

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

PRIORITIES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES IN PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

by

WILLY H. ENGBRECHT

A Thesis

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of Master of Education

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ABSTRACT

The fundamental purpose of this study was to establish priorities for administrative activities in professional development. The study had two sub-purposes. The first of these was to establish priorities for administrative activities in professional development for four sub-groups in the teaching population. The sub-groups were open area teachers, self-contained classroom teachers, inexperienced teachers and experienced teachers. The second sub-purpose was to determine the similarities and differences in these priorities for open area and self-contained classroom teachers and for inexperienced and experienced teachers.

A modified form of a teacher's self-evaluation guide prepared by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation was used as the data collecting device in this study. The instrument identified a number of areas of teacher responsibility. There were eighty-four items on the self-evaluation guide. These were divided into twenty-three major areas.

The instrument was delivered to a stratified random sample of one hundred and ninety seven teachers. One hundred and fifty seven subjects responded. This was a 79.69 per cent rate of return.

The statistical analysis of the data consisted of an item analysis for all groups, a ranking of all items for all groups, a ranking of the

twenty-three major areas for all groups and a comparison of rankings for the two pairs of sub-groups identified. The item analysis provided aggregate and mean scores for each item as well as the ranges and frequency distributions for the responses. The mean scores were used for ranking of the items. Mean scores of all responses in each area were found and then used to rank the twenty-three areas. The rankings were established for all groups and these were then compared for the identified pairs of sub-groups.

The major findings of the study suggested that top priority for administrative activity in professional development be given in two areas for all groups. These areas dealt with the use of community resources in teaching and participation in continuing curriculum development. Subsequent priorities differed somewhat for different groups but several areas were significantly high in all groups. These were areas dealing with variety and effectiveness of methods of presentation, balance between teacher-centered and pupil-centered activities, questioning techniques, use of available means of evaluation to improve teaching, clarity of purpose and content of lessons, and support for administrative decisions while using proper channels to suggest modifications to decisions.

The study also revealed that priorities for administrative activities in professional development for the identified pairs of sub-groups were highly correlated. The differences that did exist were not statistically significant. The largest differences, however, were found to be associated with the open area teacher sub-group followed by the inexperienced teacher sub-group.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

I. INTRODUCTION

In these days of accountability and change, school administrators are constantly faced with the problem of the continual professional development of teachers in their school systems. The major responsibility for staff development lies with the school principal who is ultimately responsible for the quality of instruction and learning within his building. As the instructional leader, the improvement of instruction through the development of staff abilities must hold a high priority in his responsibilities. Parsons (1971), in a study dealing with teacher perceptions of supervisory effectiveness, concluded that the principalship was the most influential and effective supervisory position. This would indicate that the principal, working with his teachers, can do a great deal to improve the teaching-learning situation in his school.

There is little doubt that the inservice professional growth of teachers is imperative if the educational delivery system is to become more effective. Schuster and Wetzler (1958) stated that education for teachers must be a continuing process and must go beyond the formal stage if teachers are to be kept abreast of the times.

The principal's role in the continuing growth process is that of a leader. Elsbree, McNally and Wynn (1967) suggested that the principal should lead his teachers in a constant search for better and more effective

ways of teaching. Unruh and Turner (1970) believed that it would be ideal to have teacher-scholars but this would be a difficult level to reach. Despite this difficulty teachers should try to become scholars. The principal must, therefore, search for means by which he can provide for his teachers experiences that will lead to improved teaching.

