

Aministration of Public Education: Summary and Analysis of Modern Trends Part II

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There are many ways to define the field of administration with universal definitions holding true whether in education or any other domain. No matter how we define it, there is no denying the fact that administration is a multi-faceted constellation of social processes. All of these processes help to give meaning to the organization or structured social system under which they function. The complexity of the human interaction involved is dynamic in nature and influences how effective organizations are, and in what way they perform. The purpose of this paper is to outline some of those social processes, organizational structures and the human dynamics and the importance of leadership involved in the decision making milieu called administration. In particular, I will concentrate on their impact in educational administration.

[**Key words**] Education, administration, organization, leadership, social systems, human resources, Theory X

LEADERSHIP DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Human Factors in Organizations

In the analysis of organizational behavior certain elements have

come under more and more intense scrutiny. These are the factors dealing with the social and psychological activity which affect productivity. The importance of these factors has been pointed out time and again, with more and more precision by social scientists. In the early part of the century, Mayo and Roethlisberger conducted some of the first social science experiments at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company. In these experiments it was shown clearly for the first time that workers' productivity was affected as much, if not more, by the perceptions of the informal group than that which had been planned for formally. This led to the groundwork for the reconceptualization of management as a social process with more influence on the activities of the people involved than that which was assumed under the mechanical process model.

Another of the earliest writers in the field was the business executive, Chester Barnard. Barnard's work dealt with the fact that in their dealings, the administrator must come in contact with organizations, individuals, and the environment. Barnard codified these complex relationships by putting them into a theoretical framework that accounts for the cross-purposes of each of these factors. His definition of an organization calls for a "system which [embraces] the activities of two or more persons coordinating their activities to attain a common goal..." with the organization as the "...binding element common to all cooperative systems." (Morphet et al. 1982:49) He categorized effectiveness (defined as the "accomplishment of the purposes of the organization") and efficiency ("the satisfaction of individual motives") as the outcome of two types of processes. These processes are "those relating to the cooperative system itself and its relationship to its environment and those relating to the creation and allocation of satisfaction among individuals." (Ibid. pg.49)

Expanding further on the role of the individual in the organization, Getzel formulated the classic model of the "social system as involving two classes of phenomena which are at once conceptually independent and phenomenally interactive." (Morphet 1982:49) On the one hand was postulated the roles and expectations of the institution, and on the other, the individual who abides in the system bringing along his or her personality and disposition of needs. The observed interaction between these two give us the concept of what is meant when we speak of social behavior in a social system (or organization). In order to be successful, an organization "has to attain its goals and also meet the personal needs of the members of the social system." (Morphet 1982:87)

Human Nature, Needs, Values, and Motivation

Based on the human relations approach to organizational management, McGregor (1960), developed the framework of Theory X and Theory Y. These are based on the perceptions that lead, in the administrator, to assumptions about the nature of humankind *vis a vis* work. Theory X is based on the assumption made by monocratic, bureaucratic concept of administration and organization. Theory Y, in turn, has as its basic assumptions those which are similar in nature to the pluralistic, collegial concept of organization.

The assumptions that underline Theory X in paraphrase are that:

1. The average human being dislikes work and avoids it when possible.
2. Therefore he must be coerced, controlled, directed, and threatened with punishment to generate satisfactory output.
3. The average human avoids responsibility, exercises

little ambition, and desires security more than anything.

This is in contrast with Theory Y which assumes that:

1. The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest.
2. Humans can and will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which he is committed.
3. Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement.
4. The average human is capable of accepting responsibility and can be taught to seek it.
5. Imagination, ingenuity, and creativity are widespread among the population. (Morphet 1982:86)

The traditional bureaucratic assumptions associated with Theory X lead, in the extreme, to a form of Taylorism. Taylor's scientific management concepts viewed "the human being [as] an economic animal who responded directly to financial incentives. ...the worker [is] guided in his actions by a pleasure-pain calculation that ... leads him to exert effort [only] in proportion to the rewards." (Pugh 1991:291)e)

However, it has been shown by Argyis (for one) that "the formal principles of organization, such as division of labor, unity of chain of command, unity of purpose, and span of control, (all associated with the monocratic, bureaucratic organization) are in conflict with the psychological needs of a mature, healthy human personality." (Morphet 1982:89) (parenthesis mine)

Modern economists recognize that in the development of economic civilization, primitive civilizations concentrate their efforts on the production of primary goods. These primary goods are mainly those concerned with food and shelter. As civilizations advance and these primary needs have been met the more developed societies turn their energies to the production of goods that satisfy cultural or secondary wants.

