In this Issue

SM&L

Better time management

Use our checklist to test your time management skills. There is sound advice for those who are found wanting in this regard.

How good are you at managing your time and your priorities? Perhaps you are one of those super-organised principals who always meets deadlines, who knows immediately where to find every piece of paper you need, whose in-tray never contains more than two or three items and who is able to spend quality time with your family every evening and over weekends? Or are you, as is the case with many principals, so overwhelmed that you can never find your in-tray because of the clutter on your desk, who goes home each night with a bulging brief case and box full of files and unopened post to a wife and children whose names you have forgotten? Most principals and people in management positions are somewhere in between these two extremes but if you are more like the latter than the former, perhaps it is time to check on how well you manage your time.

The interesting and important thing to remember about time is that everyone has the same numbers of hours in a day and the same number of days in a week. The amount is fixed and it passes by relentlessly. Once time has passed it cannot be called back because you did not use it productively or because you used it for unimportant things rather than those that mattered in your life or in your work. The essentially thing to understand is that time management is not about time, it is about the management of time, which means making decisions about how you will choose the use the 24 hours allocated to you each day. If you are not coping, or are always behind schedule or feel guilty about the people who are important to you in your life, look to yourself, not to others for solutions. Re-examine three things: your priorities, your decision-making and your self-discipline. Your priorities determine what is important to you in your life and your work. Your decision-making should determine the extent to which the choices you make about how to spend your time reflect your priorities while your self-discipline determines whether you act on your decisions or pay lip-service to them.

Kinds of tasks

In his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Covey* identifies 4 kinds of tasks based on two factors: urgency and importance.

- *Urgent* items are those that require an immediate response. A good example is a ringing telephone. If not answered within a relatively brief period of time, it will stop ringing. The choice we need to make is to answer it or not. Urgent items are not necessarily important but their urgency often drives people to deal with them first - often at the expense of other, more important, tasks.

- *Important* items are those which have the potential to yield a high payoff relative to the time invested in them. The high payoff can be of a positive or

Time Management checklist

☐ I have a year plan in my diary listing all the important events of the school year

☐ Dates of special family days like birthdays and anniversaries are listed in my diary

☐ Regular meetings of the school's management and governance structures are scheduled either a year or a term in advance

☐ At the start of each week I have a clear idea of the meetings/ events that I will be required to attend in that week

☐ I seldom miss or need to postpone scheduled meetings

☐ At the start of each week I have a clear idea of my priorities for the week

☐ I seldom miss deadlines for the completion of tasks

☐ I know what my priority tasks are at the start of each day

☐ I allocate time each day for the completion of these priority tasks

☐ I normally complete these priority tasks in the allocated time

☐ I set aside time each day for the completion of routine tasks such as processing in-coming mail, and responding to phone calls and e-mail

☐ I have a system in place to limit or prevent interruptions when this is needed

☐ I seldom procrastinate or put off difficult or dreary tasks

☐ I delegate tasks that sub-ordinates can do whenever possible

Rate yourself using the following scale:

Just like me   = 4
Mostly like me   = 3
Sometimes like me   = 2
Never like me   = 1

If you score:

42 – 56 You have excellent time management skills and have good control over your organisational and administrative responsibilities.

28 – 41 You need to tighten up on your time management. You are usually under pressure from deadlines which you struggle to meet. The advice in this article, if acted on, will help you take greater control of your life and improve your productivity

14 – 27 You need help as you battle on a daily basis to keep your head above water. Your productivity is low, you often miss deadlines and operate mostly in crises mode. Put this advice into practice to take greater control of your working life and reduce your stress levels as well as those of your staff.

negative value. Ensuring that the school bus is serviced regularly and its roadworthiness checked is an example of a task which is important because to delay or overlook this task can have potential catastrophic consequences. Important items are not always urgent and this is often the crux of the problem and the cause of the dilemma faced by principals and others who occupy senior leadership and management positions. For the irate teacher at your door, the child who has once again not done his homework is at that moment a matter that is both urgent and important. For the principal, however, the important task may be the preparation of a proposal to a sponsor who may be willing to provide the school with a state-of-the-art computer laboratory worth R1million.

The four task variables (with example) are:

• *Urgent and important* – submitting an advertisement for a teaching post by the due deadline

• *Urgent but unimportant* – the teacher at your door that wants to talk to you about pupils who arrived late for her class

• *Not urgent but important* – checking and updating the contracts and conditions of employment of all SGB employed members of staff to ensure compliance with current labour legislation

• *Not urgent and unimportant* – deciding on the venue for the staff end-of-year function

Clearly the two groups of tasks to which managers need to devote their time are those that are urgent and important and those which are not urgent but are important. The thing to avoid is allowing the urgent but unimportant tasks to distract from those that are not urgent but are important. This is not always easy because urgency often disguises itself as importance.

