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The Framework and Measure of Effective School Visioning Strategy (MCP-FIV)

This article describes a pilot study in which a prototype instrument is presented as a first step toward a reliable and valid tool that facilitates both the establishment of a visioning strategy and evaluation of the effectiveness of visioning strategies, existing or new. A brief historical perspective precedes an examination of the actual steps that comprise a visioning strategy. Analysis of research data arising from a pilot study involving the instrument suggests that school leaders are more likely to be involved in visioning strategy than parents or students. All stakeholders generally, and parents, students, and principals specifically, are more likely to be involved in visioning processes in medium-sized schools. School leaders will be challenged to consider whether change in their schools is consistent with vision that has been inclusively and collaboratively established or if such change reflects centralized, mandated, top-down processes that are simply implemented by principals.

Cet article décrit une étude pilote dans laquelle un prototype d'un instrument sert de première étape vers l'élaboration d'un outil fiable et valide pour faciliter tant la mise sur pied d'une stratégie de visualisation d'avenir que pour évaluer l'efficacité de telles stratégies (déjà en place ou nouvelles). Un aperçu historique est d'abord présenté, suivi d'une explication des démarches qui mènent à une stratégie de visualisation d'avenir. L'analyse de données de recherche provenant d'une étude pilote portant sur l'instrument permet de croire qu'il est plus probable que les chefs de file dans les écoles s'impliquent dans les stratégies de visualisation d'avenir que les parents ou les élèves. Globalement, toutes les parties intéressées et plus précisément, les parents, les élèves et les directeurs d'école, sont plus aptes à être impliqués dans les processus de visualisation dans les écoles de taille moyenne. Les chefs de file dans les écoles devront s'interroger pour savoir si les changements effectués dans leur école proviennent d'une vision qui a été mise sur pied par un processus inclusif et participatif ou s'ils sont le résultat de processus centralisés, mandatés et descendants tout simplement mis en oeuvre par les directeurs d'école.

Introduction

Visioning strategy is defined as a sequential criterion for facilitating desired school outcomes. By definition the word *strategy* implies some sort of plan, and

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when contextualized with *vision* it takes on a connotation of change. The visioning strategy framework includes formulation, implementation, and feedback and assessment stages. A prominent theme in the literature on visioning strategy, as reflected in the work of Ballantine (1997), Leiberman (1995), and Stoll and Fink (1998), is the need for *inclusion* of personnel from many levels of the organization. It is hoped that this article, through both presentation of the prototype instrument Measure of Characteristics Present in the Formulation and Implementation of Visioning Strategy (MCP-FIV, see Appendix), and analysis of a pilot study, will initiate discussion on the value of visioning strategy in enhancing school change and effectiveness and demonstrate an approach to visioning strategy that will allow it to be measured in a meaningful manner.

A brief historical perspective of management styles and the changing expectations of stakeholders is outlined. This is followed by an examination of the actual steps comprising a visioning strategy as consistent with the literature. A description of the process we used in constructing the prototype literature-based instrument follows. Our intent was to design an instrument that could eventually both guide and measure the effectiveness of visioning strategies in schools. First, it was hoped that the instrument would enable individual school and district leaders to evaluate and enhance educational change in a structured framework. Its second role is to facilitate research into the presence and health of the planned change process in schools and allow interpretation of empirical evidence that exposes political ideologies from which school policy emerges. Data generated by the instrument in the pilot study are analyzed and discussed. Consideration is given to the dual role of the instrument in assisting school leaders and researchers alike.

Hodgkinson (1983) indicated that the distinction between administration and management was the same as that between policy-making and policy implementation. Administration was "the organization of men and means about purposes or ends" (p. 2). According to Hodgkinson, the divide was clear between the administrative thinker who built the team around shared vision, and the managing doer who mobilized, managed, and monitored people and processes in order to ensure the alignment of product with someone else's vision. School principals will be challenged to consider their role as either managers of imposed standardized mandates or *administrators* sensitive to shared values, needs, and individual potential of the students whom they serve.

A Brief Theory and History of Visioning Strategy

A Top-Down History Turned Bottom-Up

The idea of visioning strategy is not new to organizational theory, particularly in relation to the industrial revolution. Initially, although referred to by other names that reflected its industrial roots, the concept of visioning strategy was heavily laden with top-down directives, spreading conformity from industry to school. Taylor (1914) stressed the importance in industry of management setting the overall direction and ensuring the workers' compliance. Barnard (1938) included as one of the three basic functions of executives the establishment of superordinate goals. The increased pace of industrialism during the 19th and early 20th century was the framework in which the public schooling system developed (Stoll & Fink, 1996).

Other writers such as Owens (1987) illustrated the efficiency modeling between industry and school. Early in the 20th century, schools were "factories in which the raw materials were shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life" (p. 9). Dutton and Snedden (1915) indicated that it was fortunate indeed that the centralization of executive power for efficient management had been widely demonstrated in the business world before the size of school systems had increased to the point where this method now needed to be imposed on schools. Graves (1932) confirmed this pattern by verifying that school boards could find this precedent in the administrative procedures of successful commercial and industrial organizations.