More in tune with Theory Y, the importance of these human needs (both psychological and physical) was pointed out by Maslow, as he developed a human needs hierarchy model as applied to educational organizations. As the lower-levels needs of people are satisfied, the higher levels of needs or desires arise and as each level is met, the next level takes precedence. Proceeding from the lower level needs to the higher, Maslow put forth the following hierarchy; needs of (1) physiology, (2) safety and security, (3), belongingness and love, (4) esteem, and (5) self-actualization. (Morphet 1982:87)

Theory and Planning

The importance of the conceptualization of theories of this type lies in the practice of planning. The type of assumption that one makes regarding the human resources at hand give us the framework that guides and affects planning. Planning entails the method of action springing from these assumptions. The system is the theory and planning is the process. This is especially true when, "the various concepts related to planning, as derived from systems theory, are put together into an entity, they emerge as a process model in which the various segments involved and their relationship to each other in the planning process are displayed." (Sybouts 1992:58)

Planning is a decision making process. When decisions are made from above and handed down as law worker productivity may not be as effective as when workers themselves are involved in planning, as pointed out earlier. Clearly, "the Hawthorne studies demonstrated that if managers took an interest in their employees and involved them in decisions affecting their work, they would work harder. Those studies thus claimed to have identified the style of supervision most likely to guarantee a happy, harmonious, motivated workforce. Leadership or management style thus became a major interest and focus for research." (Huczynski & Buchanan 1985:480)

Leadership types and perceptions

One of the most important catalysts for the proper functioning of organizations is the leader. As the recognition of the importance of leadership in organizations thenceforth increased, what emerged were various interpretations characterized in three main ways: symbolic, titular, or functional.

The first interpretation was that of the leader as being one possessed of certain traits and therefore could be nurtured into leadership positions. This type of perception is that which gives meaning to the term *symbolic* leadership. This is characteristic of situations where perceived distances between the leader and followers are remote. In this climate, the leader is viewed as one possessed of charismatic and appropriate personality traits which give legitimacy to his or her occupancy of the position.

Another representation of the leader is that where the leader and the position occupied are one and the same. Of the many terms describing this type of leadership, *formal* seems to be the most common

referent. In this type of leadership, the administrative structure is flat versus high and workers are responsible to the position and not the person holding that position. The potential danger in this type of set up is two-fold. There is a danger that highly directive behavior from these position have a stifling effect on emergent leadership. Another peril is that there is no assurance that the person in such a position can truly function as a leader, not being chosen on the basis of any special qualifications.

The *functional* view of leadership is that the most effective type of leadership is that which depends on true leadership talents as they are practiced in a group context. This modern concept of leadership considers that leadership, like any other human activity is another type of social behavior. This activity is a function of, and within, social systems within which interpersonal relations exert their due influence. The one paramount consideration that determines the role of a leader, beyond considerations of force of personality or power of position, is that effective leadership behavior can be learned. This behavior is learned to varying degrees of success consequently developing differing leadership skills in differing individuals. The more successful learner develops an awareness of the social environment in which action takes place and the values and beliefs of the group. This increases his or her chances of bcoming and remaining an effective leader.

Group roles and behaviors

It doesn't seem to matter what type of leadership stance is initially taken. It is the situation in which the leader and the group find themselves that defines, influences, and activates in the leader the appropriate style. This is especially true when the fact of the matter is that most situations that call for leadership of some kind are dynamic and

in flux. This emphasis on situational influences on maximizing leadership behaviors in a changing environment is what gives stimulus to Fiedler's Contingency Model. In short this model is based on the assumption that "leadership effectiveness depends upon the appropriate matching of the individual's leadership style of interacting and the influence which the group situation provides". (Morphet et. al. 1982: 102)

A system of interpersonal relations, as always, exists in any human organization in general, and the work situation in particular. This system, whether accounted for or not in the formal hierarchy, is part and parcel of the informal organizational framework. This system impinges strongly on leader-group member relations and lends to, or detracts from, effectiveness of the leader's power to influence. The work situation determines to a large extent, for example, whether the leadership style is relationship-oriented or task-oriented. Emergent in this context are three main common styles of leadership; *autocratic*, *democratic*, and *laissez faire* (or anarchic).

Autocratic leaders feel the necessity to act within the framework of a centralized decision-making environment and tend to assign tasks unilaterally partly in order to avoid sharing of position or authority. Part of their inherent power is the threat of punishment enhanced by reward to obedient followers.

The *democratic* leader involves others in the group in policy and planning decisions. This type of leadership is marked by the sharing of power by the leader and a professional attitude where praise and criticism are distributed on the basis of merit. Members of the organization are encouraged to contribute in a participatory setting.

