

AUTHOR:

Dr A Van Wyk¹ 

AFFILIATION:

¹School for Professional
Studies in Education: Education
Management and Leadership,
North-West University

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie.v38.i2.10>

e-ISSN 2519-593X

Perspectives in Education

2020 38(2): 155-167

PUBLISHED:

04 December 2020

LEADING CURRICULUM CHANGES IN SCHOOLS: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article was to determine the views of teachers regarding the leading role of principals during curriculum changes in schools. The research was quantitative in nature, with one qualitative section and was based on a post-positivist worldview. The qualitative section serves to inform the reader explicitly on leadership issues that are important during curriculum changes. Eight hundred and eighty-four teachers from 67 schools formed the sample. Any change initiative always has an element of resistance to it that should be considered by principals, also when changes in the curriculum are being created. Bearing in mind the views of teachers, the effect of resistance to curriculum changes could be minimised. Principals could be in a better position to steer the curriculum changes in schools in the right direction. Teachers will, as a result, be in a better position to do their work properly to the benefit of the learners and, eventually, to the benefit of society.

Keywords: *change, curriculum, leadership, principals, readiness for change, resistance, schools, teachers*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of the democratic education system in South Africa in 1994, many curriculum changes have taken place to rectify the disparities that existed in the education departments prior to 1994 (Van Wyk & Van der Westhuizen, 2015). The aim was to create a single, uniform curriculum for all schools. As change is a global phenomenon that constantly takes place in organisations, one can assume that another reason for the changes in the curriculum was to create work environments that are more competitive (Specht, Kuonath, Pachler, Weisweiler & Frey, 2017). Change agents often face difficulties in leading curriculum changes successfully. It has been maintained that in the South African schooling context, notwithstanding interventions of various institutions and the government, the curriculum changes in the schooling system do not seem to come to fruition. It seems that most of the old challenges regarding the curriculum still remain, while new challenges pertaining to the curriculum have come to the fore (Van Wyk



Published by the UFS
<http://journals.ufs.ac.za/index.php/pie>

© Creative Commons
With Attribution (CC-BY)



& Van der Westhuizen, 2015). In this regard, one can refer to the rapid curriculum changes that have taken place, such as Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), the National Curriculum Statement, the Revised Curriculum Statement and, presently, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Gumede & Biyase, 2016).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Gigliotti, Vardaman, Marshall and Gonzalez (2018) are of the view that almost 70% of change initiatives in organisations fail, although the survival of organisations relies on the successful implementation of change. In the school environment, the reasons for such failure can be classroom-related, school-related and related to external factors (Holborn, 2013). The challenges of the successful implementation of curriculum changes could be anything from the content and pedagogical knowledge and behaviour of teachers, to learner poverty and a lack of resources (Equal Education, 2015; Phakathi, 2013). According to Gigliotti *et al.* (2018), other aspects in the schooling system such as participation of and support for teachers and the knowledge of the content of the curriculum change, can also facilitate or hinder the buy-in of teachers. Other aspects relate to school environments that are plagued by drugs, gangs and weapons, all of which threaten the culture of teaching and learning (Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014).

In the South African context, leadership and management issues in the schooling system also prevent change initiatives from being successful (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007). Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (2007) maintain that some principals are appointed, for example, based on their learners' good results. This criterion does not guarantee that principals will be good at leading curriculum changes in a school. The minimum requirements of seven years' teaching experience, as prescribed in the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) (2016), to be appointed in a principal post can be an advantage for the principal as well as the school. However, it is the view of Van der Westhuizen (2015) that the management and leading of a school require an individual with specialised skills and knowledge that must be modernised repeatedly and employed in a practical manner. It thus implies that teaching experience alone is not sufficient to be a successful principal, but training in educational management and leadership issues becomes another criterion. According to Zuze and Juan (2020), this criterion is crucial for principals to acquire as they have been tasked over the past 20 years with implementing policies and programmes as well as raising the academic standards in schools. Furthermore, the PAM sets out the fundamental duties of school principals, which include among others, policy enactment and the management of teachers, learners, information, infrastructure and school discipline (Zuze & Juan, 2020). These roles have been refined in the Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship (RSA, 2016), which sets out eight interdependent areas of which the management of the curriculum forms one of the core activities of the principal.