According to Stoll and Fink (1998), the focus in the 1960s and 1970s on top-down change led to little lasting effect in schools; it became viewed as management-imposed improvements. When stakeholders, especially teachers, perceived that they were absented from the change process, they were less likely either to buy into the change or follow it through to implementation in the classroom (Parent, Rideout, & Hurley, 2002). The resulting bottom-up approach fared not much better, as it did not lead to improvement in student performances that could be easily measured. The bottom-up approach, involving local in-school diagnosis of needs and goal-setting by on-site personnel, was often the source of energy for implementation of the visioning strategy (Reynolds, Teddlie, Hopkins, & Stringfield, 2000). This bottom-up approach, which often involved qualitative elements such as a feel for the process, guiding value systems, and interaction and communication of on-site personnel, was frequently dismissed as not contributing to the necessary quantitative measurement of the effects of the vision (Reynolds et al.).

By the 1990s scholars such as Stoll and Fink (1998), Reynolds et al. (2000) and Fitz-Gibbon and Kochan (2000) were suggesting that the best improvement occurred as a result of top-down, bottom-up approaches. With this approach, the larger system provided direction and support, and the actual change process was left to schools through school-based decision-making and development planning. In this framework, as compared with the top-down model, visioning strategy had a better chance of embodying the shared visions that arose from the deeply held values of the stakeholders. This concept is supported by Hoy and Miskel's (1996) congruence postulate that "the greater the degree of congruence among the elements of the system, the more effective the system" (p. 41).

The Inclusive Nature of Visioning Strategy

According to Ballantine (1997), the degree to which visioning strategy as major change could be expected to succeed depended on the extent to which these conditions were present during implementation: clarity of goals and plans, capabilities of administrators and staff, availability of resources, compatibility of the organizational structure with the proposed changes, and willingness of those involved to expend time and effort.

Ballantine (1997) presented two key principles of change that demonstrated the effect of visioning strategy on an organization. Change at one level or part of the organization would affect other levels and parts, and change was more likely to be successful if key participants were involved in the process of planning and implementing change. The open systems approach, which

valued input from all levels inside and outside the organization, accepted the inevitability of change. Such an inclusive approach helped reduce stress arising from change, and increase participation in it, as reported by Bauch and Goldring (1998), Parent et al. (2002), and Wiley (2000).

Lieberman (1995) focused on teachers who through bottom-up participation built commitment, supported the vision, acted on the vision, and invented ways of making it a reality. This was facilitated by bringing teachers to meetings, encouraging many and varied conversations, providing structures for discussion and action, holding retreats, procuring grants, creating teams and team leaders, and linking student success with teacher participation. The involvement of individuals from many levels in the organization kept the process relevant and balanced against the competing issues of power and control on the one hand, and trust, support, and commitment on the other.

Bechtol and Sorenson (1993) laid the groundwork for applying the steps and stages of change to schools by pointing out four characteristics that confirm the importance of personal development programs and personal visions. There must be commitment to the school mission, knowledge by staff of effective education practices, use of team skills, and the establishment of a *learning community concept* in the school, all of which blend the values of individuals into the receptive atmosphere necessary for the visioning process to be effective.

Leadership: Building Team Consensus

The inputs, outputs, and functions of a system define its purpose more accurately than its stated goals and vision, and the intent of its leaders (Katz & Kahn, 1966). A permeating link—visioning strategy—needed to be established between the leader and the functioning of the organization. Thompson (1992) created a visionary Leadership Strategy that examined the states of mind, values, and orientation to life of people who exhibited visionary leadership. Its eight dimensions were: (a) learning orientation, a strong desire for self improvement and personal development of others; (b) self-knowledge, a strong knowledge of one's weaknesses and strengths; (c) values foundation, a firm anchoring in humanistic values and strong personal integrity; (d) vision, an ability to see beyond *what is* to *what could be*—a strong sense of purpose; (e) values building, a commitment to set an inclusive foundation of humanistic values in the organization; (f) vision bridging, a commitment to unite the organization under a shared vision of the future; (g) empowerment, a belief in people and their abilities—a commitment to draw out the best in others; and (h) organizational sensitivity, an understanding of human behavior and how to influence others—diplomacy.

For visioning strategy to be linked to school effectiveness, certain leadership characteristics were valued. Leithwood, Jantze, and Steinbach (1999) concentrated on the setting of direction by leadership through building a shared vision, developing consensus about goals, and creating high performance expectations. It was assumed that a statement of direction for the school (vision or mission statement) had no long-term effect on the effects of the school unless there had been a widespread commitment to that direction by those affected by those directions. They focused on how such commitment could be created.

In so doing they clarified two leadership styles and the evidence available to identify them. Evidence about charismatic and inspirational leadership was largely from attributions made by followers about the qualities of those believed to be charismatic or inspirational, whereas the evidence about vision building leadership was the presence of specific behaviors engaged in by leaders with their colleagues.

The leader who assisted colleagues in identifying and articulating a vision, but may not have been attributed with charisma by colleagues, acted to identify new opportunities for the organization. The ability to develop, articulate, and inspire others was a critical part of leadership theory in relation to creating excellence in an organization. Nanus (as cited in Leithwood et al., 1999) dedicated his 1992 book *Visionary Leadership* to the concept that the most valuable engine in an organization was the leader who could drive it toward excellence and long-range success through the formulation of an attractive, worthwhile, widely shared, and achievable vision of the future. Characteristics of the visionary leader facilitated the framing of an effective visioning strategy.