Those who engage in an *anarchic* style of leadership lend free-rein to the activities of the group and forswear direct participation unless requested by the group. This leader sees fit to act as a provider of support services and not of direction.

A fourth, added style is a *manipulative* one where submembers follow, and are active in helping to create, orders. This is done in a fashion where members appear participatory, and perhaps democratic, but in fact act under the will of the manipulative leader.

The stress of modern behavioral scientists is on the leader as an actor both influencing and influenced by human social behavior within an organizational setting. It is the social process and a structural hierarchy that defines the sub-and supraordinate relations. This is in opposition to the popular but unquantifiable belief that there are certain characteristics or leadership personality traits with which some find themselves gifted and others not, as if leaders could only be born and not made. This is to say that since leaders react to the social pressures of group dynamics that this constitutes a learning process. It is not just the group that one is a leader of that influences his or her effectiveness. The functional leader interacts with and learns from external group interchanges, that is, institutional groups and environmental groups such as the board of education or the PTA also influence the leader and require certain things from him.

Conflict in Organizations

Whether the values and beliefs held by the leader are in concert with group roles and behaviors is the main potential source of conflict. This is especially true if an organization is viewed as a social system by nature defining the roles of those in any given position by the

impact of predetermined group expectations. Organizational objectives are met by the performance of these roles by the individuals in position. Due to the fact that these individuals are human interacting within organizations, conflict will undoubtedly arise.

Typically, conflict can be either of a detrimental or beneficial nature. It can be an advantage to the organization when it helps to provoke creative thought, in turn generating alternative solutions. Where it creates a problem, it can be dealt with by preparing for it with the creation of teams specifically created to deal with crisis management quickly. Ideally, these teams should include members of the outside community.

Conflicts in organization that may stem from internal or external pressures. These conflicts usually originate in differing perceptions of the function that the administrator should perform. Perceptions held by community groups, the board of educations and even individuals within the same group have their influence on the efficacy of the administrator. However, there is no better prevention for conflicts, internal or external, than communication. This is one area where the administrator can act as an agent for change and direct the willing cooperation of the members of his or her group. His ability to act in this role is enhanced by keeping open the channels for two-way communications. Davis (article pg.26) was able to point out that effective administrators can train for the improvement of listening competencies.

Leadership Communication Competencies

These competencies can be developed and concentrate on group dynamics, motivation, conflict resolution communications and such.

There are things that the effective leader selectively listens to among the immense flow of information that comes his way. The administrator as a leader profits from paying attention to that which is related to the understanding of people working in groups, the dynamics of social interactions, group role expectations, and the forces under which leadership ascends. Lipham (ibid. pg.27) codified such, stressing that the importance of flexibility in leadership is contingent upon the different stages of the change process. This is subsumed under an effective leadership that recognizes and acts upon the perceived effectiveness of the process, the perceived effectiveness of instruction, and staff satisfaction and morale.

“When we develop a greater understanding of social systems, we may also enjoy the ability to make more accurate predictions.” (Sybouts 1992:24)

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

The definition of planning varies according to how it is perceived and is often indistinguishable from the other various functions of administration that it affects and is affected by. The focus of planning by its very nature is on what is intended to transpire in future. As such, the form it takes is, in large part, determined by its forward looking disposition. The outcome of the activities exercised in planning is the product of anticipation put into practice. The process of planning seeks to foresee conditions, directions, and challenges facing the organization and to formulate rational alternatives in response. All in all, the definition of planning is best served by determining what it is a planner does. In this we have help from Sybouts who notes that planners “...strive to provide the catalytic ingredient by which the

steps leading to the achievement of specific and desired goals are specified.” (1992:7) What is produced by his process is a plan of operations that, having vision, is capable of encompassing contingencies met during the achievement of organizational goals.

Practices and Trends in Educational Planning

There are specific goal in the field of education that define its “limited area of planning”. The early developers of educational systems seem to have been aware that educational planning has special needs to be taken into consideration. However, since the scope of planning in education has, until recently, been operational, the time-frame has usually been limited to the school year. In modern times, the call is for a more sophisticated planning outlook. The changes that have been experienced by society have had their impact on the expectation of all societal processes, including education and what it encompasses.

