

Cavanagh & Dellar

Cavanagh & Dellar focus on a critique by Sergiovanni (1993) regarding the application of organisational (culture) models to schools, which states that the basic concept of schools is different to that of production or service-providing companies in other sectors, and instead suggests using sociological models for schools (Cavanagh & Dellar 1995: 3f.). It continues that schools must be seen as a community based on connective ideas, in which 'control' is practised through norms, goals, values, professional socialisation, collegiality and 'natural independence' (Sergiovanni 1993, quoted according to Cavanagh & Dellar 1995: 4).

For Cavanagh & Dellar, the concept of education and the communal concept of a school unite when a school is viewed as a community of learning. The culture of such a community combines beliefs, attitudes, values and norms regarding schooling and education with **social interaction**. A school culture model must incorporate organisational aspects into its teaching and educational function (loc. cit.: 5).

Cavanagh & Dellar thus refer to Fullan & Hargreaves (1992), Erikson (1987) and Maxwell & Thomas (1991), and attempt to pool their ideas into one single model:

Fullan & Hargreaves describe school culture with the terms 'separation', 'connection' and 'integration'. In an individualised culture, teachers withdraw from collective activities and instead work independently. Cultures of connectedness become forms of 'Balkanisation', i.e. a state of close ties between small groups, which clearly distance themselves from other groups, 'comfortable co-operation', i.e. a state of creating a 'warm' and 'cosy' work environment, and 'contrived collegiality', i.e. a state resulting from bureaucratic procedures, seeking to achieve growing co-operation and joint decision-making. A culture of integration, on the other hand, takes both into account, i.e. individual demands and interests, and those of the community. The authors propose expressive and instrumental domains as bases for the model: The expressive domain covers social cohesion by supporting positive relationships, while the instrumental domain does so through social control and a focus on goals. This produces a model of four types: 'Traditional' with low cohesion and high control, 'Welfarist' with high cohesion and low control, 'Hot-house' with high cohesion and high control, and 'Anomic' with low cohesion and low control (loc. cit.: 5).

Erikson focuses on the development of cultural knowledge, stating that school culture is a framework for interpretation, which contains the different concepts through the possession and sharing of cultural knowledge. Cultural knowledge initially exists in small units spread across the school (no one has access to all the knowledge). Then there are larger structures of cultural knowledge which support collective behaviour, and finally the sharing of knowledge is associated with power and status. According to Erikson, school culture continues to be a concept with central organisational structures and core symbols which are extensively distributed, and which ensure cohesion and behavioural consistency. And school culture is also a systematic variation of cultural knowledge amongst the groups, in which the organisation of differences (and 'permitted' deviations) is the result of social interaction, including conflicts. Beyond school culture, each individual is involved in other concepts of cultural knowledge, meaning there is never complete involvement. School culture is thus a dynamic combination of shared and individual cultural knowledge, in which the constantly new framework and new knowledge are learned and applied (loc. cit.: 6).

