

The Influence of Management Practices on Authentic Collaboration with Educators

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ABSTRACT The advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994 paved the way for educational transformation. The main feature of this transformation involves a shift from managing via a bureaucratic model to a collaborative model. This has resulted in a proliferation of education legislation and policies underpinned by bureaucratic management practices such as accountability, rules and regulations, policies and procedures, hierarchical authority structures, division of labour and job specification. The South African Schools Act encourages principals and governing bodies to form collaborative partnerships with various educational institutions, academics, teachers and learners. However, in order to achieve authentic collaboration among teachers, management practices will need to place a greater emphasis in managing the school in less bureaucratic ways as this usually results in teachers collaborating in a contrived way. Contrived collaboration arises through administrative control, imposed on teachers regardless of their desires in order to secure the implementation of national or provincial legislation/policies or even school policies. Using a structured questionnaire, this research examines the perceptions of teachers on the association between management practices and authentic collaboration to predict which aspects of management practices foster such collaboration. A multiple regression analysis on management practices that enhance authentic collaboration shows that effective collaboration is promoted by management practices that promote harmonious interpersonal relationships among staff in a reciprocal relationship with authentic collaborative management practices. Authentic collaboration is impeded by espousing expected collaborative teaching practices, by management practices that emphasize task effectiveness as well as by the principals' perceived management style.