Leithwood et al. (1999) listed eight such research-based identifiable leadership behaviors associated with vision building. They centered on actions that helped colleagues find uniting purpose, engaged staff in vision development, provided the framework of vision that included others' views, helped colleagues see the result of working together to change practices, tied vision to practical implications for programs and instruction, made the link between external initiatives for change and school vision, assisted in building understanding of the larger implications of the school vision, and communicated the vision to all stakeholders and the school community at every opportunity.

From Theory to Practice

Sheetz and Benson (1994) focused on the process of visioning strategy as a crucial tool for improving effectiveness in schools by providing insight into its actual operation in an educational institution. Consistent with theory presented in the above section, successful visioning strategy centered on the principles of inclusiveness and congruence.

The process was started by asking the following three questions that would lead an individual to a clearer personal vision through the examination of personal beliefs and mental models.

1. What do we want the organization to accomplish? For students? For staff? For community?
2. What will the results look like? From the point of view of students? From the point of view of staff? From the point of view of community?
3. How different was my view of success from others? From students? From those I work with? From community? (Sheetz & Benson, p. 48)

Many stakeholders such as parents, students, educators, communities, and Ministry of Education officials all could have strong views about what the system should produce. These views may or may not be congruent inside each group and among all the groups. Personal visions of members of the organization could be examined and clarified to build a shared vision of the organization, which in turn could be broken down to specific desired results of the school organization. Several suggestions for this included the following.

1. Provide potluck meetings during which participants (users of the vision, usually staff) would share ideas about the daily topic or part of the vision being focused on at that time. Ways to share included wall charts for comments and sharing quotes or cartoons.
2. Share at the meeting or through a memo an experience you had in enacting a part of the shared vision. Encourage all staff members to do the same.
3. Seek feedback from visitors to your school who have experienced some aspect of the shared vision. Make a big deal of consistency with the desired outcomes.
4. Have the staff role-play to an "alien" visitor the shared vision of the school. Then ask for feedback from the visitor to see how precisely the staff was able to articulate the vision.

Sheetz and Benson (1994) continued by pointing out that words would have no effect on the direction and output of the school if there was no action taken to connect these words and ideas to practice that occurred on a regular basis in the daily routine of the school. The shared vision must be clarified or turned into a user-friendly format. The movement in clarifying a vision was from the clear focus created by the visioning process to the specificity of achieving desired results.

A more concise visioning strategy was detailed by Dlugosh, Norton, Sybouts, and Webb (1996). These authors also focused on the school system's past and its historical foundations, beliefs, values, and traditions. A significant amount of time was devoted to each of the following phases.

1. The Past—School members/key leaders under the superintendent's leadership, considered/analyzed the question, "What has the system been in the past?"
2. The Present—The key question, "What are we now?" was considered/analyzed in depth.
3. The Future—An in-depth exploration and visioning of what the system wanted to become in the years ahead were considered/analyzed.
4. System Strengths/Needs, Resources and Actions Needed to Accomplish the vision—Strengths were assessed and weaknesses identified in relation to successful accomplishment of the future vision. What problems or inhibitors must be overcome?
5. Selected/Preferred Alternatives—Action was focused on best alternatives. Specific strategic planning was operationalized. (p. 81)

These researchers pointed out that establishing a shared vision was a continual, dynamic process, not a product. The cultural change that must occur to produce the desired outcomes must rest, at least in part, on personal development programs and personal visions of the future held by members (Dlugosh et al., 1996).

Effective visioning strategy involved examining the results as well as the process. Lieberman (1995) provided a process for examining the effect of a school's vision on restructuring to create effective student outcomes. This process included an examination of:

- the larger context and policies of the school;
- the local context and description of the school;
- what the school was trying to do;
- how the school made change to roles and created new ones

- programmatic changes;
- barriers and/or tensions that have impeded progress.

Some school leaders will focus on the traditional role of the school in preparing students for integration into the economy. Howard (1986) reported on the work of a cluster of educational leaders who defined the characteristics of a school that would serve the needs of students during the 21st century. This process began with the study of emerging characteristics of the society that the school served. This was distinctly different from the traditional process of doing a needs assessment of the school in its present circumstances. The key questions asked were:

A. What are the characteristics of our society and our economy today and how are these characteristics changing?
B. What competencies will our children and youth need in order to be successful, happy, contributing members of the emerging society?
C. What should schools be like in order to nurture these competencies? (p. 16)

MCP-FIV: The Instrument

Development of the Instrument

It is important to note at the outset of the discussion of the instrument (see Appendix) that it does not propose to evaluate the appropriateness of a school's vision; its focus is on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the process. As discussed above, it is hoped that eventually the instrument will serve on two fronts. First, it may serve as a guide to implementing and evaluating a visioning process as the principles included in each section are enacted and/or evaluated. Second, it may generate empirical data from which conclusions can be drawn about school visions as they relate to school size, type, stakeholder involvement, and other variables relevant to individual schools and groups of schools.