In addition, in order to respond to the new curriculum in the classroom and the management and leadership challenges in schools, training opportunities for teachers and principals have also been made available (Gaza, 2012). Notwithstanding these interventions, most schools, especially schools in poor communities, are not performing at a satisfactory level and the envisaged curriculum changes have not yet been realised. However, there is evidence that some schools in poor communities nevertheless excel, implying that not all schools in these areas perform poorly (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). In view of the latter, there must be other missing aspects in the South African schooling system that have not yet been accounted for that

impede on the readiness of schools for the envisaged curriculum changes. Based on the aforementioned observations and remarks regarding leadership and frequent curriculum changes in the schooling system, the research reported in the remainder of this article was guided by the following question: *What are the perceptions of teachers regarding the leading role of principals in curriculum changes in schools?* The research was based on the following conceptual and theoretical framework.

3. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section covers the conceptual and theoretical framework on which the empirical research regarding the perceptions of teachers pertaining to the leading role of principals in curriculum changes in schools was based.

3.1 Change and resistance to change

Change is an ever-present phenomenon in organisations. It happens to renew organisations and should be dealt with skilfully for it to be successful (Mohamed & Abdel-Ghany, 2014). The element of resistance is always present during change (Van Wyk & Van der Westhuizen, 2015). Resistance takes place when there is change, but also when there is no change in organisations (Van Wyk & Van der Westhuizen, 2015). The skilful handling of change minimises the possibility of resistance. However, employees seldom exhibit change-resistant behaviour from the onset without first considering the negative consequences for themselves (Mohamed & Abdel-Ghany, 2014). Choi and Ruona (2011) hold similar views, stating that individuals are not naturally inclined to resist change but, instead, are annoyed with the consequences that the change might bring and the way change is forced upon them. Change or non-change in organisations each has the potential to manifest in revolutionary or reactionary resistance (Van der Westhuizen & Theron, 2014). Both views of resistance have relevancy for education and serve as aids to let change happen in schools (Zimmerman, 2006). This phenomenon can best be described by Kurt Lewin's force-field theory, which deals with driving forces on the one side and restraining forces on the other (Lewin, 1947a; Lewin, 1947b). Choi and Ruona (2011) maintain, referencing Lewin (1947a), that driving forces, for instance stakeholders in schools, mostly occur when an organisation fails to effect a change. Parents and teachers as driving forces have the interest of the school at heart and one assumes that they will do anything positive to let changes happen in the school. However, they could also be hampering the change process as restraining forces, especially when they believe that the change process is to the detriment of the school.

3.2 Readiness for change

Readiness for change refers to the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and intentions of the members of organisations regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the capacity of the organisation to effect the changes (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Eby, Adams, Russell & Gaby, 2000; Jansen, 2000; Jones, Jimmieson & Griffiths, 2005). Readiness is all about employees' perceptions of their competencies to implement the change (Combe, 2014; Holt, Armenakis, Feild & Harris, 2007). Being prepared for change implies that the individual needs to be transformed physically and cognitively so that he or she will have control over, and the capacity to, respond to a challenge (Weiner, 2009). During a time of change readiness, organisational members are more likely to initiate change, utilise greater effort in support of change and display greater determination in the face of obstacles during the enactment of the change.

The systems and the management of organisations as well as the relationships within the organisation should be conducive for individuals to embrace the change process. Organisational readiness can also be measured by the organisation's financial, material, human and informational resources that can be applied to the change, as well as by the psychological willingness of affected people to cooperate in bringing the change to fruition (Wallinga, 2008). The consequence of being ready will be the effective implementation of new ideas, programme processes or technology. Organisational members whose commitment to change is based on "want to" motives rather than "need to" motives exhibit cooperative and supportive behaviour (Weiner, 2009). By contrast, when organisational readiness for change is low or non-existent, staff will resist initiating change, put less effort into the implementation thereof and exhibit less compliant behaviour.

In an effort to integrate the concepts discussed above, the next section deals with the formulation of a theoretical framework. Kotter's eight-step change model served as the backbone on which the research of the perceptions of teachers regarding the leading role of the principal in curriculum change was based.