In her excellent book, *The Organised Executive: New ways to manage Time, Paper, and People,* Stephanie Winston provides some useful advice on how busy executives can best manage their time and tasks. The following time management process is loosely based on her model.

1 In a single notebook (e.g. an A5 stenographers pad) make a Master List of every task, idea, or project that you feel you need or would like to tackle. List everything, no matter how large or small, important or trivial. Don't worry about the order, list them as they arise.

2 Review this list on a daily basis at the end of each day. Large projects should be broken up into smaller more manageable units. Eliminate (delete) tasks that have been completed, that have been delegated to others or that, on reflection, you feel do not warrant further attention or action.

3 Use your Master list to compile a "To do" list for the next day. The list should not contain more items than you feel that you can complete in the day. Use your diary to check the amount of time that you will have available. This will depend on your teaching load for the day and whether you are required to attend regular scheduled meetings during the course of the day.

In compiling your list you first need to identify those tasks which are urgent and important – priority items that need to be completed because of looming deadlines or because they may be stressful, such as dealing with a difficult parent or an underperforming member of staff. List these first but try to avoid having more than three items of this nature to deal with on one day.

Next, list at least one important item which is not urgent. This would typically be an item which forms part of a larger long-term project. Examples could be a review of the school's disciplinary procedures or an analysis of the school's budget as part of a cost-saving drive. Allocating time to items of this kind on a regular basis ensures that they get done and that the process is more thorough than if they were put off until they move from being important but not urgent to important and urgent.

Finally add some routine busywork tasks. These are low stress tasks such as filing, sorting incoming mail, signing letters and reading minutes.

4 At the start of the day, read through your daily list and prioritise it in terms of payoff. Start with the item that is priority number 1 and work through it until it is completed, then go on to the item which is priority 2. If the items are really urgent and important, instruct your secretary to hold all calls, turn off your cell phone and close your door, with instructions that you are to be disturbed only if there is a major crisis. This is not something that I would normally advocate for principals but there are times that this needs to be done if you are to retain your sanity and drive quality in your school.

References

Winston, S. *The Organised Executive: New ways to Manage Time, Paper, and People.* Warner Books, New York (1983).

Covey, S. R. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.* Simon & Schuster, London (1989)

Protocol for events involving pupils

The DoE has recently published a protocol to safe-guard teaching time which will help prevent zealous officials from governments departments (including PEDs), and well-meaning NGOs from "demanding" that schools provide groups of pupils, during school hours, for functions that they deem to be important. I am sure that most principals have been faced with the situation in which some self-important official or community member demands that pupils attend a function during school hours. Usually, the pupils are not only required to attend, but they need to be in uniform and supervised by teachers to ensure that they behave and applaud appropriately. In most instances they are there simply to make up the numbers and are forced to sit and listen to interminable speeches by these same people or their superiors whom they are trying to impress.

The protocol sets parameters for all events involving pupils which are not organised by either the schools themselves or at the request of the Minister or Deputy-Minister of Education or the MEC for education in the province.

Primary responsibility for implementing the protocol rests with the relevant provincial HOD although the MEC retains the power to veto the decisions of the HOD.

Included in the protocol is the proviso that:

• applicants will be liable for any damages that may arise should an activity hold any risks for pupils, teachers, parents or visitors

• no applications will be approved for events held during the last quarter of the academic year

• applications must be made to the HOD in writing at least 3 months before the scheduled date of the event. The written submission must justify the participation of pupils in terms of the benefits that they and/or the school will derive from the event

• the HOD or his/her delegate confer with the principal within 7 days of receipt of the request with regard to the following:

– the educational value of the event

– pupil safety

– the timing and duration of the event

– the suitability of the event for the target group

– the acceptability of the event to the parent community, as well as parent consent

– all other relevant issues.

• where approval of the event results in loss of learning and teaching time, the HOD or his delegate

Creating Instructional Materials for all pupils

Recommendations from specialists who work with pupils with barriers to learning on ways in which layout and design can be used to make learning materials more accessible to all pupils

Kathleen Rotter, writing in the May 2006 issue of *Intervention in School and Clinic*, a journal devoted to the teaching of pupils with special needs (*barriers to learning in our terminology*), provides some interesting and helpful advice on how the layout and design of instructional material can make it more accessible to all pupils. "Accessible" in this context relates to the ability of pupils to identify and comprehend those elements of the instructional material that are critical for effective learning.