As is shown in Table 1, the sections of MCP-FIV include the principles espoused by the authors whose works are discussed above. All the authors presented have highlighted in their research the section with which they are aligned in the adjacent instrument format, or typify a widely held acceptance in the literature of the component. Each of the authors also specified the importance of other factors present in the format.

Limitations of the Instrument

The most pronounced limitation of this instrument rests in its focus on gathering data about the phases of visioning strategy from school principals only, based on self-reports. Fang (1996) has detailed the dangers inherent in self-reports, including the tendency to report inaccurately to enhance one's own image. By seeking data from principals only, the instrument in a sense works contrary to one of the themes prevalent in the visioning strategy literature, that of inclusion. In this approach the final word on the efficacy of the visioning process comes exclusively from the principal. A slightly modified questionnaire administered to other stakeholders could be used in future studies to strengthen conclusions about the condition of any particular visioning strategy. Individuals such as school board personnel, parent representatives, and student leaders may be equally informed and interpret details differently than those reported by the principal.

Table 1
Instrument Basis in the Literature

Instrument: Measure of Characteristics Present in the Formulation and Implementation of Visioning Strategy (MCP-FIV)		
Authors >>>>>	*Criteria* >>>>>	*MCP-FIV*
Thompson (1992): Leadership, vision bridging	Leadership	A. Identification 1. Involvement in formulation and implementation?
Dlugosh et al. (1996): Past, present, and future; Operationalization of strategic plan	Formulation Inclusive; Past, present, future; strengths and weaknesses	B. Formulation of Vision 2. Stakeholder involvement? 3. Attention to past, present, future; Strengths and weaknesses?
Sheetz and Benson (1994): Feedback re consistency with desired outcomes	Implementation Strategic plan	C. Implementation of Vision 4. Strategic plan 5. Characteristics of strategic plan?
Leiberman (1995): Collaborative, inclusive	Feedback/assessment % Implemented; Inclusive feedback	D. Feedback/Assessment 6. % Implemented? 7. Feedback/assessment variety?

According to Creswell (2002) and Eisenhardt (2002), research in educational change and school effectiveness would be further strengthened through the presentation of qualitative data. It follows that conclusions about the state of visioning strategy in any particular school would be enhanced through the presentation of qualitative data. Although it is not suggested that the quantitative nature of the instrument is a weakness in itself, individual circumstances of each case would be better understood as more detailed culture and climate factors, leadership characteristics, and behaviors are reported as well. Such information may be gathered in semistructured interviews and observations in the school. It is important for the consumers of such research to be able to evaluate the effect of the description provided by the quantitative data. Answers to such *so what?* questions often arise from qualitative considerations of each case.

Instrument Scoring

Two approaches are suggested for scoring MCP-FIV. First, researchers can use a simple coding method to create scores for fine-grained analyses of individual variables such as comparing the involvement of parents with the involvement of principals in the formulation of vision. Variables can also be grouped into stakeholder types such as the Client group of parents and students, in order to determine potentially significant differences with another group such as School (teachers, vice-principals, and principals). Details for this type of scoring are presented in the data analysis section. Second, in the event that the instrument is being used to ascertain to what degree each of the suggested components of visioning strategy is being used in a particular school, scores for

each of sections B through D can be totalled and converted to a percentage of the possible score available for each section. In this manner, stakeholders can determine in which areas their visioning strategy is either strong or weak based on higher or lower percentages achieved in each of these sections. These section scores can also be used as a means of comparing schools. Such comparisons could identify groups of stakeholders who have been successful with particular aspects of visioning such as *formulation* or *implementation.* Such success stories could be shared with those less successful in these areas through teachers' and administrators' workshops, or inter-school staff or parent council meetings, for example.

Internal Reliability Analysis

A reliability analysis was conducted using Chronbach's Alpha scale. An Alpha score of .86 was measured from 637 total cases and 27 items.

Research Relevance

This instrument was developed for use in *The Relationship Between Visioning Strategy and School Effectiveness from a New Paradigm Perspective* (Rideout, 2001). The conclusions of that study, in which the pilot study for MCP-FIV was conducted, were derived from research completed in 34 public, separate (publicly funded Catholic), and private secondary schools in southwestern Ontario. Data for the pilot study were gathered from 17 principals via mail-back instruments. All these principals indicated that they had been in place for at least two years and had participated in one or more elements of visioning strategy in the past two years. Using a scoring method similar to method two cited in the above "Instrument Scoring" section, it became obvious that these schools were falling well below the maximum scores available. The average scores of the schools were approximately 55%, with the highest score at 79%. These scores indicated that school leaders may have been put in the position of not being able to create a mandate for the school that reflects inclusive perspectives; this is demonstrated by the low grade of schools on the instrument, which granted a strong score only to those schools whose visioning strategy was inclusive at the formulation, implementation, and feedback and assessment phases; promoted cohesion; and was rooted in the context of the school itself. This conclusion is bolstered by the indication of 50% of responding school principals that they had not even attempted to participate in the elements of visioning in their school.

MCP-FIV Pilot Study

Introduction

Data and analysis are presented in this section based on information generated by MCP-FIV in the pilot study described above. The study gathered visioning information from 17 high schools in southwest Ontario. This sample size is divided into three governance types (public, separate, and private) and three schools sizes (small, medium, and large) in order to conduct certain statistical analyses.