3.3 Kotter's eight-step change model

3.3.1 Increase urgency

During this phase, teachers want principals to give reasons for the change and an explanation of how it will affect them. The crisis with the curriculum and the opportunities that can be established should be emphasised. Aspects that can be emphasised as reasons for change in the curriculum revolve around teachers' uncertainties of how to implement the curriculum, their negative reactions and resistance, as they find it difficult to maintain a balance between teaching and assessment time. Other reasons are, for instance, the fact that South African learners score poorly in literacy and numeracy tests compared to learners from other African countries (Mouton, Louw & Strydom, 2012).

In addition, reports showed that the literacy and numeracy rates of learners in South Africa are among the lowest of their peers, despite the huge amount spent on education each year (Mouton *et al.*, 2012). To intensify the need for curriculum change, principals could use examples of opportunities, such as the envisaged coding and robotics that will be part of a new curriculum to prepare learners for the Fourth Industrial Revolution in South Africa. It can also be emphasised that the new curriculum will prepare learners to apply their digital and ICT skills to work from their homes to solve a problem such as the current COVID-19 crisis (Business Tech, 2019). Principals should enable teachers to talk about and participate in discussions about changes in the curriculum.

3.3.2 Guide the team

Putting together a team that shares the same goal and vision, communicates effectively and is trustworthy is crucial for effecting the curriculum change (Webster & Webster, 2018). Further qualities of the team are the display of expertise, positive power, credibility and proven leadership skills (Mento, Jones & Dirndorfer, 2010). In this regard, one can think of experienced teachers, head of departments, subject advisors, the deputy principal and the principal of the school. The team, under the leadership of the principal, has the responsibility to execute the curriculum changes that include the following step, getting the vision right.

3.3.3 Get the vision right

A clear vision is vital to teachers for understanding what needs to be achieved in a particular timeframe (Anson, 2011; Goldberg, Williams & Paul-Brown, 2002). To convey the correct vision to other teachers, it is, as previously indicated, important to include persons who have experience in curriculum matters. In this sense, it should enable other teachers to visualise a picture of what the end result of the curriculum change would look like (Anson, 2011; Goldberg *et al.*, 2002). The next phase would be to communicate the vision to teachers for them to embrace the curriculum change.

3.3.4 Communicate for buy-in

The message of the team to teachers should be clear and understandable (Mento *et al.*, 2010). It is not sufficient for the leader to hold one or two meetings to sell the vision to other teachers; the vision should continuously be part of the agenda points in all meetings (Anson, 2011). The team, led by the principal, should talk about it in e-mails and presentations and during staff meetings, school gatherings, school governing body meetings, subject meetings and meetings with learners and parents. People want leaders to be ethical and to “walk the talk” to inspire them to do the same. It is counterproductive if the team and its leader say one thing but do something different (Goldberg *et al.*, 2002). The next phase is about the actions the team should take.

3.3.5 Empower

Empowering teachers by giving them training removes the obstacles that are hindering them from doing their best (Webster & Webster, 2018), as the way the different structures at schools are driven can be either detrimental or advantageous to the curriculum change (Sharma, Upadhyaya, Schober & Williams, 2014). Krummaker and Vogel (2012), in turn, are of the view that a team that is highly competent to drive the curriculum change seems to be successful in transferring their readiness for change to other teachers. These teachers could display the same behaviour as a team whose readiness for change is contagious and elicits high levels of drive for the curriculum change (Krummaker & Vogel, 2012). On the other hand, undesirable conditions in schools do not contribute to the empowerment of teachers (Mentz, 2002; Van Wyk, Ogina & Mampane, 2016). Teachers will most likely resist these conditions. The next phase is to create short-term gains for teachers.

3.3.6 Create short-term gains

As change takes time to come to fruition, teachers may lose interest and revert to their old ways of doing things (Webster & Webster, 2018). It is advisable that the leader creates opportunities for teachers to experience success with the change in the short term (Friesen, 2016). The team should, in view of the new dispensation, look for evidence that suggests that teachers have achieved in one way or the other, for instance learner results, good teaching practices and building good relationships with colleagues and learners. These wins should be recognised and rewarded (Friesen, 2016). Recognising and rewarding impart credibility and enhance the urgency levels of the curriculum change to teachers (Friesen, 2016).