The improvement of teaching abilities implies a change in teacher behavior. In his role as educational leader, the principal needs to be aware of the psychological factors involved in changing teacher behavior. Maslow (1954) claimed in his theory of motivation that change in behavior occurs as the result of changing needs within the person as various needs are satisfied. Neagley and Evans (1970) believed that teachers will change the way they behave in order to gain approval from peers and supervisors, and that a sense of accomplishment will provide motivation for further endeavors. Wallen (1965) provided three processes by which people change: (i) compliance to receive rewards or avoid punishment, (ii) identification with a role which results in private and public change but produces internal conflict since the behavior is essentially not their own, (iii) internalization of changed behavior because the change is intrinsically rewarding for the person. Psychologists indicate that change is acceptable as long as the persons involved control the change in place of the change controlling the persons. Cogan (1973) provided a good summation for this concept when he suggested that supervisors and teachers must establish a relationship in which the teacher knows why he is changing his behavior, wants to change it, and derives professional satisfaction from making the change. Productive staff development, then, is most likely to occur when the principal plans his programs on the basis of teacher expressed needs and desires, and in

such a way that teachers will find the result professionally satisfying.

The planning of staff development programs must be done with much thought given to the outcome. Frequently, inservice programs are labelled as useless by the participants if the programs have failed to meet their needs. The principal, as he prepares professional development programs, must by some means determine what the teachers in his school see as prime areas in need of improvement. This is frequently a critical problem for administrators. Since each teacher is a unique person with a unique set of problems, it is difficult to locate those areas where problems are common to many teachers. As a result, the principal often prepares and presents material which he believes will be "good" for his teachers. Unfortunately, this approach is unsuccessful as often as it is successful. Perhaps a statement by the teachers themselves in which their needs are made evident would be useful to principals in the process of planning professional development programs.

The purpose of this study was to determine priorities for professional development programs. These priorities were based on teachers' self-evaluations.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The major purpose of this study was to establish priorities for administrative activities in staff development. The sub-problems were:

1. To establish the priorities for the following sub-groups:
 - (a) Teachers in self-contained classrooms;
 - (b) Teachers in open area teaching situations;
 - (c) Teachers in their first and second year of teaching;

- (d) Teachers having more than two years of teaching experience.
2. To determine what the similarities and differences were for the following pairs of sub-groups:
- (a) Teachers in self-contained classrooms and open area teaching situations;
 - (b) Teachers in their first and second years of teaching and teachers having more than two years of experience.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

1. The problem was significant for the following reasons:
- 1. There is a need for a systematic procedure for establishing priorities. Only after priorities are established can effective programs be planned.
 - 2. The professional development of teachers must begin with a self-expression of needs.
 - 3. The professional development needs of the different sub-groups may vary, thus requiring different programs for professional development.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- 1. Teacher: Those people in the educational system having regular classroom teaching duties and registering a class.
- 2. Administrator: Those individuals duly appointed by the school board as building principals, vice-principals and members of the superintendent's department.
- 3. Staff development programs: Those activities planned by administrators for the purpose of developing the teaching capabilities of staff members.

4. Inexperienced teacher: A teacher having less than two years of teaching experience.

5. Experienced teacher: A teacher having two or more years of teaching experience.

V. LIMITATIONS

The following limitations were recognized in this study:

1. The limitations inherent in statistical analysis.
2. The limitations accompanying a questionnaire method of data collection.
3. The collection of data involved teacher self-evaluations. The accuracy of these evaluations may act as a limitation.

VI. DELIMITATIONS

The following delimitations were placed on this study:

1. The study was conducted in one school division, St. James-Assiniboia, No. 2.
2. Only elementary teachers were included in this study.

VII. SETTING OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted in St. James-Assiniboia School Division No. 2 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This is a suburban division comprising 37 schools of which 23 contained elementary classes. The division has old and new schools, some of the newer ones containing open areas. There were 1004 staff members and the enrollment was 19,806 students as of January, 1974.

VIII. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In this study a fifty per cent stratified random sample of elementary teachers employed by the St. James-Assiniboia School Division No.2 during 1973-74 was selected. This resulted in a sample of one hundred and ninety-seven teachers.