Data Analysis

MCP-FIV was used in a study that examined the relationship between visioning strategy and school effectiveness (Rideout, 2001). The mean scores arising

Table 2
Ranking of Means for Formulation Component

F = Formulation component	*N*	*Mean**	*SD*
F Principals	17	2.71	.93
F Vice-principals	17	2.46	.87
F Teachers	17	2.32	.79
F Department heads	14	2.30	.75
F Superintendents	12	2.15	1.21
F Board consultants and specialists	16	2.09	1.14
F Parents	17	2.02	.85
F Students	17	1.91	1.02
F In-school consultants and specialists	11	1.91	1.18
F Assistant superintendents	9	1.39	1.07
Valid N (listwise)	9		

*Minimum score = 1, Maximum score = 5.

from each of the stakeholder types for both vision formulation and feedback and assessment of the visioning process were ranked to see which types of stakeholders were most involved in these elements of visioning strategy. Tables 2 and 3 show these rankings and the mean scores for each type across all participating schools.

It is interesting to note in Table 2 that principals, who provided the data, ranked highest for involvement in formulation, followed by vice-principals and teachers. Parents, students, and assistant superintendents, along with in-school consultants and specialists, had the lowest mean scores. A series of Paired-samples *T*-tests revealed that principals (M=2.71, SD=.93) were significantly more involved in the formulation phase than vice-principals (M=2.46, SD=.87), $t(16)$=3.43, p<.01). Principals were also significantly more involved than the other stakeholder types, as the mean of each was lower than

Table 3
Ranking of Means for Feedback and Assessment Component

FA = Feedback and Assessment Component	*N*	*Mean**	*SD*
FA Teachers	15	2.40	.83
FA Principals	15	2.10	.88
FA Department heads	14	1.64	.93
FA Parents	15	1.40	.91
FA Vice-principals	15	1.27	.88
FA Superintendents	12	1.25	1.14
FA Board consultants and specialists	15	1.13	1.13
FA Students	15	1.13	.92
FA Assistant superintendents	12	.75	1.14
FA In-school consultants and specialists	12	.17	.39
Valid N (listwise)	12		

*Minimum score = 0, Maximum score = 4.

the vice-principal mean. In the area of feedback and assessment, Table 3 shows that teachers ranked highest in mean score, followed by principals and department heads. Parents ranked fourth, and students tied for seventh with board consultants and specialists. Paired-samples *T*-tests indicated no significant difference between the involvement of teachers (M=2.40, SD=.83) and principals (M=2.07, SD=.88), t=1.58, p>.05). However, teachers (M=2.43, SD=.85) differed significantly from the third ranked department heads (M=1.64. SD=.93), p<.01, and consequently each of the other stakeholder types in relation to feedback and assessment. Principals (M=2.07, SD=.88) differed significantly in their reported feedback and assessment input from the fourth ranked parents (M=1.40, SD=.91), p<.05, and the remaining stakeholder types.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders were then divided into three groups (Client, School, Administration) in order to see if there was a difference among groups for involvement in the *formulation* and *feedback and assessment* components. A variable was computed to represent each of the groups. This was done by adding the scores of the stakeholder types present in each group as specified below, and then dividing by the number of stakeholder types included in each group. The groups were Client, which included students and parents; School, which included teachers, vice-principals, and principals; and Administration, which included board specialists and consultants and superintendents. In constructing the variables, only the stakeholder types that were consistently present across the majority of schools were used. As indicated by the individual means of the stakeholder types reported in Table 2 for the formulation component, the School group had the highest mean for this component of visioning strategy, followed by Administration and Client. Paired-samples *T*-tests revealed that there was only a significant difference between the School (M=2.50, SD=.84) and Client (M=1.97, SD=.84) groupings, $t(16)$=3.27, p<.01.

For the feedback and assessment component, again the School group had the highest mean, followed this time by Client and then Administration. Paired-samples *T*-tests revealed that there was a significant difference between the School grouping (M=1.91, SD=.70) and Client grouping (M=1.27, SD=.88), $t(14)$=2.82, p<.05. There was also a significant difference between School (M=2.08, SD=.45) and Administration (M=1.25, SD=.97), $t(11)$=3.39, p<.01. There was no significant difference between Client and Administration, p>.05.

School size

The *formulation* scores for stakeholder types were analyzed in relation to school size (large 1,000-1,500 students, medium 500-999 students, small 1-499 students) by creating two groups of stakeholders (Client and School). The Administration grouping was omitted from this analysis because data were insufficient to complete at least four cells for each school size. The Client grouping included parents and students, and the School grouping included teachers, vice-principals, and principals. A 3 x 2, 2-way ANOVA was computed for formative ratings with school size and stakeholder type as the independent variables and stakeholder type as a repeated measure. There was a main effect for stakeholder type, $F(1,14)$=13.31, p<.01, due to the School group showing a higher ranking (M=2.50, SD=.83) when compared with the Client

grouping (M=1.97, SD=.84). There was no main effect for school size, p>.05, nor was there an interaction effect between school size and stakeholder grouping, p>.05.