She uses the mnemonic COLA to represent the key elements of layout and design that need to be considered when preparing instructional material. These elements are Contrast, Orientation, Lettering, and Artwork

Contrast

Contrast ensures that critical information is easily located by the reader and is perceived as being important. Create contrast using one of the following five techniques:

• Contrast the text from the background colour. Although coloured text and backgrounds may appear to be more interesting, black text on a white background is the most legible.

• Use a larger font size of the same font type for important information. Mixing of font types on the same page is not recommended.

• Use colour or highlighting. Although colour and highlighting will help accentuate an important word, they should be used judiciously. The same applies to bold type. Too much of any of these three (colour, highlighting and bold type) makes text look dense and uninviting and is likely to hinder rather than help the reader.

• Use of white space (space without text or artwork). The greater the white space surrounding an item, the more it is accentuated. White space helps avoid clutter and improves the readability of text. It is important to remember this not only when producing instructional materials but also when producing assessment tasks including tests and examination papers. There is a tendency in many schools to reduce test and examination papers during the duplicating process to save on the costs of paper and printing. This may, in the end, be to the disadvantage of pupils, particularly those who read poorly, or whose mother tongue is not the LOLT of the school, or who may have other barriers to learning.

• Use of borders or boxes. Borders or boxes are an effective way of accentuating important information and are particularly useful for identifying instructions or directions relating to the text. The borders should, however, be simple so as not to distract from the text itself. Underlining should as a means of accentuating text should be avoided as it obscures the descending part of letters such as "y" and "p" and may interfere with the ability of a reader to decode words.

Orientation

Orientation is the positioning or alignment of words on a page, or in a space such as a text box on a page. In South Africa, where the majority of children read (and learn to read) from left to right and from top to bottom, it is important that the layout of text and other objects such as artwork used in learning materials, be organised in this way. This will ensure that a pupil who engages with the material and follows it visually from left to right and from top to bottom will encounter it in the correct sequence.

Lettering

Hand-written material, particularly cursive writing, has been shown to be very difficult for pupils with barriers to learning to read. Instructional material should therefore be printed or typed. This is important to remember not only for material that is duplicated for pupil use but also when writing on a black/green/ white board. The exclusive use of CAPITAL/ UPPERCASE or small/lowercase letters is also not recommended. Using all capital letters has been found to reduce the reading speed of typical readers by as much as 20%. Upper and lowercase letters should be used as is typically found in writing. This applies equally to headings and important information, where the use of uppercase and/or small capitals should be avoided.

Artwork

Although artwork may add to the visual appeal of learning materials, this does not necessarily result in improved learning and may even hinder children in certain learning tasks. Generally graphics and artwork should only be used where they support the information being presented. When deciding whether or not to include artwork the teacher needs to decide whether the graphic provides information that will assist the pupil in recalling or understanding the information presented. Artwork is particularly useful where it provides a visual representation of an item that may be described in the text. As an example, if the text reads "the man wore a red sombrero" then a picture of a man wearing a red sombrero will provide an important visual representation of what the text describes, helping the pupil to understand that a sombrero is a kind of a hat with a wide brim.

Too much artwork on a page or artwork that is too complex can also confuse pupils and distract them from the print. Equally, artwork which is poorly drawn, making it difficult for pupils to recognise, or illustrating an object which is new to the experience of pupils can also create problems and/or lead to misconceptions about the size and nature of the object.

To summarise, for learning materials to be effective, keep them simple and uncluttered with plenty of white space. Accentuate only the most critical information using white space and/or a larger size of the same font type. Use the same simple clear font throughout and avoid the use of capitals, underlining, italics and colour. Font size and line spacing should be such that the text can be read at a normal reading distance. Avoid reducing worksheets, tests and examination papers to save paper as it is likely to disadvantage pupils with poor reading ability and other barriers to learning. Place important items of text, such as instructions, in boxes. Use artwork sparingly and only if it supports the text and aids understanding. Do not use artwork or other graphic devices simply to make learning materials "pretty".

Reference

Rotter, K. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, Vol 41, No 5, May 2006 pp. 273 - 281

National Recovery Plan

The teachers' strike during the last weeks of the second term was unprecedented as it was the first time that all the major teacher unions supported and participated in industrial action of this kind and was also the most protracted in the education sector. Only time will tell what the fall-out and long-term consequences will be and whether the end-result will justify the sacrifices that were made.

In response to the strike and in an effort to reduce its impact on pupil learning the DoE and PEDs have launched the "National Recovery Plan for Education" which has been widely advertised in the media. The details of this plan can be found on the DoE website at http://www.education.gov.za.

It is interesting to look at the key features of the plan and to consider the extent to which it may or may not accomplish its goals of limiting the negative consequences of the strike, particularly in relation to the Senior Certificate and Grade 11 national examinations.