These changes typify a dynamic environment in which educational planning must operate within and of which it must take account. Strategies that are able to weather the ravages of change that time brings must be formulated. Approaches to planning should have, within their make-up, long range time frames, sophisticated planning models and procedures, relatively permanent planning units, reliance on and clear comprehension of theory related to the process of educational planning, greater levels of involvement of higher level administrators, and probably most importantly, allocation of resources toward the effective functioning of educational planning. (article pg.35)

The function of planning is the basis upon which rest all the other management functions and pervades throughout every management level. Its importance is pointed out by Sybouts when he states that “[planning] is needed so that the best approaches to the management

of an educational agency can be assured.” This importance is further amplified when he mentions that “[the] demand for quality planning has never been greater than at the current time as educators face the new century in a time...overdosed with change and conflict.” (1992:14)

This emphasis on change is evident within the planning process itself. One of the more dynamic characteristic of modern planning methods is that we have done away with the concept that plans must never be modified. Fayol’s four characteristics (article pg.36) of the effective plan take this into account. *Unity* stipulates that crosspurposes are counteracted by implementing one plan at a time for any single dimension. *Continuity* provides for the preparation of consequent plans to be effected upon completion of previous ones. *Flexibility* should be built in so that modification can be performed should the need arise. *Precision* provides that all elements of a given plan must meet with standards of accuracy and clarity in order to avoid vaguity, imprecision of execution, and such. What is more important perhaps is that they lend structure and a framework for procedure in the realization of the potential of any given plan.

Types of Plans: Strategic and Tactical

The most important processes that concern the educational administrator, in regards to planning, are those that lead to the achievement of goals or objectives. The two types of plans that emerge in this respect are strategic or tactical in nature. Strategic plans, while encompassing short-term projections, focus on long term goals. This type of plan is characterized by its conceptual complexity and foundation in theory. They are “approaches to be employed in accomplishing a goal.” (Sybouts 1992:47)

Tactical plans on the other hand are methods to be employed in accomplishing strategic objectives. These are the type of operational plans that continue on a day to day basis and form the specific, detailed focus of organizational activity. There is an interdependent relationship between strategic and tactical planning. Strategic planning gives direction to the activities generated by tactical planning which, in turn, orders things so that strategy can be effected. While strategic planning spells out *what* it is to be done, tactical planning enumerates *how* it is to be achieved.

The progression brought about by strategic planning flows from the *Generation of a Vision* (which is the beginning of the planning process and often called *needs assessment*) as a commitment and continues through three distinct phases; *Clarification* of mission and the prioritization of goals, *Strategic Management* where strategies are selected and implemented, and *Operational Planning* or the design of specific tasks. Considerations concerning the aspects of vision and commitment fall loosely in line with needs assessment. It is in this primary phase that the planner or planners determine the difference between existing conditions and those that seem to be desired. Finally, in order to bring each of these functions into mutual contact, the final closing loop of *Feedback* generation and application is added. This final and recursive step augments the process by "...[enabling] planners to capitalize on a fundamental concept of systems theory as applied to the planning process... [which] makes it possible to negotiate within the system in any direction at any time and to ensure that all subsystems remain in tune with the total system." (Sybouts 1992:52) The importance of this last step can not be underestimated of its value in the accomplishment of the development of a meaningful or viable plan.

With the ever-intensifying change that a rapidly shrinking world experiences, what is required of educational planners is that they recognize the value of foresight. In other words, by becoming futurists, school planners acquire the benefit of prediction and hence an enhanced ability to affect change. They can do this by being prepared to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves. This preparation relies, itself, on foresight. Since much of this foresight is provided by those who engage in the research of futures, methods for attaining that expertise are called for. One of these is known as the Delphi technique, developed by the Rand Corporation in the 1960's. This is a series of questionnaires given to a panel of experts to gather opinions on a given topic. They then, at each level (three or four), are given a chance to revise their responses should they fall outside given ranges. These opinions are also reviewed by other respondents and tabled for discussion by written justification and critique. While the Delphi technique originally had the purpose of providing predictions, more recent modifications have developed to where it is now used also "to gather information about what people think are desirable options or goals to be pursued." (Sybouts 1992:86) This gives it the function of a tool for needs assessment and specification; the two legs upon which rests the definition of the organization's planning needs.

As many models of planning as there are, there are commonalities which exist among them. These commonalities provide not only impetus for planning but also the constraints that impinge on the process. Strategic planning is best done when viewed as being affected by what transpires in future. Social forces, especially in this time of rapid social change, exert their influence and evolve at speeds that defy grasp unless the leader has the vision and the belief that things can be improved. Thus his or her concern is not only the organizational struc-

ture but planning for the future under which that structure will, by necessity of circumstance, change.

THE IMPACT OF THE JUDICIARY ON THE OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS.

In the United States at present one of the greater forces for social change lies within the government. While the legislative and executive branches have made their power felt by maintaining an active role in the education of the nation in fostering change for the purpose of improvement, these activities are regulated by the judiciary. On the federal level this has only been true since the end of the '50s while the state judiciary resolved the majority of education disputes before then.