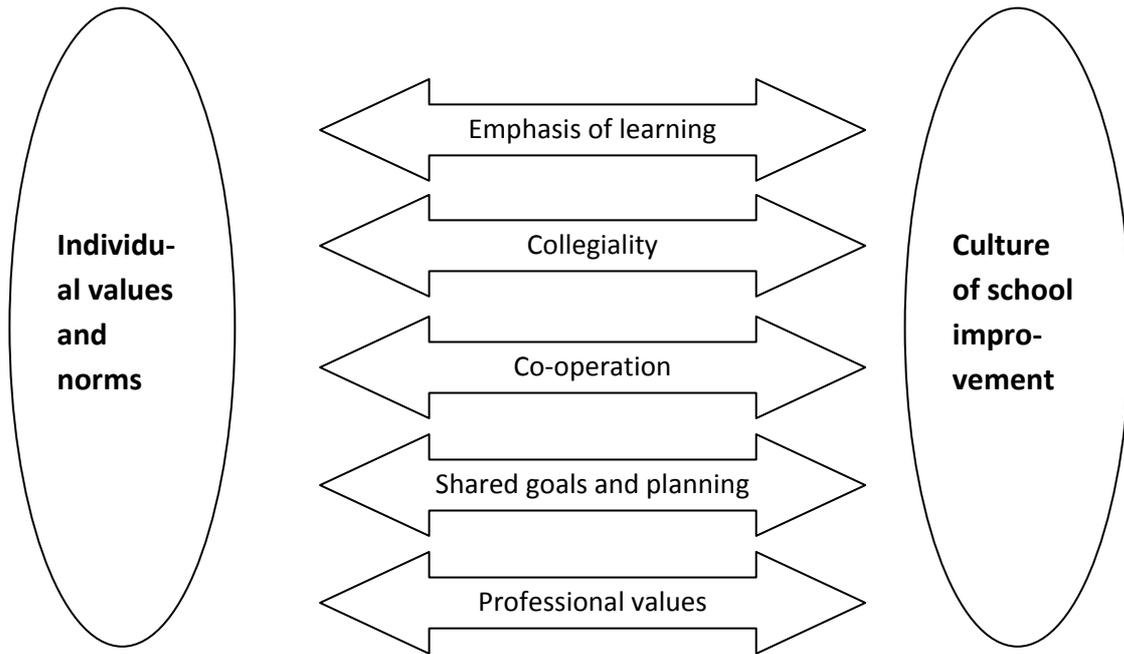
Maxwell & Thomas (1991) assume that culture is expressed through the behaviour of individuals and groups in a process of debating competing ideas, beliefs and values. Their interactive culture model is thus geared around four interrelating elements: The central element is the system of beliefs (1), which includes the group's assumptions and understandings. This influences the group's values system (2), which involves shared assessments of the relative significance of facts and opinions. This in turn serves as the basis for the system of norms (3) which establish behavioural expectations and standards, as well as limits for what is permitted. Finally, there is actual behaviour (4). Each subsequent element mutually influences the one preceding it, while the entire system does the same with its current socio-political environment. In the end, however, all system elements affect each other (loc. cit.: 6).

Based on this model, school culture can be understood as follows: The culture of a learning community is manifested through the sharing of values and norms amongst teaching staff in such a way that the result is appropriate to the aims and intended actions to improve student learning. A school's culture is thus characterised by perceived participation in the interactive social processes of culture development, preservation and transformation (loc. cit.: 7), and the community's cohesion is defined by the individuals' link to common beliefs, values, attitudes and aims (Cavanagh 2011: 2).

When Cavanagh refers to student learning here, he believes the school effectiveness research reveals the standards for school aspects which benefit this learning – particularly based on the contributions made by the teaching staff and managers -, understood as a search for dependencies between the conditions at the school and the students' performances (loc. cit.). He is, however, completely aware of the inconsistency of the research results. For him, the starting point for such a link lies in constructivist models, and further efforts to appropriately shape the social learning environment. The construction of mental patterns and attitudes in students' 'minds' is based on examining learning and shared experiences (loc. cit.). He also believes trust and motivation arise from a supportive social environment in the classroom.

Shared values in terms of educational results are the 'production plants' for culture, and control interpersonal dealings and relationships within the school. In his eyes, culture is thus the **way** in which shared values are **expressed**, both characterised and constituted, in social interaction. To ensure a school's positive development, a strong student focus on learning, as well as the co-operation process, must be associated with high value in order to strengthen the community's interpersonal relationships and cohesion (loc. cit.: 3).

The school improvement model of school culture is derived from these ideas:



(cf. Cavanagh & Dellar 1997: 11; the model referenced here still shows ‘teacher efficacy’ instead of ‘professional values’, which has been replaced in subsequent papers and the instrument).

The individual values and norms are the starting point, serving as the basis for aspects of school culture which emerged from colleague discussions; without such discussions, the individual teacher is left professionally and socially isolated, and a culture of school improvement cannot form, as the professional (further) development of teachers is a personal responsibility, which cannot be fulfilled through access to colleague experiences and knowledge (cf. loc. cit.: 10).

Conversely, a school focused on development also needs to ensure organisational requirements are communicated to the individual teachers, who then react based on their HR and professional skills. If these communications and discussions do not occur, it results in withdrawal and defence mechanisms by the teachers, and traditional management reactions in the form of control (cf. loc. cit.: 11).

The elements stated in the model are the vehicles for developing the school culture, but also for improving the school. The interpersonal interactions between teachers allow individual needs, beliefs and attitudes to be expressed. Through dialogue, these can be exchanged, and personal views ‘improved’ by relating them to those of others and to shared values and norms (cf. loc. cit.). ‘Teacher efficacy’ (or ‘professional values’) means the values the teachers assign to the social educational institution and the application of teaching principles. The ‘emphasis of learning’ is school-specific, and relates to the individual learning of both the students and teachers. In addition to interpersonal relationships, ‘collegiality’ also includes the need for empowerment. ‘Shared planning’ is the teachers’ fundamental understanding of the school’s aims, and the evaluation and implementation of these aims (cf. loc. cit.: 12).