The instrument was a modified form of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation's Self-Evaluation Guide. The guide was modified by two committees, one consisting of faculty members and graduate students in the Department of Educational Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, and the other consisting of elementary school teachers. The resulting self-evaluation guide contained eighty-four items divided into twenty-three areas of teacher responsibility and was completed by the selected sample of teachers. The instrument was delivered to the teachers by this researcher and collected one week later. A follow-up collection was conducted one week after the first collection. Anonymity of respondents was assured.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to establish those areas which teachers indicated to be most in need of development. Aggregate scores, means, ranges and frequency distributions were used to complete an item analysis for the total sample and the identified sub-groups. A ranking of the items and areas was completed from the analysis for the total group and each of the sub-groups. Area rankings for the identified pairs of sub-groups were then compared.

IX. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study has been delineated. Chapter II will

provide the theoretical framework for the study and a review of the related literature. Chapter III contains a description of the methodology used in this study. It describes the population, the sample and the instrumentation. Chapter IV provides the findings of the study. The final chapter summarizes the findings, states the conclusions reached and gives the implications for administrative actions. Possible areas for further research are also given in the final chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the theoretical framework upon which this study was based. A review of the related literature follows the description. The theoretical framework and the literature review both include the teacher's climate, the teacher's "self", the motivating forces for change and inservice programs. Included in the review of the literature as well, are short sections dealing with the need for professional development, the principal's role in staff development, and self-evaluation.

II. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

An open systems model for professional development was used as the theoretical framework for the present study. A "system" is simply defined as a complex of elements in mutual interaction. A comprehensive definition by Allport (1955, p.496) defines a system as follows:

A system is something that is concerned with some kind of activity and preserves a kind of integration and unity; and a particular system can be recognized as distinct from other systems to which, however, it may be dynamically related. Systems may be complex; they may be made up of interdependent sub-systems, each of which, though less autonomous than the entire aggregate, is nevertheless fairly distinguishable in operation.

This simply means that a system is composed of components which

are the parts of the system and that there are relationships among the components and their attributes which tie the system together. Systems theory is basically concerned with problems of relationships among the components.

Open systems, while having the properties of systems in general, have specific characteristics according to Allport (1955):

1. Open systems have inputs and outputs--they exchange energy and information with their surroundings.
2. Open systems tend to maintain themselves in steady states. A steady state indicates a constant relationship among the components of the system.
3. Open systems maintain their steady states through feedback. Feedback enables the system to correct for its own malfunctions and thus maintain a steady state.
4. Open systems are self-regulating--they will regain their normal characteristics subsequent to an intrusion from the external environment.
5. Open systems maintain their steady states through the dynamic interplay of sub-systems operating as functional processes. The parts of an open system operate without persistent conflicts.

The open systems model for this study was developed following a review of the literature and an examination of previous practices in the area of professional development in schools. The literature suggested that there were several critical components requiring consideration when principals worked with their teachers towards professional development.

These factors were the motivation of teachers, the "self" of the teachers, the climate within which the teachers functioned, and the programs for professional development that were presented to the teachers. The literature and the examination of previous practices indicated that professional development programs in the past had not generally been planned in conjunction with an awareness of the teacher's conditions. Too often attempts at professional development focussed on programs alone, thus meeting with limited success. On the other hand some administrators have endeavored to develop climates conducive to growth but neglected the factors of motivation, the "self" and programs. Previous practices have tended to ignore the "self" of the teachers almost entirely. Similarly, little thought has been given to the factors that motivate teachers toward continuing professional growth. One of the most significant things revealed by the literature was that all of these factors are very closely inter-related. Consequently, an open systems approach which deals with the inter-relationships was adopted as the theoretical framework for this study.

Figure 1 portrays the open systems model for professional development used in this study. The components of this model are:

- A. Motivating forces,
- B. The teacher's "self",
- C. The climate within the school,
- D. The programs for professional development,
- E. Feedback.

