

DE LA SALLE'S 'FORMATEUR' AND 'INSPECTOR' CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES

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The term 'Management by Objectives' was coined by the famous Management theorist **P. F. Drucker**. This style of management is also known as **MBO**.

Part three of the 'Conduite' deals expressly with the Formateur and Inspector who are equivalent to top/middle management of the present day set-up. According to Agathon (1947), it contains all the pedagogical essentials to include in the young teacher... it is the collection of precepts that the Brother taught and followed.

The 'Conduite' did not leave anything to chance. The mission statement was made and fixed in De La Salle's mind; what was needed now was the strategy to achieve this end. It was for De La Salle, what **Drucker** (1989) termed "Management by Objectives".

"... what the organization needs is a principle of management that will give full scope of individual strength and responsibility, and at the same time give common direction of vision and effort, establish team work and harmonise the goals of the individual with the common weal. The only principle that can do this is management by objectives and self-control". (Drucker)

In this section of the "Conduite" De La Salle sets out the objectives, and job descriptions of the key men in his organization. He makes it quite clear that the same points set, ought to be reviewed and adapted with time, another key premise of MBO. Philippe (1860) confirmed this:

"We understand that a book of this nature is not able to receive a final form. New experiences, progress in methodology, legal prescriptions, new needs demand that from time to time it undergo modifications."

Humble (1978), calls 'MBO', a dynamic system which seeks to integrate the company's need to clarify and achieve its objectives. When a worthwhile system of MBO is operating in an organization, **Humble** goes on to explain there is a continuous process of:

"... reviewing critically and restating the company's strategic and tactical plans; clarifying with each manager the key results and performance standards he must achieve, in line with unit and company objectives, and gaining his contribution and commitment to these, individually and as a team."

De la Salle sets a time and place for the constant self criticism and examination of each individual's responsibility within the organization. He reviews and adapts according to the situation, and sets a measurable and realistic strategy for the future. In his letters and interviews that he sets for each individual Brother he prepares the ground for a structure which motivates one to examine his performance and sets the challenges for the future.

De La Salle describes the education of new teachers with the practical statement: *"...things which a new teacher must learn and the means of enabling him to do so."* His intention was directly to assist those responsible for the education of the young Brother teachers and the country school teacher candidates. Teacher appraisal is a major subject of controversy which is causing considerable apprehension throughout the teaching profession at the time of writing (1990's). De La Salle realised that if this appraisal and correction has to be achieved, it would require, as **Wragg** (1987) says, *"immense inter-personal skill from those involved in it."* De La Salle had the advantage of a community of men bound together by religious vows and a spirit of fraternity, living together and mutually sharing their research and studies.

In the "Règle du Formateur" de la Salle wanted to remove the bad qualities and instil the good in the new teacher. This sounds deceptively simple, but De La Salle in his practical and realistic attitude, wanted the Brothers to know what he considered a hindrance to excellent performance.

Who would argue with the listed bad qualities e.g.: an itching to talk, too great activity, indifference, pre-occupation, harshness, spite, partiality, negligence, lack of determination, discouragement, familiarity, loss of time, failure to be aware of individual differences in pupils. The good qualities are: vigour, firmness, reserve, vigilance, self-control, approachability, zeal, facility to express oneself correctly and at the level of the child.

One would expect such a programme based on lists of 'do's and don't's' to achieve very little. However, the clear parameters and the explicit guidelines set up by De La Salle and the serious efforts of the formateur and the new teachers made the Prescriptions work. The rule of the formateur aimed at a behaviour modi-

fication easily identified, observed and evaluated by both the new teacher and the formateur. The teacher's efforts received immediate reward and reinforcement from the response of the students in the classroom and from the good reports of the parish priest, parents and townspeople in general. The new teacher learned to teach by teaching. Supervision took place in the classroom in a close relationship between the new teacher and the formateur. Much importance was placed on self-control by the teacher ("Le maître en soi"). It is interesting to note that this approach to training is being revived today. (cf. **Drucker**, *ibid*).

The lack of hard empirical evidence about what constitutes effective teaching meant that there is no easy solution to be discovered in research literature. However, there are no doubts that ineffective teaching happens. According to **Wragg** (*ibid*, op.cit.), those passing an opinion on teachers' classroom competence will look at one or more of three aspects:

1) **The behaviour and experience of pupils** (whether what they are doing is worthwhile, whether they appear to be absorbed in their task or misbehaving, the extent to which the task matches the pupil's ability and previous experience).

2) **The behaviour of the teacher** (professional skills such as the ability to explain concepts, ask appropriate questions, manage the badly behaved, prepare lessons, organize a classroom, assess and monitor progress).

3) **Outcome of teaching** (What pupils appear to have learned, including the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they acquire as a direct or indirect result of whatever the teacher has done).

The above statement by **Wragg** (1987), could easily have been culled 'in toto' from De La Salle's *Conduite* and how to run a school effectively. De La Salle goes into more detail as to how to bring about the desired effect on the people who are appraising the teacher's performance. De la Salle has a whole chapter on how to ask questions and when to ask them, which is a classic in pedagogy worth emulating today.

According to de la Salle, the brother teacher transforms and models his pupils. His own personality is the principal agent of this transformation. It is not so much subject matter and methods which impress but his own personality which gets across to the pupils:

- **his patience** which prevents him from giving way to ill humour when he has to correct a pupil (cf. Letter 37)
- **his self-control** which makes him even tempered so that the pupils have no difficulty in approaching him at any time (Letter 58, 15)
- **his tenderness towards all**. A love which is not weakness but dedication and assistance, especially to those who are in most need. (L. 11,15 & 55,16)

De La Salle was insistent that his schools must be well run. Regulations for teachers were focussed on making instructional and educational efforts effective. Our present Lasallian documents recall the directions followed by De La Salle and his Brothers when they remind us that whatever their nature or level "the Brothers' schools are characterised by the quality of education and formation given in them" (Declaration 45,2). Once again De La Salle's work illustrates **Drucker's** "spirit of performance" and **Peters'** (1988) "organisational excellence".

De La Salle had an inborn respect for the individual. Brought up in the company of lawyers he was obsessed with the philosophy of 'innocence until proven guilty'. As **Peters & Waterman**, put it:

"Excellent companies have a deeply ingrained Philosophy that says, in effect, 'respect for the individual', 'make people winners', 'let them stand out, 'treat people as adults'."

It is true that De La Salle did not have much experience in management but what is being said now by modern management theorists (**Peters**, **Drucker**, etc) was natural intuition to him. De La Salle believed that the opportunity for new teachers lay in the ability of management to convert potential into performance. De La Salle gave the lead for translating principle into action.

In modern terms De La Salle was constantly preoccupied with good teaching performance to satisfy the customer (cf *Conduite*) He encouraged the Brothers always to feel the pulse of parents, teachers and also pupils, and get their feedback in order to enhance the performance in their classes. Pedagogical competence and a perfect grasp of subject matter are considered essential. The permanent system of in-service supervision strengthened the professional qualities acquired in the novitiate (training house). From then on set up a good management control and development system. The formateur, the inspector and Director worked as a team.

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