3.3.7 Keep the momentum of the change

It is tempting to celebrate efforts at this stage when it becomes clear that a school is out of its comfort domains and starts performing (Kotter, 1995). Teachers who, for instance, still resist the change should be persuaded and retrained to accept the new culture more easily (Anson,

2011). The principal should recognise and celebrate the perceived success with the teachers without resting on their laurels, which may result in losing focus (Friesen, 2016; Mento *et al.*, 2010). The last phase is to make sure that the new curriculum is sustained.

3.3.8 Sustainable change

During the last stage, the principal and the team should ensure that the policies, procedures and practices of the new curriculum are followed (Mento *et al.*, 2010). Cultural change, institutionalising and connections should be established and articulated as it must be visible that the old curriculum is no longer relevant (Goldberg *et al.*, 2002). Attempts should be made to indicate how the new approaches, behaviours and attitudes contribute to the new curriculum change that has helped performance in schools. Every effort should be made by principals and their teams to explain why the performance of schools has improved (Mento *et al.*, 2010). New teachers should complete a comprehensive training programme to familiarise themselves with how the curriculum works (Anson, 2011; Goldberg *et al.*, 2002). The following empirical investigation was based on the conceptual and theoretical framework outlined in the previous section.

4. EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

The purpose of the investigation was to determine the perceptions of teachers regarding the leading role of principals in curriculum changes in schools.

5. RESEARCH ORIENTATION AND DESIGN

A quantitative research approach, coupled with one qualitative section, was used. The research was based on a post-positivist paradigm. The post-positivist paradigm lies on a continuum between the quantitative and qualitative research methods. It is concerned with the subjectivity of reality and so doing, moves away from the solely objective standpoint embraced by the logical positivists (Creswell, 2012).

5.1 Study population and sampling

The study population consisted of teachers at primary and secondary schools from the five regions of a province in South Africa. Only schools with 500 and more learners formed part of the population as these schools had enough teachers to provide meaningful data for the research. Every second school was selected from the EMIS system of the Department of Basic Education in the province. Questionnaires were sent to all teachers at the selected schools. The bibliographical section of the questionnaire comprised the profile of the teachers, such as teaching experience, post level and age. From the population mentioned, 67 schools with 884 teachers took part in the research.

5.2 Instrument

The survey was posted and hand-delivered to schools. As a result, 884 questionnaires were distributed to teachers in the province. The questionnaires were either sent back by post or collected when officials from the Department of Education visited these schools. The principal of each school was asked to distribute the questionnaires to the teachers. The instructions were printed clearly on the front page of the questionnaire; thus, it was not necessary for someone to help the teachers with the completion of the questionnaire. Eighty-three per cent of the questionnaires were received back due to the fact that the researcher was in constant

contact with the principals and the departmental officials assisting with the collection of the questionnaires. An open-ended question formed part of the survey to cater for the views of respondents who wanted to elaborate on the answers they gave in the survey.

5.3 Validity and reliability

The soundness of the questions was constructed from the literature on aspects regarding the leading role of principals in curriculum changes. In order to validate the information further, a colleague was asked to peer examine the information on the questionnaire (*cf.* Creswell, 2012). A pilot study was also undertaken, where teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire and make notes when a specific question was not clear enough. These notes of the teachers on the questionnaire were considered when the questionnaire was finalised. Furthermore, the validity of the questionnaire was also discussed with the person who handled the data capturing at the independent statistical services of the university. For the questionnaire to be reliable, the alpha coefficient should be one (1) or near one (1) (Ellis & Steyn, 2003). In the case of the research, the different categories of the questionnaire were near one (1), for instance 0.86, 0.70, 0.76, 0.74 and 0.86.

5.4 Ethical issues

Ethical approval was granted by the South African university under the authority of which the research was done. Permission to commence with the research in schools was obtained from the Department of Basic Education. Privacy, integrity, professional dignity, the trustworthiness of the information and the anonymity of the participants were all part of the ethical aspects explicated on the front page of the questionnaire (*cf.* Maree & Pietersen, 2014). The participants could also withdraw from the investigation at any time.