A pro-development school is one where all six elements are clearly defined. There is a school culture tying in with the individual values and norms, which is the result of teacher discussions, and which, in addition to supporting the students’ learning, also creates an atmosphere of trust, mutual support,

and fault tolerance. Problems and successes are shared, individual development supported, and a growing pool of knowledge generated (cf. loc. cit.).

The six elements need to be viewed as interdependent and interactive. Each element contributes to a school culture, but is also influenced by this culture and the other five elements. The school culture is in a state of dynamic balance, which responds to internal forces, formal organisation forces, and external forces. The stability of the school culture depends on disruptions to the balance of relatively weak elements. The culture is strengthened when all six elements are strengthened. Conversely, the culture may be weakened if certain elements are weakened. If the entire culture is weakened, it results in a coexistence of individuals, although this may not necessarily be permanent, and may instead be eliminated by virtue of the teachers assessing the need to jointly respond to this state (cf. loc. cit.: 14).

Based on the intensity of the six elements, the teaching staff can discuss requirements submitted to the school, and decide whether new programmes should be accepted or rejected. In a weak culture, on the other hand, external requirements result in a wide range of individual responses, involving inconsistency, divided staff and a weak culture (cf. loc. cit.).

Model assessment:

The **proximity to the educational process** and the explicit focus on school development are positive aspects of note. The described classifications and term usage illustrate that school development can certainly be understood as quality development, meaning that, to a certain extent, this can be viewed as a quality culture model. However, culture is **not** seen in a **layer model**, and the issue of the explicit and hidden is not addressed. According to the **normative approach**, culture is considered as something an organisation **has**, as something **modifiable**. But the associated idea of the mutual relativity of the discussion regarding individual values and norms and the school culture as the resulting shared formation of beliefs, views, assessments and attitudes is indeed also similar to the Helsperian model of culture between the realm, imaginary and symbolic and the associated idea of a continuous process of modification and mutual influence. The **relationship** between **individual** values and norms and the **school culture** is explicitly addressed, and the focus on the discussion process is plausible, additionally providing access to assessment. This similarly enables a certain **central position** between Marré’s distinguishing features as cited by Müthing:

Cultural understanding	Sociocultural system	Meanings system
Understanding of knowledge	Objectivist	Subjectivist
Organisation	Has culture	Is culture
Explanatory approach	Functional	Interpretative
Access	Results-oriented	Process-oriented
Aim	Description & design	Explication

The assessment instrument limits the model’s universality, but illustrates the essence – i.e. the six elements which mediate between individual values and norms and school culture -, very well, even

though it does not comprehensively explain why it is precisely these elements, and whether these are the only elements.

Although the model and instrument do not claim to assess school culture per se (and are limited to the school-development culture), meaning the descriptive quality is certainly restricted, they do not generate false expectations, and the school is spared the – possibly – difficult transfer from the (assessed) culture to the importance for quality/school development when analysing results.

Instrument adaptation:

In addition to the necessary translation, the item must also be modified in order to satisfy the term usage commonly applied in the school context. This is problematic in many respects, as – from a cross-culture perspective – the context initially needs to be reinterpreted, and a state of understanding must first be assumed. Use in other cultural contexts would then see this double-sided problem re-emerge.

During adaptation, it was ensured that the items' sometimes positive, sometimes negative (inverse) 'spin' was retained; the number and classification were completely adopted. Distinction between statements formulated for an individual person ('I'), the teaching community ('we'), the 'teachers of this school' or simply in general ('there is...') was largely retained in order for the model's mutual relationship between individual values and norms and the school culture to also exist in adapted form (this is based on a subsequent **assumption of grounds!** – there is no explicit explanation for this in the available sources).