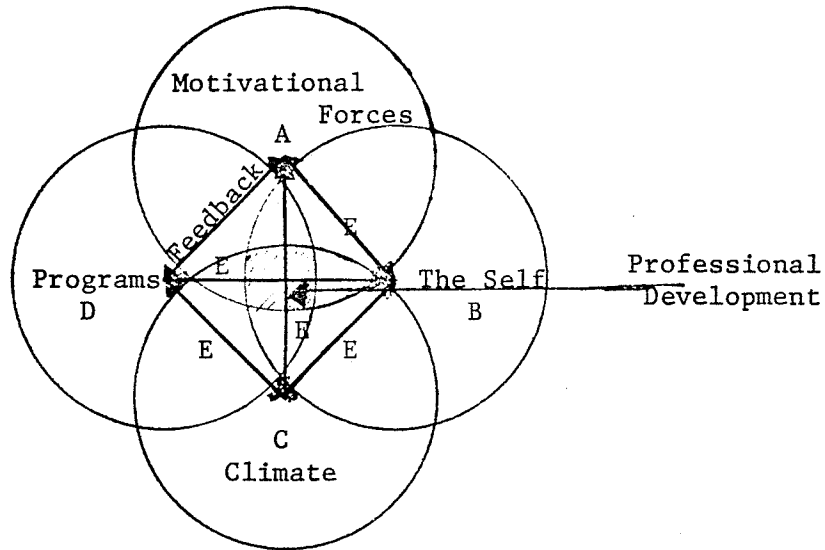


Figure 1. An Open Systems Model for Professional Development.

It was theorized that when these components function as a system continuous professional growth is likely to occur. The professional growth becomes the output of the system. The input for the system is provided by the careful application of motivating forces, by the development of positive self-concepts in teachers, by developing climates in schools that are conducive to professional growth and by programs planned with an awareness of the other components. The feedback component in this model provides constant information with respect to the functioning of each component and thus maintains the system in a steady state. The feedback component also acts as a constant source of information for evaluating the entire system.

An open system exchanges energy and information with its surroundings. In this model, the energy is largely provided by the school principal as he provides programs, develops the climate, applies motivating forces and develops the teachers' self-concepts. He gathers information both from

the system through the feedback component and from the surrounding environment. This information is then used as the basis for further input into the system.

Teacher self-evaluations were used as a source of information in this study. Analysis of the data gathered should provide some information for principals when they plan for future input into the system. Careful surveillance of the components on a regular basis, particularly the feedback component, should continue to supply the information required by principals to provide for continuous professional growth for the teachers in their schools.

III. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature reviewed in this chapter relates to the need for professional growth, the principal's role in staff development, self-evaluation and four components of the theoretical framework. The four components are:

1. Motivating forces,
2. The "self" of the teacher,
3. The climate in the school,
4. Programs for professional development.

Educators have long been aware of the fact that an educational system is only as good as the teachers in it and hence the need for professional growth is well recognized. The principal, because he is so closely associated with the teachers in his school, plays a significant role in this professional growth.

Programs for improvement are frequently initiated as the result of evaluations. The evaluations provide part of the feedback necessary for improvement in teaching. Self-evaluation is often considered essential for self-improvement. In this study self-evaluations were used to provide data.

The Need for Professional Development.

The need for competent teachers has long been evident. Moehlman (1940, p.86) wrote:

The teacher is the most important agent in the instruction process and if he is inadequate in capacity and training, no amount of emphasis on mere organization and supervision can remedy these defects.

The increasing demands upon the educational system made by society has required new and increased expertise within the teaching force. Hencley, McCleary and McGrath (1970) clearly emphasized this point. They suggested that the continuing education of elementary school teachers played a critical role in the improvement of professional standards for teachers. Inservice programs designed to increase competence were included in this continuing education.

The demands for increasing competence in teachers has been recognized by the teachers' professional organizations. The Assistant Director of Professional Development for the Manitoba Teachers' Society, M. Bean, reported that in 1973-74 the Society allocated \$23,561 of their budget towards professional development activities. The budget allocation for 1974-75 increased to \$26,000. A similar trend is evident in other teachers' organizations across Canada and the trend is expected to continue. Goble (1974), in an address to the St. James-Assiniboia Division Association

Inservice at Winnipeg on February 27, 1974, said: "The quality of education, and the effective pursuit of its aims, depends upon the teacher."

