

# Managing for Effective Teaching

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Teachers do better when their principals follow the Ten Commandments of Consultation.

Examinations of what principals do (manage) and how that relates to what teachers do (instruct) are by no means new (Edmonds, 1978; Wellisch and others, 1978). But researchers have confronted a dual problem in pursuing such studies. First, it has been difficult to decide whether management processes should be treated as essentially fixed and constant or as

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variable and contingent on the nature of the situation. Second, researchers have faced the dilemma of how to measure "productivity" in schools. Standardized tests, as end-product measures, are often used but are far removed from the processes that lead to particular test outcomes.

To overcome these difficulties, we settled on the notion that there may be a better—if not a "best"—way to manage that is constant, regardless of the situation. To test this, we asked teachers to tell us about the management style of their principals. We also determined that, in order to understand the processes that determine how well students

perform, it would be best to ask students to describe the learning-related actions of their teachers, an approach found more reliable for predicting quality than limited adult observations (Eash and Talmage, 1975; Gage, 1972).

To assess principals' management styles, 125 teachers in 20 elementary schools completed the *Profile of the School* questionnaire, indicating for their schools the mode of communication used, the level of morale, and other indicators of principals' styles of leadership (Likert, 1967). Based on these responses, the schools were arranged into four groups, from Authoritarian (Group 1) to Participative (Group 4). Schools

that fell into Groups 2 and 3 were closely related to Likert's Consultative mode of management. Closer examination indicated that principals in Group 3 consulted more frequently and nonselectively with their teachers, while Group 2 administrators were apt to consult only with those staff members directly concerned with the issue at hand. Thus, Group 3 was labeled Consultative-Decentralized and Group 2 was labeled Consultative-Centralized.

The second stage of the study sought to determine the effectiveness of teaching behavior as it related to each group of school managers. A random sample of 25 percent of the students in the 20 schools completed the *Our Class and Its Work* instrument (Eash, Rasher, and Waxman, 1980), which examined the presence of 11 teaching behaviors previously found to correlate with effective instruction and pupil achievement (Good and Grouws, 1977; Rosenshine and Furst, 1971; Stallings, 1977). Figure 1 presents these behaviors and their definitions.

When the managerial systems of Groups 1 through 4 were related to teacher effectiveness behaviors—as reported by the children—some very interesting results occurred. Schools in Group 2 (Consultative-Centralized) had the most effective teaching, not the Participative (Group 4) schools, as Likert and others have suggested. In fact, Authoritarian Group 1 was the least productive, with Participative Group 4 next. Hence, much to our surprise, consultation appears to be the managerial system most highly related to promoting effective teaching—and thus learning.

Furthermore, significant differences existed between schools with Authoritarian management and all other management approaches. Significant differences also existed between schools which were managed Participatively and those which were Consultative-Centralized, indicating that teachers use more effective teaching strategies when decision making rests with principals who act as leaders and who consult with care and discrimination.

#### Implications

While school principals have been urged to "do something" about learning in their buildings, as managers they have not quite known which management approach to take. Would acting tough—demanding and threatening—work best? Or would a soft, cuddly, involving strategy prompt teachers to

teach better? This study indicates *neither*, rather, principals should assume a middle ground, consulting with staff but making the decisions themselves. But not just any consultation will do. Our data suggest that a deliberate, controlled, and limited form of seeking advice, information, and ideas from just those people *involved* and *expert* will work.

Here are our Ten Commandments of Good Consultation:

1. *Take consultation seriously.* Consider what selected members of the staff have to say and be prepared to use this information in the decision-making and implementation process.

2. *Consult only when necessary.* Not every decision requires major, or even minor, consultation. Since the teachers are already occupied with their jobs and resent attendance at meetings or constant conferences, the principal must use this technique sparingly and with great care. Then, when a teacher is called upon for advice, he or she will know that the advice sought and the ideas given will be vital to the governance of the school.