SM&L would like to hear from our readers, whether elements of the National Recovery Plan are being implemented in their schools or districts, and if so, whether they are proving to be effective. Schools may also have launched their own "recovery" strategy and we would like hear about these, particularly where they are proving to be effective.

Some examples

This is how colour contrast can be used to accentuate text so that it stands out. This is how font size can be used to accentuate text so that it stands out. This is how the use of a bold contrast can be used to **accentuate text** so that it stands out.

Increasing the space between lines and letters makes the text more legible. USING ALL CAPITAL LETTERS HAS BEEN FOUND TO REDUCE THE READING SPEED OF TYPICAL READERS BY AS MUCH AS 20%. Underlining as a means of accentuating text should be avoided as it obscures the descending part of letters such as "y" and "p"

Use borders and boxes for important information such as instructions

Use white space to make important information stand out

and may interfere with the ability of a reader to decode words. *Hand-written material, particularly cursive writing, has been shown to be very difficult for those pupils with barriers to learning to read. Instructional material should therefore be printed or typed.*

Protocol for events involving pupils

must be informed in writing of alternative arrangements that will be made to make up time that is lost.

The protocol which was published on 19 June 2007 contains very specific detail about time frames and responsibilities and is available from the DoE website http://www.education.gov.za/

From our reading of the protocol it would seem that it provides principals with the ammunition they need to turn down well-meaning requests which may not be convenient or in the best interests of the school. It also makes it possible to say no on the basis of the loss of teaching and learning time, rather than in terms of the importance of the event, which is often where the principal's and the fervent promoter of the event's perceptions of its value are most different.

Professional development

Planning a programme of coordinated professional development for your school

In the April edition of *SM&L* we listed the critical requirements for high-quality teacher professional development that have been identified from research on effective staff professional development programmes.

The findings were that high quality programmes:

• include a strong foundation in subject content and the method of teaching

• are based on evidence from research on effective teaching and learning strategies

• are aligned with the long-term goals of the school and district to improve education, and more specifically, to improve the academic performance of pupils

• are planned to meet teacher-identified needs

• use collaborative problem solving, with teachers working together to solve problems and develop new strategies to improve the effectiveness of their teaching and learning

• are primarily school-based

• allocate sufficient time and resources to professional development for teachers to work together within the school building

• are an ongoing process forming an integral part of the school programme

• use the principles of adult learning

• provide follow-up and support to ensure that new knowledge, skills and approaches are used and practiced

• are evaluated on the basis of their impact on teacher effectiveness and pupil learning.

These findings can serve as a useful checklist of teacher professional development for schools in which an ongoing programme of teacher professional development is already in place. For schools in which professional development is an ad hoc process or is entirely absent, the list forms a good starting point for the development and implementation of a teacher professional development programme.

In our May edition we looked at ways of identifying the professional development needs of teachers through the use of a needs analysis tool. This, together with information that is provided by the IQMS Development Appraisal process, as well as the Personal Growth Plans of individual teachers and the School Improvement Plan which are derived from it, should provide a clear idea of the professional development needs of a school's teachers.

The next step is to analyse this information in terms of the school's long-term development goals and to prioritise the identified needs in terms of these goals. This priority list should provide a clear indication of the kind of professional development that is required. It is important to note that the needs of the staff are likely to vary, depending on their experience and their specific duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be necessary to provide a differentiated programme to meet these differing needs. A good proportion of whatever is planned, however, should involve all staff because this offers opportunities for teambuilding through shared experience and congeniality. From the evidence provided in the list, it should also be possible to determine the nature of the training that will be needed in term of structure, frequency and time allocation, as well as the extent to which outside "experts" may be needed to assist with the training.

The professional development programme

In developing the programme structure, one needs to take cognisance of the following:

• the practicalities of the school's teaching and co-curricular programme and the demands that this places on teachers

• the kind of training that is needed

• the time, facilities and other resources that may be needed to deliver quality training.

• whether particular training needs are best met by once-off events or whether they require a series of activities and on-going support for those involved.

For all practical purposes, professional development activities for teachers can be of four types in terms of the amount of time allocated to them:

• Short session of between 1 and 2 hours. These would normally take place before or after school on weekdays and be repeated at weekly or fortnightly intervals

• Part-day sessions of 3 to 5 hours. These are sessions which are scheduled to occupy part of a day, typically a full morning, afternoon or evening. These can be scheduled on a weekday for late afternoon or evening and could include a light meal break.

• Day sessions of 5 to 8 hours which utilise a full-day and would normally include meal and tea/coffee breaks

• Multi-day session. Normally scheduled for a weekend and which can include "island" type settings with participants overnighting at the venue.