In relation to the feedback and assessment component, a second 3 x 2, 2-way ANOVA was computed for formative ratings with school size and stakeholder type as the independent variable and stakeholder type as a repeated measure. There was a main effect for stakeholder type, $F(1,12)=15.71$, $p<.01$, due to the School group showing a higher ranking (M=1.91, SD=.70) when compared with the Client grouping (M=1.27, SD=.88). There was a main effect for school size, $F(2,12)=5.39$, $p<.05$, due to the medium-sized schools showing a higher ranking (M=2.05, SD=.44) when compared with large schools (M=1.06, SD=.79), p=.01, and small schools (M=1.31, SD=.24), $p<.05$. There was also an interaction effect between school size and stakeholder grouping. The Client grouping was more likely to be involved in feedback and assessment in medium schools, $F(2,12)=10.93$, $p<.01$, than in either small schools, $p<.01$, or large schools, $p<.01$.

A more fine-grained analysis of some of the subscales such as individual stakeholder types did reveal several significant differences. In the formulation phase students of medium-sized schools (M=2.22, SD=1.03) were more involved than students of large schools (M=1.00, SD=.35), p=.05. In the feedback and assessment phase, several significant differences for stakeholder involvement appear with respect to school size. Parents of medium schools (M=2.14, SD=.69) had a significantly higher mean score than parents of both large schools (M=.75, SD=.50), $p<.01$) and small schools (M=.75, SD=.50, $p<.01$). The same pattern held true for student involvement in the feedback and assessment component. Students of medium-sized schools (M=1.86, SD=.69) had a higher mean than larger schools (M=.50, SD=.57), $p<.01$, or smaller schools (M=.50, SD=.58), $p<.01$. Principals of medium schools (M=2.43, SD=.53) reported a higher mean than either small schools (M=2.25, SD=.96) or large schools (M=1.25, SD=.96). Their level of input was only significantly higher than large schools, $p<.05$.

Pearson correlation coefficients indicated no significant relationship between the formulation section scores and the feedback and assessment scores (r=.33, p>.05). This is an indication that the scales are not measuring the same construct. Thus they would appear to be distinct measures, both of which contribute to our understanding of visioning strategy.

In summary, principals reported that they were significantly more likely to have a higher participation rate than most other stakeholders in both the formulation and feedback and assessment components of visioning strategy. In every case where stakeholder types or groups were compared, and a significant difference existed, the principal or group containing the principal ranked as significantly more likely to have a higher degree of participation.

Regarding groups of stakeholders, School stakeholders ranked significantly higher than the Client grouping in the formulation phase. School stakeholders also ranked significantly higher than Clients and Administration in relation to feedback and assessment.

When school size is analyzed no significant difference is found in the stakeholder groupings involvement for formulation. For feedback and assess-

ment, there is significantly higher likelihood of involvement for stakeholder groupings in medium-sized schools than in small or large schools. In every case where a significant difference occurs for school size, medium-sized schools ranked significantly higher for the likelihood of parent, student, or principal involvement.

There was an interaction effect between stakeholder grouping and school size in relation to feedback and assessment. The Client grouping is significantly more likely to be involved in medium schools than in either large schools or small schools.

In relation to the interaction of individual stakeholder types and schools size, students were more likely to be involved in both formulation and feedback and assessment of medium schools, and parents and principals were more likely to be involved in feedback and assessment of medium schools.

Several patterns seem to emerge from these results.

1. Principals and in-school educational professionals play a dominant role;
2. Parents and students play a significantly smaller role than in-school educational professionals;
3. All stakeholder groupings play a larger role in medium-sized schools than in small or large schools;
4. Parents, students, and principals are more likely to be involved in medium-sized schools

Discussion

The limited size of the sample presented the problem of generating at least four data imputs for each cell, as each school type or school size was considered in relation to the individual stakeholder types and groupings of stakeholders. Consequently, for some of the analyses, the Administration stakeholder grouping is excluded. Further, because the Ministry of Education policy of board and school consolidations in Ontario has reduced the number of small secondary schools (1-499 students) in Ontario, all schools that fall in the small category in this study are also private schools, and therefore conclusions reached about school size as they relate to small schools may in fact be a function of their private governance type. This limitation is further explored below.

This study did not attempt to weigh the effect of a variety of other factors that may also affect the role of visioning strategy in any given school such as whether the school was rural or urban, principal longevity (other than the two-year requirement), principal gender, client SES factors, and so on. Further, the data analysis is primarily limited to the implementation and feedback and assessment components because the sparsity of data generated by the implementation section may have led to less meaningful conclusions. Research that comprises these variables and components is encouraged.

The recent literature on school size points to small schools as the favored model for increased effectiveness. Owen, Cooper, and Brown (2002) reported on the Sacramento, California plan to create learning communities of 200-300 students in place of the existing large (2,000+ students) high schools. Krysiak and DiBella (2002) pointed to the benefits of small schools in relation to technology, student achievement, and the higher cost-benefit ratio of smaller schools. Carnie (2002) indicated that small schools had better attendance,

higher test sores, more participation in activities, less violence, more parental involvement, and closer bonds between teachers and students. Such findings may seem to contradict those of this article. However, when one considers the limitations of the sample size and that all small schools in this study were private, it may be that the findings of this study point to the medium-sized schools (the smaller of the primarily publicly funded schools) for the same reasons cited in the literature presented above. This presents a further consideration in relation to private schools.