5.5 Data collection

The head of Basic Education in the province consented to distribute the questionnaires to the respondents. All the instructions regarding the completion of the survey were indicated on the front page.

5.6 Data processing procedures

The completed questionnaires, consisting of 60 questions and divided into four categories, were sent to the statistical services for processing. This research was part of a larger study and only those sections that were applicable to this research were considered. Only questions with *d*-values of 0.5 and larger were taken into account, as these numbers were regarded as practical and significant to report on. As indicated earlier, one qualitative question was included in the survey. This question was analysed and interpreted by the researcher for similarities and differences to substantiate or refute the information given by the respondents on the survey. The next section deals with the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the results.

6. RESULTS, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The following section contains the results, analysis and discussion of the perceptions of teachers regarding the leading role of the principal in curriculum changes.

Table 1: Categories and related questions of the quantitative section

Item no.	Category description and questions	Average		d-value
		Principal	Teacher	
Category A: Systemic				
11	Do you receive support from your principal?	3.61	3.22	0.67**
22	How were previous curriculum changes dealt with?	2.94	2.62	0.53**
Category B: Personality				
30	Do you deal with your emotions when curriculum change is introduced?	1.94	2.45	0.51**
32	Are you sceptical about the curriculum change?	1.42	1.95	0.56**
35	Are you afraid of the unknown when curriculum change is introduced?	1.60	1.98	0.52**
Category C: Process				
47	Are you sure that the skills you have are sufficient to cope with the curriculum change?	3.27	2.91	0.54**
Category D: Management/Leadership				
16	Are the communication channels in the school sufficient?	3.24	2.82	0.57**
65	Is there a hidden agenda with the curriculum change?	1.31	1.76	0.68**
66	Are teachers allowed to take part in the curriculum change?	3.32	2.71	0.66**
68	Does your principal listen to teachers when they propose something about the curriculum change?	3.49	2.95	0.69**

0.2 ~ practically non-significant or small significance *

0.5 ~ practically significant or medium significance **

0.8 ~ practically significant or large significance ***

Table 2 accounts for the responses of the participants from the open-ended question. Not all the teachers answered the question and quotations of a similar nature are only from a third of the participants.

Table 2: Open-ended question of the qualitative section

Are there any other aspects regarding the curriculum changes that could be seen as frustrations for you?	
Category	Responses of participants
A. Systemic aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “there is no sufficient staff”; “a lack of parental involvement”
B. Personality aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The people are not open to change”; “Low tolerance levels of teachers”; “When you speak your mind, you are taken as a sell-out”; “When you speak, you are taken as [if] you are nothing in the school”

C. Process aspects	• “Shortage of resources”
D. Management/leadership aspects	• “The lack of consistency in the management style is of a great concern”; “Autocratic management style”; “Lack of participation”; “SGB participation not good”; “the principal say[s] there must be change, but he and the School Governing Body (SGB) hold on to old views”

6.1 Category A

• Support for teachers

There was a practical significance ($d = 0.67$) (see Table 1) regarding the nature of the support that principals should grant teachers. It is inferred from the data that the teachers held the view that principals did not give them sufficient support during curriculum changes. Support for teachers comes in various forms, for instance encouraging, giving advice and supplying the necessary resources. However, this perception of teachers has been clarified by the open-ended question that revealed that “*there is no sufficient staff*” and there is “*a lack of parental involvement*” (Table 2). Sufficient staff and parental involvement should be advocated by principals all the time, as it will help to ease the workload of teachers. Parents, on the other hand, can assist with homework or at least see to it that their children do their homework. Some of the supporting aspects may not be under the direct auspices of principals, but the type of leadership that principals and their teams display to rectify these issues will determine whether teachers perceive their leading as supportive or not. This view concurs with the statement made by Holt *et al.* (2007) that teachers should be prepared for curriculum changes (Mouton, Louw & Strydom, 2012). In this sense, it will create buy-in from the relevant stakeholders, including teachers (Anson, 2011).