3. *Consult only with staff who have expertise or possess pertinent informa-*

*tion.* Don't play favorites. If the circle of "consultees" becomes static, it may be that the principal is "playing favorites" or has allowed himself or herself to be surrounded by "yes" people who are safe. Conversely, don't rush out into the hall and grab the nearest teacher for a quick, public consultation. In effect, an administrator must stifle the urge to walk through the halls, pad and pencil in hand, recording everyone's "input." This is not consultation; it's taking an opinion poll. Be bold in seeking ideas from those involved and knowledgeable, but be particular about who is asked.

4. *Consultation is a two-way street—so give feedback.* If the administrator gives the impression that consultation means feeding information upward only, then staff members may resent the process. But if consultation involves a sharing of ideas between principal and teachers, they will be more willing to consult. Consultation, then, should occur not only when the principal needs help but also when it fills some of the teachers' needs for feedback, praise, and information.

5. *Be certain that staff members are aware that consultation has occurred.* Many teachers do not want to be con-

Figure 1. Effective Teaching Behaviors

Behavior	Definition
1. Task orientation.	The extent to which the classroom is businesslike, the students spend their time on academic subjects, and the teacher presents clear goals to the students.
2. Opportunity to learn criterion material.	The extent to which criterion material is covered in class.
3. Variability.	The amount of flexibility or adaptability of teaching methods; the amount of extra materials, displays, or resource materials in the classroom.
4. Enthusiasm and interest.	The amount of the teacher's vigor, power, and involvement.
5. Feedback.	The extent to which the teacher provides the student with positive and negative feedback.
6. Structuring.	The extent to which the teacher directs instruction.
7. Questioning.	The extent to which the teacher asks questions at different levels and adjusts them appropriately in the classroom.
8. Management.	The extent to which the teacher is able to conduct the class without instruction being interrupted.
9. Direct instruction.	The extent to which the teacher sets and articulates the learning goals, actively assesses student progress, and frequently makes class presentations illustrating how to do assigned work.
10. Instructional time.	The allocation of a period of time for a lesson adequate to cover the material yet flexible enough to allow for the unexpected.
11. Pacing.	The extent to which the level of difficulty and the pace of the lesson is appropriate for the student's ability and interest.

sulted and may not want to participate in decision making. But most staff appreciate knowing that one or more of their colleagues has been consulted—even if it's someone else. Such openness is essential to the consultative mode of leadership.

6. *Know what resources are available.* The Consultative-Centralized approach to leadership rests on the premise that a principal knows the resources on her or his staff. If a principal needs to make a decision about the math curriculum, which math teacher or teachers should be consulted? How many opinions and ideas does one seek? These depend, of course, on the issue and the principal's knowledge, but knowing who to ask what, when, and why is crucial to centralized consultation.

7. *Be sure information is accurate.* Knowing resources, consulting the right people, evaluating, cross-checking, and following up on ideas are essential for accurate information. Teachers or other administrators do not "lie" during the consultation process, but present the "facts" from their own viewpoints, including their biases and misconceptions. Thus, consultation requires verification and good detective work.

8. *Know how to make decisions.* Consultation is no substitute for decision making. One does not simply consult until the "right answer" pops into one's head. Usually the answer, the policy, or the decision is *not* lying out there waiting for the consultative administrator. After consultation comes the agony of making a decision. But consultation can help at all stages: to inform the decision, to help "sell" it, and to assist in getting the decision put into action.

9. *Be prepared to make the final decision and stick to it.* The data analyzed in this study clearly indicate that teachers work best in an environment in which the principal is in charge. In fact, the Participation approach scored next to worst, behind only the Authoritarian approach. Thus, consultation means just that, talking carefully with people before final decisions are made.

10. *Be supportive of staff in meeting the goals and program expectations resulting from consultation.* The consultation process does not end when the decision is made and the policy promulgated. Rather, staff require support, consultation, and understanding after decision making as programs come into being.

Managing for better teaching is clearly the mandate for principals. Neither bullying staff nor abdicating control is

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effective; a middle ground, selective or controlled consultation, has been shown to relate most closely to effective teaching behaviors in schools. The pendulum has swung from the authoritarian end to the participative, but now has moved back toward stronger control, suggesting that leaders in education can be strong, decisive, and open to subordinates. Using these ten commandments of consultation, principals can meet the pressures for greater productivity and accountability. □

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