A further item column of 7 statements on the quality aspect of '**understanding**', resulting from our current discussion context, was also added. This can be seen as a suitable addendum to the model, but does not necessarily modify it; it can instead also be viewed as additional information.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Students are not taught what they need for education or careers in future.					
2.	I am proud to be a teacher.					
3.	The teachers at this school know how to support one another.					
4.	At conferences or team meetings, contributions are always made by the same colleagues.					
5.	Our mission statement does not reflect the views of the teaching staff.					
6.	The school's directors have the greatest influence on the formation of opinions among teaching staff.					
7.	This school takes into account the students' learning interests, even if this means compromising on curriculum content.					
8.	Schooling does not help increase quality of life in our society.					
9.	I take time to question my teaching.					
10.	The teachers at this school often do not deal with their professional problems openly.					
11.	Conferences and team meetings rarely involve general discussion.					
12.	We have never had a shared vision for our school.					
13.	The school's directors do not encourage colleagues to take responsibility for projects.					
14.	There is not enough time in lessons to thoroughly discuss things with the students.					
15.	The students' creative potential is not maximised.					
16.	It is particularly important to develop the students' social skills.					
17.	Colleagues make no effort to maintain positive interrelations.					
18.	We work together to implement decisions from conferences or team meetings.					
19.	We do not collect data to assess course success.					
20.	The school's directors do not support professional development for teaching staff.					
21.	Student opinion does not help me very much, as ultimately they cannot evaluate the quality of the lesson.					

		Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
22.	I have a clear idea about how I can help implement the school's objectives.					
23.	At this school, teachers learn from one another.					
24.	My teaching-related decisions are not always supported by my colleagues.					
25.	We often question the content taught in the individual courses.					
26.	We do not always evaluate course success.					
27.	The school's directors seriously look after me and my human interests.					
28.	I involve my students in the lesson plan, even if this is at the expense of other requirements.					
29.	Individual differences between students are not catered to.					
30.	I use hints or advice from colleagues in my lessons.					
31.	Everyone here is very willing to support each other in the event of problems.					
32.	Educational approaches are not discussed enough amongst teaching staff.					
33.	We have ways and means of finding out whether we will achieve our academic objectives.					
34.	The school's directors give each colleague enough individual scope for their work.					
35.	I regularly explain the professional or general importance of the individual course components to the students.					
36.	I gear my work around the school's mission statement.					
37.	We believe each student can learn what is needed for professional life.					
38.	We always encourage each other to question our professional judgements.					
39.	We often compare how we assess our students.					
40.	The teachers at this school do not agree when it comes to fulfilling objectives.					
41.	The school's directors are able to encourage personal commitment amongst colleagues to ensure the school development measures are successful.					
42.	Through my training and professional experience, I know what and how I need to teach; so it doesn't make much sense to ask the students.					

		Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
43.	It is noticed and appreciated when students' performances improve.					
44.	I always try out new things to improve my teaching.					
45.	We encourage each other to take responsibility for new projects or developments.					
46.	Ways and means of handling student misconduct are not sufficiently discussed.					
47.	Colleagues do not consistently fulfil the school's most important objectives.					
48.	The sustainability of successful improvements is ensured through explicit support from the school's directors.					
49.	Students simply have to accept that the school does not run according to what they want.					
50.	Our school mission statement (school programme/quality model) refers to what is important to everyday education at our school.					
51.	The school mission statement (school programme/quality model) is also drawn on in discussions or decisions relating to educational matters.					
52.	Our school's directors ensure suitable framework conditions (resources, advanced training, functioning work groups, e.g. Q-groups, team coordination) to implement quality standards.					
53.	Our school's directors act consistently, authentically and in a trend-setting manner in relation to quality management.					
54.	Our school has instruments and defined processes to identify and address quality problems (e.g. educational, organisational).					
55.	Suggestions, complaints or proposals regarding quality improvement are acted on seriously and consistently at the school.					
56.	Data (e.g. as part of evaluations) relating to teaching efficacy (e.g. examination results or satisfaction) is systematically collected and analysed at our school.					
57.	Obtaining feedback (from students, colleagues or others) on one's own teaching is an integral part of our professional identity.					
58.	I use the data collected from surveys (evaluations) or feedback to assess/reflect on my teaching.					
59.	At the school, we systematically use findings gained from data collection (evaluations) or feedback to improve teaching practices.					

		Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
60.	Our quality management serves to systematically further develop the school and lessons by involving participants.					
61.	At the school, I find that the efforts put into quality management are justified by the positive effects on teaching practices.					

Sources:

Cavanagh (Cavanaugh?), Robert F.; Dellar, Graham B. (1997): Towards a Model of School Culture. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association

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