• Previous change initiatives and the agenda with new change

The data showed a practical significance ($d = 0.53$) regarding the way principals led previous change initiatives. It is an indication that the teachers were of the opinion that the way previous curriculum changes had been led created a negative perception of how the leaders would lead the change in future. The teachers' suspicion developed over time. This suspicion was confirmed by the data in the open-ended question, where some teachers stated that “*the principal say[s] there must be change, but he and the school governing body (SGB) hold on to old views*” (see the response under management and leadership aspects). This response is indicative that teachers have developed an integrity problem towards their principals. The readiness of a school to change can be measured by the psychological willingness of the teachers affected by the change (Wallinga, 2008). It is maintained that the leaders and their teams should be credible, be trusted and be able to “walk the talk” (Mento *et al.*, 2010; Theron, 2014; Van der Westhuizen & Theron, 2014)). It is clear that in this instance, some teachers view their principals as untrustworthy to support the curriculum changes.

6.2 Category B

• Emotions, scepticism and afraid of the unknown

The data showed a practical significance regarding the emotions of the teachers ($d = 0.51$), the fact that the teachers were sceptical about the change ($d = 0.56$) and the fact that the teachers were afraid of the unknown ($d = 0.52$). These aspects were explained by the views of some teachers in the open-ended question. They stated that there was a general “*intolerance*

and insensitivity towards the views, opinions and actions of others” and that some colleagues had “fixed mind-sets” and “they do not want to change and prefer their comfort zones”. It can be deduced from the data that there was a general negative atmosphere among the teachers. This gloomy mood of the teachers is to be expected as it was said earlier that the principals had not been very supportive and communicative towards the teachers regarding the curriculum change. In order to oust teachers from their comfort domains, true urgency for the curriculum change should be created and embedded in the teachers’ minds (Combe, 2014)

6.3 Category C

- **Skills**

The data revealed that the teachers were concerned about their skills and, thus, their capability ($d = 0.54$) to cope with curriculum changes. This concern was complemented by the teachers’ views stated in the qualitative part of the questionnaire and mainly revolved around “shortages of resources”. Training opportunities to handle the new challenges brought about by the curriculum change are essential (Wallinga, 2008). In addition, Friesen (2016) advised that short-term opportunities to experience success with the change should be created for teachers.

6.4 Category D

- **Communication and participation**

A practical significance existed around the kind of communication ($d = 0.57$), participation ($d = 0.66$) and listening ($d = 0.69$) the principals provided to the teachers. The importance of communication was stated by the data in the open-ended question as follows: the principals displayed an “autocratic leadership style” and there was a “lack of participation” that made “collective decision making” impossible. One can thus assume that the teachers were unable to give sufficient input about the curriculum changes as participatory decision making was not possible. A communication gap emanated from the lack of communication between the principals and the teachers. Step 4 of the Kotter model states that change and the effect thereof should be clearly articulated by principals. In view of this, it can be postulated that the teachers viewed the leadership espoused by the principals as inappropriate for successful curriculum change. The teachers’ view concurs with Anson’s (2011) view, which states that successful change necessitates effective communication of principals with teachers.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The teachers see principals as the custodians of curriculum changes. Therefore, it is important for them to be at the front – communicating and providing the necessary resources to implement the curriculum changes successfully. In order to avoid making the same mistakes of the past, the input of teachers is crucial. In so doing, their fears and scepticism regarding the curriculum changes can be laid to rest. The curriculum change should constantly be placed as an item on the agenda of meetings, and curriculum training should be provided on a continuous basis for as long as it is necessary. The teachers participating in this research were not sure whether their skills were sufficient for the curriculum changes. Thus, mentoring is important for teachers, especially those who are unsure and new in the system. Better measures should be put in place by the employer to strengthen the type of candidates who are being appointed as principals. Interviews alone are insufficient.

8. CONCLUSION

Resistance to change is the most commonly encountered response to an advocated change. However, it is given less attention than it deserves. It is in this regard that principals should take the views of teachers, as the implementers of curriculum changes, seriously. Teachers need a great deal of support from credible school leaders to make schools places of excellence.

