please contact him on either rpdayward@yahoo.com or 011-888-3262. There's a small fee to cover the cost of packaging and posting.