Each of these kinds of sessions offer advantages and disadvantages and how and when to use each type will depend very much on the needs of the staff and the extent to which they and the school's senior management team are committed to their own professional development.

Generally, to be effective, a professional development programme would need to include regular (weekly or fortnightly) short sessions of between 1 and 2 hours as well as several longer part-day or full day sessions. These longer sessions can be scheduled either quarterly or spread across the year at times that are convenient in terms of the school's year plan. The purpose of the short sessions is to provide opportunities for discussion, support and mentoring of on-going professional development activities. The longer sessions, on the other hand, offer opportunities for more in-depth discussion, and for training conducted or supported by external agencies or facilitators in the form of workshops, seminars etc. Multi-day sessions, because of the time demands that they place on staff members, particularly those with young families, and because of their expense, should be used sparingly. They do, however, offer wonderful opportunities for team-building and for personal and professional growth provided they are well planned and that those responsible for their presention have the necessary skills and experience. It is wise therefore, to use experienced professionals with expertise in the area to be covered, to present these programmes.

Grade 9 CTA Timetable

Section B of the CTAs will be written this year at the dates and times given below. These are pen-and-paper type tests but do not necessarily take the form of conventional examination papers.

Day	Time	Subject
Monday 12/11	13:00	Life Orientation
Tuesday 13/11	08:30	Languages (Home Lang. level)
Wednesday 14/11	08:30	Languages (1st Additional Lang. level)
Thursday 15/11	08:30	Mathematics
Friday 16/11	08:30	EMS
Monday 19/11	08:30	Natural Sciences
Tuesday 20/11	08:30	Social Sciences
Wednesday 21/11	08:30	Arts and Culture
Thursday 22/11	08:30	Technology
Friday 23/11	08:30	Languages (2nd Additional Lang. level)

E-mail from William Foaden, principal of Victoria Park Grey Primary School

I recently received the following e-mail from William Foaden, who makes an interesting proposal which we would be happy to support. If any of our readers have suggestions of topics for discussion, or concerns that they would simply like to raise, we would be delighted to hear from you. Our contact details are given in the running footer at the bottom of each page.

Dear Alan

Thank you so much for the latest copy of SM&L (May Vol. 1 Number4)

I am always impressed by the quality of the articles and look forward with anticipation to receiving the practical advice and information.

A suggestion for the future may be, something like "Scenario Sense" whereby Principals could mail you with queries and a panel could give advice. Many ex model C school heads phone each other on a regular basis and do this sort of consulting.

It might be interesting to see the types of queries doing the rounds- there may be a trend.

Thank you for a great magazine.

Kind regards

William Foaden
Victoria Park Grey Primary School

Because examinations are such an important element of assessment in Grades 10 to 12, *SM&L* would advise schools to include a formal examination as part of their assessment in Grades 7 to 9. The examinations can be designated as one of the assessment tasks in each subject and in Grade 9 these marks can be included as part of the internal assessment component of the final promotion mark.

One option schools may wish to consider is to write formal examinations in Grade 9 during the course of the third term. This will reduce the marking and administrative load of teachers during the final term when they are saddled with the additional marking generated by the CTAs.

Senior Certificate Planning Checklist

A planning checklist to help your school to provide the best possible structured support for your Grade 12 pupils as they prepare for this final Senior Certifcate examination based on the "old" curriculum

The third term is the final teaching term for Grade 12s and if schools are to provide those Grade 12 pupils with the best possible preparation for their Senior Certificate examinations which begin on 8 October, it is vital that full and effective use be made of the time that remains. Efficient use of teaching time is even more important this year because of the significant number of lesson hours that were lost as a result of the strike by teachers and other public servants at the end of the second term.

Without wishing to diminish the value of what can be done during the third term, particularly relating to practice in examination technique, it is important to emphasise that good Senior Certificate results are not achieved through cramming in the final months and weeks before the examinations begin. They are also not a consequence of good teaching and hard work during a pupil's Grade 12 year. Good results are the product of a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy during the primary years and the development of sound study habits, self-discipline, hard work and good teaching throughout the high school years. More importantly, results achieved through cramming have few long-term benefits for pupils: indeed the poor grounding of these pupils in the key disciplines becomes apparent in their indifferent performance when they begin their tertiary studies or enter the job-market.

So what should schools do to ensure that their Grade 12 pupils derive the most benefit from the remaining 10 to 12 weeks of their schooling? The following are suggested strategies for schools to consider:

1   Make the most of every moment of teaching time. Academic time should not be used for anything other than teaching and learning. Discussions about events such as year-end functions and matric dances should not usurp teaching time. (Many schools are sensibly scheduling their matric dances in the first half of the year to ensure these events do not become a distraction.)