REFERENCES

- Anson, M.J.H. 2011. Leaders are the critical element in the network: Applying the Kotter change model in shaping future information system. *Winter*, 20–27. <https://doi.org/10.21236/ADA550352>.
- Armenakis, A.A. & Bedeian, A.G. 1999. Organizational change: A review of theory and research in the 1990s. *Journal of Management*, 25: 293–315. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639902500303>.
- Business Tech*. 2019. *5 major changes coming to South African schools – including new subjects and early-leaving certificates*. Available at businessstech.co.za [Accessed 19 May 2020].
- Choi, M. & Ruona, W.E.A. 2011. Individual readiness for organizational change and its implications for human resource and organizational development. *Human Resource Development Review*, 10(1): 46–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484310384957>.
- Combe, M. 2014. *Readiness: Focusing change management where it counts*. Available at <http://www.peakperformancepm.com.au/uploads/32766/ufiles/Focusing-Change-Management-Where-it-Counts.pdf> [Accessed 12 May 2020].
- Creswell, J.W. 2012. *Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*, 4th ed. Boston: Pearson.
- Eby, L.T., Adams, D.M., Russell, J.E.A. & Gaby, S.H. 2000. Perceptions of organizational readiness for change: Factors related to employees' reactions to the implementation of team-based selling. *Human Relations*, 53: 419–442. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726700533006>.
- Ellis, S.M. & Steyn, H.S. 2003. Practical significance (effect sizes) versus or in combination with statistical significance (p-values). *Management Dynamics*, 12(4): 51–53.
- Equal Education. 2015. *School infrastructure*. Available at <http://www.equaleducation.org.za/campaigns/minimum-norms-and-standards> [Accessed 3 March 2015].
- Friesen, W. 2016. Change Management: A key to a successful future. *Business Credit*, 118(9): 42–43.
- Gaza, C. 2012. How to fix SA's education system. *News 24*, 6 November, 1–5.
- Gigliotti, R., Vardaman, J., Marshall, D.R. & Gonzalez, K. 2018. The role of perceived organizational support in individual change readiness. *Journal of Change Management*, DOI: 10.1080/14697017.2018.1459784. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2018.1459784>.
- Goldberg, L.R., Williams, P.S. & Paul-Brown, D. 2002. Leading the change effort: Developing a systematic framework for the inclusion of speech-language pathology assistants in service delivery. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, 24(1): 5–9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/152574010202400102>.

- Gumede, V. & Biyase, M. 2016. Educational reforms and curriculum transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. *Environmental Economics*, 7(2): 69–76. [https://doi.org/10.21511/ee.07\(2\).2016.7](https://doi.org/10.21511/ee.07(2).2016.7).
- Holborn, L. 2013. *Education in South Africa: where did it go wrong?* Available at www.ngopulse.org/article/education-south-africa-where-did-it-go-wrong [Accessed 12 October 2018].
- Holt, D.T., Armenakis, A.A., Field, H.S. & Harris, S.G. 2007. Readiness for organizational change: The systematic development of a scale. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 43: 232–255. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886306295295>.
- Jansen, K.J. 2000. The emerging dynamics of change: Resistance, readiness, and momentum. *Human Resource Planning*, 23(2): 53–55.
- Jones, R.A., Jimmieson, N.L. & Griffiths, A. 2005. The impact of organizational culture and reshaping capabilities on change implementation success: The mediating role of readiness for change. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42: 361–386. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2005.00500.x>.
- Kotter, J.P. 1995. *Leading change: why transformation efforts fail*. Available at <https://hbr.org/2007/01/leading-change-why-transformation-efforts-fail> [Accessed 12 August 2018].
- Krummacker, S. & Vogel, B. 2012. An in-depth view of the facets, antecedents, and effects of leaders' change competency: Lessons from a case study. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 49(3): 279–307. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886312469442>.
- Lewin, K. 1947a. Frontiers in group dynamics. Channels of group life in social science. Social planning and action research. *Human Relations*, 1: 143–153. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872674700100201>.
- Lewin, K. 1947b. Frontiers in group dynamics. Concept, method and reality in social science. Social equilibria. *Human Relations*, 1: 5–40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872674700100103>.
- Maree, K. & Pietersen, J. 2014. The quantitative research process. In: K Maree (ed), *First steps in research* (pp. 145–153). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Mento, A., Jones, R. & Dirndorfer, W. 2010. A change management process: Grounded in both theory and practice. *Journal of Change Management*, 3(1): 45–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/714042520>.
- Mentz, P.J. 2002. Gehalte van werkslewe van onderwysers in 'n periode van konstitusionele hervorming en verandering in die onderwys. *Tydskryf vir Geesteswetenskappe*, 42(4): 237–249.
- Mncube, V. & Madikizela-Madiya, N. 2014. Gangsterism as a cause of violence in South African schools: The case of six provinces. *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, 5(1): 43–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09766634.2014.11885608>.
- Mohamed, M. & Abdel-Ghany, M. 2014. Readiness for change, change beliefs and resistance to change of extension personnel in the New Valley Governorate about mobile extension. *Annals of Agricultural Science*, 59(2): 297–303. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aoas.2014.11.019>.
- Mouton, N., Louw, G.P. & Strydom, G. 2013. Critical challenges of the South African school system. *International Business & Economics Research Journal*, 12(1): 31–43. <https://doi.org/10.19030/iber.v12i1.7510>.