The US Supreme Court and Education

But with the student movement of the 60's a seaswell of change was put into motion. The litigation that was brought to the courts were couched in constitutional terms of student rights and teachers' rights. This merited the attention of the U.S. Supreme Court. The Warren court of this time can best be characterized as a provocative judiciary determined to act as an instrument for social change. The vigorous attitude that the court took in affecting this change was perceived in some quarters as overstepping the bounds of its duty. At the time, Populist sentiment went as far as to call for the impeachment of Supreme Justice Earl Warren in reaction to what was perceived as court-mandated interference in the social life of groups of individuals. This was perceived as being in conflict with tradition that had seen control of education focused on a more local level. It seemed incongruent that the highest court of the land should concern itself with influencing or monitoring the daily operations of local school systems.

However, the true nature of the concern of the courts was in insuring that the fabric of society was that which was intended to be produced by the loom of the Constitution. Fully two-thirds of the cases heard by the court during this period were either concerned with the implementation of constitutional amendments with the remaining determining the distribution of powers between the federal and state governments.

One of the first and perhaps most important judgements of this time did in fact concern education but, further and more importantly, addressed basic constitutional rights of citizens. To many, the decision in the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka*¹ signified the exercise of the Fourteenth Amendment in denying racial discrimination in public school. What is of equal import is that this decision also affirmed the importance of education and the legal responsibility of the government (federal or state) to provide such to all its citizens. There has been much dispute as to what this exactly means however, there are two interpretations open. One is that if the states find that they are willing to provide education using public funds that such education must be public; i.e. accessible to all. On the other hand, decisions have placed the rights of citizens in a position of priority. In consequence, while states may compel its citizenry to attend school, this requirement may be met outside of the public school system. The states of course, do have the power to demand proof that the education received outside of the public system is equivalent. This is in fact the case with religious education institutions, private schools, and home instruction.

Students rights

Students' rights were further amplified by the *Tinker*² decision but

not extended beyond the rights granted by the US Constitution. Specifically, this decision allowed school authorities to conduct reasonable searches and seizures as granted other governmental bodies by the Fourth Amendment, when carried out upon probable cause, warranted, and particular in its purpose. The trend of the court since the 1967 *Gault*³ decision is toward the recognition that the state cannot maintain separate and different legal standards for adults and minors. Beyond the *Tinker* decision, this legal status was fortified in 1975 when the “court expanded the right of students to procedural due process of law” (Morphet 1982:32) in the case of *Goss vs. Lopez*⁴.

This emphasis on the rights of the individual also extended to the rights of teachers within the state systems. Cases concerning freedom of speech and the constitutionality of requiring loyalty oaths were heard throughout the Sixties. These cases, for the most part, adjudged to individuals their freedom of speech, association, and beliefs. These decisions, while affecting the law of the land and reinforcing the constitution on which they are based, highlight the necessity of the administrator to keep abreast of changes in the laws affecting education and its environment. It must be recognized that the courts are and will continue to be an influential and controlling force as education continues to evolve in its development.

The Political Role of the Courts in Education

That each legislative body injects its own philosophy or outlook into its influence over the future and the future of education raises many questions. One question is whether politics is a desirable ingredient in education. Whether the determination is desirable or undesirable, it is an inescapable fact that political activity has, does, and will continue to play a role in determining the role of education. This type of

political influence cannot be ignored considering the state's control over the direction of funding and its interest in designing curriculum to meet its needs. Challenges to the state decisions concerning education actualize the exercise of political power. These contests take place in the arena of the judiciary at times reaching the highest courts in the land. Decisions reached there have a far-reaching effect on the activities and planning for education by setting guidelines under which local autonomous bodies can operate. Thus the judiciary have their role in prescribing educational activity but are at their most potent when "failure or cessation of the leadership by the governor, the legislature, or others in a state raises the need for judicial intervention." (Morphet 1982:37)

It is the duty of the effective leader acting within the social organization to keep informed of factors affecting change in the environment of the educational system. These factors are related to sociology, psychology, and the political arena in which human and organizational behavior take place. Being an administrator requires that one maintain the ability to communicate the reality and the importance of influences such as these and to guide and affect the change that they demand.

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NOTES

- 1 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483, (Kans. 1954).
- 2 *Tinker v. Des Moines School Board*, 393 U.S. 503 (Iowa 1969).
- 3 *Gault*. 387 U.S. 1, 87 S. Ct. 1428 (Ariz. 1967).
- 4 *Goss v. Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565 (1975).