2   Ban or discourage frivolous activities in the days leading up to the final days of formal schooling and play down or minimise celebrations and partying on the last formal school day. These distract pupils from what should be their only goal at this stage, which is to achieve their best possible results in the coming examinations. Schools should rather focus on the significant advantages of achieving good results and the huge disadvantage of failure – precipitating the need either to repeat the year or to leave school without the benefit of a Senior Certificate. Pupils need to be helped to take the view that the appropriate time for celebration is *after* they have written their final papers,

or better, when they have received their results and can celebrate their achievements and the results they have worked for.

3   Provide pupils with examples of sensible study programmes (timetables) from the start of the third term to the end of their Senior Certificate examinations. These should map out the revision that needs to be done in each subject up to the time when the examination is written, and also provide guidelines on the amount of time (in hours) that needs to be allocated to the revision of each sections of work. With appropriate guidance, this approach helps pupils to focus on those sections of work which are likely to give them the best return on investment in terms of marks earned per hour of study.

4   Make sure that the pupils and their parents are aware of the amount of time after school and over weekends that Grade 12 pupils should devote to study and examination preparation. As a guideline, Grade 12 pupils should spend **at least** 3 hours per day, including Saturdays and Sundays, on homework and revision during the course of the third term. Those that wish to excel should - and do - spend considerably more time than this on focused revision. Pupils should concentrate first on homework and revision assignments set by their teachers before tackling revision tasks of their own choosing. This is because their teachers, who will have prepared pupils in previous years for the examinations, are better able to identify the sections of work that are most important in terms of examination preparation, as well as the best ways of revising these sections.

Once formal lessons have been completed and the period of "study leave" begins, the time devoted to revision should increase to **at least** 6 hours a day and this should continue throughout the examination period. It is a simple fact of life that the majority of pupils at this age do not have the self-discipline to maintain a programme of consistent study over the extended period of the Senior Certificate examinations. Schools can assist their pupils in this regard by providing teacher-supervised and supported study periods at school for the full duration of the examinations. It is a model that has been used with some success both here and overseas. In any event, teachers should be available during this period to provide extra help for individuals and small groups of pupils who request such support.

5   Provide parents of Grade 12 pupils with advice on how they can support their children in their preparation for the examinations. This advice should include information on recommended hours of study and sensible study habits, as well as the importance of providing their sons and daughters with a quiet place

to study free of distractions such as television, radio, cellphones, siblings and their friends. It is also helpful to provide parents with advice on the importance of a sensible diet (plenty of fruit, vegetables and cereals) and the need to limit the use of stimulants such as coffee and tea and to avoid the use of drugs (except those prescribed by a doctor), nicotine and alcohol. Where the home circumstances of individual pupils make the provision of a quiet study area impossible, schools should provide these facilities for Grade 12 pupils to study at school in the afternoons and evenings wherever this is feasible.

6 Give pupils practice writing as many past examination papers as they can. Most papers and memoranda are now available from the DoE's Thutong website (http://www.thutong.org.za) and from some PED websites (the WCED is one of the better PED websites at http://wced.wcape.gov.za). Recently, papers have also been provided in special supplements in the press. By the time pupils write their final examination papers in a subject, they should have worked through every examination paper in that subject for the past five years. Once a question or paper has been worked through, the pupils' answers should be checked against the relevant memorandum, where this is available.

7 Teachers should teach examination technique. This should include all of the following:

7.1 Subject teachers helping pupils to interpret questions by discussing with them the kind of answer that the examiner requires for a particular question.

7.2 Setting pupils the task of answering specific questions within an allocated time period based on the mark/time allocation for that paper in the final examination. This should be followed by teacher-led discussion that unpacks the question - to help pupils interpret it and in doing so to understand what was required. This should be followed by a study of the memorandum to see how marks would be allocated for the answer.

7.3 Providing pupils with explanations of the kinds of answers examiners require when they use certain kinds of words in questions. As an example, pupils need to know the kind of answer that is required if the examiner uses "discuss", "explain", describe", "in point form", "list", "tabulate", etc.

7.4 Giving advice on the specific requirements of each paper so that pupils know exactly which and how many of each kind of question they are required to answer. This applies particularly to papers which may include choices of questions. Pupils also need to be given advice on the best way to set out their responses and on the importance of producing a script which is neat and of hand-writing that is legible.

8 Practise, practise, practise. There are only so many ways that examination questions can be set and

topics that can be covered. Because of this, there is a good chance that a pupil who has thoroughly worked through most of the past papers in a subject will encounter questions in their final papers that are similar to those that they have practised in their preparation for the examinations. It is then that their hard work and diligence pay off, not only in terms of their confidence when writing the paper but in the results that they will attain. It is then that they have something to celebrate and can take pride in results that have been earned through hard work.