The question arises as to whether small private schools, therefore, can be expected to present the benefits of smallness as indicated by the literature on small schools, because these schools generally receive public funding. In this study at least, small (private) schools were less likely to offer optimal conditions for stakeholder participation in the components of visioning strategy than were medium schools, which in fact were the smaller of the publicly funded schools. This may explain why medium schools present significant positive differences when compared with small as well as large schools in relation to the expectations placed on them by visioning strategy. Personnel in small schools (in this study, also private) would perhaps be expected to be overwhelmed with meeting the academic requirements and providing a full range of extracurricular opportunities and activities for students. Further, they often operate on carefully managed tuition and fundraising revenues. This would suggest that there might be little time, energy, or financial resources left for organizing stakeholders around such an imprecise concept as visioning strategy. Conversely, one can easily gain the impression that large schools are usually viewed as successful in relation to the tightness of their administrative regimen. "Too many cooks in the kitchen" might be viewed as a hindrance to getting to the prescribed destination in the appointed manner, and consequently outside-the-school input, particularly that of the Client grouping, may not be welcome.

Medium schools, on the other hand, may present opportunities for relief from the constraints of small and large schools. Their stakeholders may find the room they need to maneuver in relation to workload of personnel, financial and other resources, and willingness to hear voices that may differ from those of in-school education professionals. This study suggests that in medium schools parents, students, and principals are more likely to find their voices than in large or small schools.

In consideration of the role of School personnel as compared with the Client grouping, jurisdictional policy may play an important role. Visioning strategy appears to be controlled by in-school professional educators, and specifically principals, both at the formulation and feedback and assessment stages. Of the 17 principals who reported no involvement with visioning strategy in the past two years, six provided unsolicited responses that may be reflective of the general approach taken toward visioning strategy in schools. It was a thing to be "done" as opposed to an ongoing process: "We did ours about five years ago"; it was done from outside the school: "We did strategic planning in our board about five years ago"; and vision was not necessarily connected to action: "We have a vision statement, but no strategic plan." These responses are not surprising when one considers that at this time in Ontario, the Ministry of Education is promoting a highly centralized and standardized approach to

education. Principals who can administer, reduce problems, and deliver results are highly valued. This does not leave much room for listening to voices that may suggest that schools should serve other purposes, or achieve agreed-on purposes with nonstandardized methods. Evans (2000) indicated that leaders must possess ethics, vision, belief in others, and problem-solving wisdom, but that this wisdom was most valued when it enabled the leader to reach his or her predetermined goals.

In conclusion, although literature was available about the visioning process, it appears that few if any studies have attempted to quantify the interaction of school stakeholders with elements of visioning strategy. It is hoped that the conclusions reached in this study will be confirmed or challenged by research that pursues some of the issues raised here.

As specified in the introduction, the instrument in its formative stages serves two specific purposes. The first purpose is that of assisting individual school and district leaders in evaluating and enhancing educational change in a structured framework. In this article the strengths and weakness generally present in visioning strategies in schools represented in the study are highlighted. Principals could use this type of information as a starting point for moving from the general overview of visioning strategies to the specifics of their own schools. They may, for example, choose to enhance visioning strategy by strengthening *process* factors such as the formulation or feedback/assessment components. They may also choose to effect improvements by involving a wider variety of stakeholders.

Second, the instrument may facilitate research into the presence and health of the planned change process in schools. Principals and other stakeholders internally, or educational researchers externally, can use MCP-FIV as a means of gathering empirical evidence that will allow current trends in schools and groups of schools to be examined. The data presented here, for example, might lead to a further examination of the apparent lack of Client involvement in the visioning process in Ontario Schools.

The larger purpose of this article is to initiate discussion on the value of visioning strategy in enhancing school effectiveness. Educational change that is planned, inclusive, brings people together in learning communities, and enhances the likelihood that the shared visions of the school's stakeholders will be fulfilled is more likely to be successful (Dlugosh et al., 1996; Fitz-Gibbon & Kochan, 2000; Leiberman, 1995). These characteristics, which are central in MCP-FIV, appear to be lacking in many schools. This might be an indication that educational change as reflected in the visioning strategy of these schools is still predominantly a professionally oriented and relatively noninclusive initiative. Perhaps MCP-FIV will serve as a tool to meet these challenges.[1]

Note

1. Enhancements and modifications to MCP-FIV are encouraged. We request that researchers who wish to work with the instrument keep us informed of their progress (rideoul@uwindsor.ca).

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Appendix

MCP-FIV

MEASURE OF CHARACTERISTICS PRESENT IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF VISIONING STRATEGY

TO BE COMPLETED BY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

A. Identification **(Omit the four identifiers if questionnaire is not part of a research study)**

Your position_____

Grade levels included in your school_____

Number of students attending your school_____

Type of School Board - Public_____
Catholic_____
Private_____

1. In the past two years have you been involved in the formulation or implementation of a Vision for your school that included a specifically defined sequential criteria for achieving desired school outcomes, including consideration of the past, present, and what the organization aspires to in the future?