- Ngcobo, T & Tikly, L.P. 2010. Key dimensions of effective leadership for change: A focus on township and rural schools in South Africa. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38(2): 202–228. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143209356359>.
- Personnel Administrative measures (PAM). 2016. No. 39684 *Government Gazette*, 12 February 2016 Government Notices.
- Phakathi, B. 2013. Minister questions no-fee school model. *Financial Mail*, 19 September.
- Sharma, S.V., Upadhyaya, M., Schober, D.J. & Williams, C.B. 2014. A conceptual framework for organizational readiness to implement nutrition and physical activity programs in early childhood education settings. *Preventing Chronic Disease*. <https://doi.org/10.5888/pcd11.140166>.
- Specht, J., Kuonath, A., Pachler, D., Weisweiler, S. & Frey, D. 2017. How change agents' motivation facilitates organizational change: Pathways through meaning and organizational identification. *Journal of Change Management*, 18(3): 198–217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2017.1378696>.
- South Africa. Department of Education. 2016. *Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship*. Government Printers: Pretoria.
- Theron, A.M.C. 2014. Change in educational organisations. In P.C. van der Westhuizen (Ed). *Schools as organisations*, 4th ed (pp. 182–217). Van Schaik: Pretoria.
- Van der Westhuizen, P.C. 2015. *Effective educational management*. Cape Town: Kagiso.
- Van der Westhuizen, P.C. & Theron, A.M.C. 2014. Resistance to change. In P.C. van der Westhuizen (Ed). *Schools as organisations*, 4th ed (pp. 218–242). Van Schaik: Pretoria.
- Van der Westhuizen, P.C. & Van Vuuren, H.J. 2007. Professionalising principalship in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(3): 431–445.
- Van Wyk, A. & Van der Westhuizen, P.C. 2015. Resistance to change in impoverished schools of a South African province. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 13(4): 186–194.
- Van Wyk, A., Ogina, T. & Mampane, S. 2016. Manage and lead the organizational climate and culture of schools. In I. van Deventer (ed), *An educator's guide to school management-leadership skills*, 2th ed (pp. 59–77). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Wallinga, J. 2008. Toward a theory of change readiness. The roles of appraisal, focus, and perceived control. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 44(3): 315–347. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886308318967>.
- Webster, V. & Webster, M. 2018. Successful change management – Kotter's 8-step change model. Available at <https://www.leadershipthoughts.com/kotters-8-step-change-model/> [Accessed 12 October 2018].
- Weiner, B.J. 2009. A theory of organizational readiness for change. *Implementation Science*, 4: 67. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-4-67>.
- Zimmerman, J. 2006. Why some teachers resist change and what principals can do about it. *NASSP Bulletin*, 90(3): 238–249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636506291521>.
- Zuze, T.L. & Juan, A. 2020. School leadership and local learning contexts in South Africa. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 48(3): 459–477. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143218814006>.