Grade 11 National Examinations 2007

The examination timetable for the national examination in Grade 11 has been published on page 10 of this edition of *SM&L* because we are aware of the fact that not all PED are equally efficient in providing this information to schools. All schools are required to write the nationally set examinations for the following subjects:

Mathematics P1 & P2

Mathematical Literacy P1 & P2

Home Language P1

Additional Language P1

The decision about which of the other nationally set papers will be compulsory for schools, will be made by the PEDs and may vary from province to province. Information at our disposal, however, suggests that PEDs are opting to make use of these nationally set papers. If this is correct then the majority of public schools will write the national Grade 11 examinations in the subjects that they offer at the dates and times set out in this Grade 11 examination timetable. Schools will, however, be responsible for conducting and invigilating the examinations, and for marking the papers using memoranda provided by the DoE once they have been written. The PEDs and DoE are likely to moderate a sample of scripts from schools. As and example the WCED has indicated that it will moderate a sample of 9 scripts in each subject from each school. Schools will be expected to set their own internal examinations papers for paper 3 of the languages.

Grade 11 National Examination Timetable

More information on these examinations is provided on page 9

Week 1	08:30	13:00
Monday 5 November	Electrical Technology (3hrs) Music P1 Theory (3 hrs)	Mathematics (LO 1,2) P1 (3 hrs) Mathematical Literacy P1 (2½ hrs)
Tuesday 6 November	English Home & First Additional Language P1 Language (2 hrs)	Business Studies (3 hrs)
Wednesday 7 November	Agricultural Technology (3 hrs)	HistoryP1 (3 hrs)
Thursday 8 November	Diwali	
Friday 9 November	Diwali	
Week 2		
Monday 12 November	Afrikaans Home & First Additional Language P1 Language (2 hrs)	Mathematics (LO 3,4) P2 (3 hrs) Mathematical Literacy P2 (2½ hrs)
Tuesday 13 November	Physcial Science P1 Physics (3 hrs)	Computer Application Technology P2 Theory (2½ hrs)
Wednesday 14 November	Engineering Graphics and Design P1 (2 hrs) Design (3 hrs)	Life Sciences P1 (2½ hrs)
Thursday 15 November	Physical Science P2 Chemistry (3 hrs)	isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiSwati, insindebele Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Xitsonga,Tshivenda, Home Language P1 (2 hrs)
Friday 16 November	Geography P1 Theory (3 hrs)	Geography P2 Mapwork (1½ hrs)
Week 3		
Monday 19 November	Dramatic Arts (3 hrs) Tourism (3 hrs) Mechanical Technology (3 hrs)	Agricultural Science P1 (2 hrs) Dance Studies (3 hrs)
Tuesday 20 November	History P2 (2 hrs)	Engineering Graphics and Design P2 (2 hrs)
Wednesday 21 November	Hospitality Studies (3 hrs) Visual Arts (2 hrs) Agricultural Management (2½ hrs)	Accounting (3 hrs)
Thursday 22 November	Agricultural Science P2 (2 hrs)	Mathematics P3 (2 hrs)
Friday 23 November	Life Sciences P2 (2½ hrs)	Information Technology P2 Theory (3 hrs)
Week 4		
Monday 26 November	Economics (3 hrs)	Religion Studies P1 (2 hrs)
Tuesday 27 November	Consumer Studies (3 hrs)	Civil Technology (3 hrs) Religion Studies P2 (2 hrs)

Brighten and add warmth to your classrooms

The ideas for this article are based on the article *Quick and Easy Classroom Makeover* by Carlee Adams, published in the September 2006 edition of *Instructor*. The author provides a list of practical ideas which she has garnered from practising teachers and interior design experts for improving the visual appearance of classrooms and other teaching spaces and which are easy to implement and involve little cost. We have also added some ideas of our own.

Add a splash of colour

Brighten classrooms with the use of vivid primary colours on door and window frames and on pinboards. Different colours can also be used for desks, or for tables and chairs, and for shelves and storage boxes. If a classroom is the "home" venue to a particular teacher or group of pupils, allow them some say in the choice of colours and how they are used. Take care not to overuse bright colours because they can be overpowering in a small space. The use of colour can be extended to other areas of the school, particularly to notice boards where it can be used to identify and demarcate certain areas or specific notice boards, as in "the notice is on the red notice board".