❒ YES
❒ NO

If no, the following sections may serve as a guide to effective visioning strategy, Rather than scoring the sections, they can serve as a guide for inclusion and collaboration in the formulation and implementation stages

B. Formulation of Vision

2. To what degree were each of the following groups of stakeholders involved in formulating the Vision?

		Not at all involved				Involved 4 or more times
a)	Parents					
	i) attending committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5
	ii) attending public forums	1	2	3	4	5
	iii) completing questionnaires	1	2	3	4	5
	iv) other _____	1	2	3	4	5
b)	Students					
	i) attending committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5
	ii) attending public forums	1	2	3	4	5
	iii) completing questionnaires	1	2	3	4	5
	iv) other _____	1	2	3	4	5
c)	Teachers					
	i) attending committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5
	ii) attending public forums	1	2	3	4	5
	iii) completing questionnaires	1	2	3	4	5
	iv) other _____	1	2	3	4	5
d)	Department heads					
	i) attending committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5
	ii) attending public forums	1	2	3	4	5
	iii) completing questionnaires	1	2	3	4	5
	iv) other _____	1	2	3	4	5
e)	In-school consultants/specialists					
	i) attending committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5
	ii) attending public forums	1	2	3	4	5
	iii) completing questionnaires	1	2	3	4	5
	iv) other _____	1	2	3	4	5
f)	Vice-principals					
	i) attending committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5
	ii) attending public forums	1	2	3	4	5
	iii) completing questionnaires	1	2	3	4	5
	iv) other _____	1	2	3	4	5
g)	Principals					
	i) attending committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5
	ii) attending public forums	1	2	3	4	5
	iii) completing questionnaires	1	2	3	4	5
	iv) other _____	1	2	3	4	5

		Not at all involved				Involved 4 or more times
h)	Board level consultants/specialists					
	i) attending committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5
	ii) attending public forums	1	2	3	4	5
	iii) completing questionnaires	1	2	3	4	5
	iv) other _____	1	2	3	4	5
i)	Assistant superintendents					
	i) attending committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5
	ii) attending public forums	1	2	3	4	5
	iii) completing questionnaires	1	2	3	4	5
	iv) other _____	1	2	3	4	5
j)	Superintendents					
	i) attending committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5
	ii) attending public forums	1	2	3	4	5
	iii) completing questionnaires	1	2	3	4	5
	iv) other _____	1	2	3	4	5
k)	Other _____					
	i) attending committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5
	ii) attending public forums	1	2	3	4	5
	iii) completing questionnaires	1	2	3	4	5
	iv) other _____	1	2	3	4	5

3. To what degree did the process of creating a Vision statement include discussion of the following?

	No discussion				Much discussion
a) What the school has been in the past	1	2	3	4	5
b) Where the school is now	1	2	3	4	5
c) What we want the school to become	1	2	3	4	5
d) Identification of strengths and weaknesses associated with achieving what we want the school to become	1	2	3	4	5

C. Implementation of Vision

4. Does the implementation of the Vision include use of a strategic plan?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

5. How significant are the following characteristics in the strategic plan for the implementation of Vision at your school?

	Not Very significant				Very significant
	1	2	3	4	5
a) Specific action steps	1	2	3	4	5
b) Statement of who is responsible for carrying out each action step	1	2	3	4	5
c) Time line stating when specific steps are to be enacted	1	2	3	4	5
d) Formal provision for assessment of adherence to implementation procedures					

D. Feedback / Assessment

6. To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of the action steps or implementation procedures required to be completed to date have actually been completed on time?

❒10% ❒30% ❒50% ❒70% ❒90%
❒20% ❒40% ❒60% ❒80% ❒100

7. From which groups has feedback been received concerning the implementation of strategy or achievement of goals specified in the Visioning Strategy?

a) Parents
   i) written report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   ii) oral report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iii) assessment instrument(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iv) other_____ ❒ Yes ❒ No

b) Students
   i) written report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   ii) oral report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iii) assessment instrument(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iv) other_____ ❒ Yes ❒ No

c) Teachers
   i) written report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   ii) oral report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iii) assessment instrument(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iv) other_____ ❒ Yes ❒ No

d) Department heads
   i) written report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   ii) oral report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iii) assessment instrument(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iv) other_____ ❒ Yes ❒ No

e) In-school consultants/specialists
   i) written report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   ii) oral report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iii) assessment instrument(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iv) other_____ ❒ Yes ❒ No

f) Vice-principals
   i) written report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   ii) oral report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iii) assessment instrument(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iv) other_____ ❒ Yes ❒ No

g) Principals
   i) written report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   ii) oral report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iii) assessment instrument(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iv) other_____ ❒ Yes ❒ No

h) Board level consultants/specialists
   i) written report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   ii) oral report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iii) assessment instrument(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iv) other_____ ❒ Yes ❒ No

i) Assistant superintendents
   i) written report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   ii) oral report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iii) assessment instrument(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iv) other_____ ❒ Yes ❒ No

j) Superintendents
   i) written report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   ii) oral report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iii) assessment instrument(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iv) other_____ ❒ Yes ❒ No

k) Other _____
   i) written report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   ii) oral report(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iii) assessment instrument(s) ❒ Yes ❒ No
   iv) other_____ ❒ Yes ❒ No