This statement would suggest that if the quality of education is to improve to meet new demands then there must be a corresponding increase in the expertise of the teaching force. This contention is supported by the literature. The majority of the textual material on school administration or supervision of instruction has included sections dealing with the need for staff development. The common theme in these sections is closely related to Gobles (1974) statement, i.e. the quality of education and the expertise of teachers are closely related. Authors generally agree upon the need for continuing staff development.

The school principal should recognize that this need is ever-present as the result of changing demands upon the teachers in his school. He should recognize the fact that he cannot afford to ignore this facet of his task.

The Principal and Professional Development.

The importance of the principal's role in the continuing professional development of teachers cannot be overemphasized. Many writers see the principal as occupying a key position in the continuing growth of the teaching force. Parsons (1971) concluded that the principalship is perceived by teachers as the most influential and effective supervisory position. Neagley and Evans (1970) declared that the principal is the leader in faculty improvement. This view agreed with that of Schuster and Wetzler (1958). Jensen, Coffield, Burr and Neagley (1967) indicated that future progress in education will be determined largely by the quality of educational leadership offered by principals. Elsbree, McNally and Wynn (1967), Adams and Dickey (1953),

Lucio and McNeil (1962), Harris (1963), and Jacobson, Reavis and Logsdon (1954) all agreed that one of the major functions of the school principal is that of providing the leadership and the opportunities for the professional growth of teachers. A recent study by the Manitoba Teachers' Society (1973) concluded that both principals and teachers in Manitoba felt that principals should function as instructional leaders rather than as plant managers in schools. The views of many writers were well summarized by Hoeh (1973, p.5) when he stated:

Surely all teachers are desirous of perfecting their professional competencies, and it is incumbent upon the principal to provide leadership in this area of responsibility.

Although Coleman (1972) theorized that the principal's role as instructional leader would diminish as teachers became more competent, other writers have suggested that the principal will be the key in this continuing drive for new competencies in teachers. Coleman (1972) seemed to emphasize the manager role of the principal instead of the leadership role stressed by others. These opposing points of view pose a problem which school administrators must resolve since the tasks of a principal involve both managerial and leadership tasks. A new role may arise as a result of this conflict. Writers in industrial relations and organizational development are strongly emphasizing the team building role of executives in industry. This role combines many aspects of the manager role, the supervisor role, and the leadership role. Evidence that this new approach to administration is finding its way into the school systems is provided by the fact that many school divisions are now offering training sessions in team building to their administrators. On several occasions this has occurred at the local school level as well. Principals may soon find that their major function in the

school is that of team building and team leadership. This new aspect again re-emphasizes the key role the principal holds in the growth aspect of his teachers. He is in the leadership position and it is incumbent upon him as the principal to provide the leadership required for continuing professional growth.

Self-Evaluation.

The principal, in his role as faculty leader, is frequently made responsible for the planning of professional development activities. To plan appropriate activities the principal requires considerable information related to the professional needs of his staff. He must determine what the significant professional development needs are and then establish priorities for these needs. One way to determine these needs is to evaluate carefully the present situation. Various methods of evaluation may be employed, such as evaluation by external groups, evaluation by the principal himself or evaluation by the teachers themselves. The principal may then use the results of these evaluations to establish some priorities with respect to the professional development needs of his teachers.

Professional development activities can then be planned according to the priorities established. In this study teacher self-evaluations were used as the source of data for establishing priorities for development programs.

Evaluation may be thought of as the process of making meaning out of experience. Self-evaluation is, then, the process of making ones own experiences meaningful. Barislow (1965) conceptualized self-evaluation in terms of the discrepancy between a self conception and a concept of the ideal. He further suggested that self-evaluation may be specific or general