Use fabrics

Use coloured fabrics (old sheets or tablecloths are ideal and if necessary can be brightened using fabric dye obtainable from craft shops). Plastic tablecloths are also relatively cheap and can be used to protect surfaces from water and other mess during practical activities. Fabric can be used to cover and improve the appearance of old or tatty furniture, to screen storage areas from inquisitive eyes, to cover and protect apparatus such as overhead projectors and computer monitors when not in use, and as make-shift curtains. Try plastic shower curtains which are cheap and hard-wearing and come in a range of plain to brightly patterned colours. Fabric has the additional benefit of having sound-absorbing qualities and their use can help make classrooms quieter places – always a plus!

Display pictures of pupils and their work

With the advent of relatively cheap digital cameras and colour printers it has become possible not only to display the best work of each pupil, but also to display pictures of pupils at work or with their best work. Mount pictures of pupils and their best work on large sheets of coloured paper and pin these to classroom notice boards or hang them from the walls. If large sheets of coloured paper are not available or are considered to be too costly, use the sides of cardboard boxes or multiple sheets of newspaper glued together with a flour and water mix. Painted in bright colours these can serve just as well.

Mobiles of work-related images or objects can be hung from the ceiling to add further interest to the classroom.
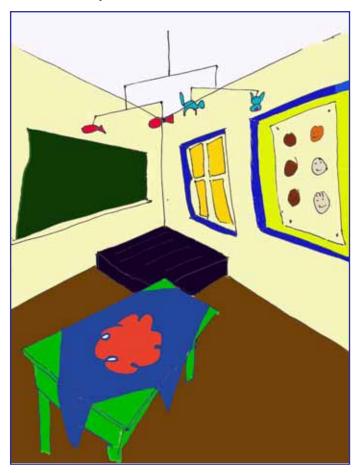
Demarcate special areas

Colour on the floor or walls can be used to demarcate certain areas of the classroom. The tops of old trestle tables, desks or damaged teachers' tables can also be used to construct small raised platforms. Old pallets, if you can get hold of them, are ideal for this purpose. Cover them with old carpet and use them to produce a raised area for use as a small stage or a reading nook.

Use warm-toned fluorescent lamps

Fluorescent and low-energy lamps are available in more than one "colour" option. The colour of the warm-toned options is closer to that of natural sunlight and is less cold and harsh than traditional fluorescent light.

Lay carpets

Although carpets are expensive and carpeted classrooms are less easy to keep clean than classrooms with traditional wood or vinyl-covered floors, they do substantially reduce the noisiness of classrooms because of their sound-absorbing properties. For schools that can afford them they are worth the cost.

School Policy Checklist

School policies can and should be an important element of the good management of any school. The value of policies, if they are well thought out and are supported by the majority of stakeholders, lies in the clear operational framework they provide for sound and consistent decision-making. However, policies will be effective only if those who are subject to them have knowledge of them, if they are supported in principle by all involved and if they are applied fairly and consistently.

There are certain policies which public schools are required to have by law. These are listed below, together with the relevant prescribing legislation:

Policies required in terms of the *South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996*

☐ Admission policy (Section 5)

☐ Language Policy (Section 6)

☐ Code of conduct for Learners including provisions for due process in disciplinary proceedings (Section 8)

☐ Policy for the establishment, election and functions of the representative council of learners (Section 11)

☐ Governing Body Constitution (Section 18)

☐ School Mission Statement (Section 20)

☐ Criteria and procedure for the total, partial or conditional exemption of parents who are unable to pay school fees (Section 39)

In addition to the above, schools need to have:

☐ Employment equity policy (Employment Equity Act, Act 55 of 1998). Required only for schools which employ staff who are paid from school funds.

☐ Policy on drug abuse (Government Notice 3427 of 2002)

☐ HIV/Aids policy for Learners and Educators (National Education Policy Act, Act 27 of 1996)

☐ Access to information manual (Promotion of Access to Information Act, Act 2 of 2000).

In addition to the above, schools should consider whether there is a need for the following additional internal policies:

- Assessment policy
- Attendance and absentee policy (students)
- Code of Conduct for staff
- Dress code/policy (staff)
- Employment Policy
- Entertainment policy (cost of entertaining visitors)
- Excursion policy
- Extra-curricular/ sports policy
- Facilities and resources use policy
- Financial controls policy
- Fund-raising policy
- Homework policy
- ICT acceptable use policy
- Injuries and first aid policy
- Leave policy
- Portfolio management policy
- Registration policy
- Religious observance policy
- Safety Policy
- School times including compliance with instructional time for school subjects
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Sportsmanship code
- Staff Disciplinary Policy including disciplinary proceedings
- Staff induction policy
- Student induction policy
- Subject Choice and additional subject policy
- Tours policy
- Uniform and student dress code policy

In the coming editions we plan to provide generic examples of these policies which schools can use to develop and/or check their own school-specific policies.