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Colleague support: building a supportive ecology in schools

Dr Bill Rogers

Teaching can sometimes be experienced as a lonely profession. We teach in a smallish room, with 25 to 30 students day after day after day. When the 'breaks' come we rush off for a tea or coffee, or 'playground duty' or, perhaps, another meeting. For the better part of the day we are – effectively – cut off from our adult peers, the very people whose support can make a difference to our professional and personal coping and to our professional assurance and development.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) have also described teaching as the 'lonely profession'. Rudduck (1991) has noted '...education is among the last vocations where it is still legitimate to work by yourself in a space that is secure against invaders.' (p 31). Is this overstated? Is there still some truth in these words in 2002? We do often work 'alone', though (hopefully) we are not lonely in our work.

There is still, in some schools, a practice of treating the class*room* as a place of professional privacy; *personal* boundedness, perhaps even professional boundedness. As Andy Miller has noted (1996), there is (in a teacher's daily role) some 'ambivalence' between the wish for 'boundedness' and the search for assistance. This ambivalence can mean that while teachers see their colleagues as a powerful source of ideas, they also see them as 'mirrors' in which they may 'assess their own performance' (pp 95–98).

This point is echoed by Leiberman and Miller (1990) when they say that,

'...loneliness and isolation are high prices to pay but teachers willingly pay them when the alternatives are seen as exposure and censure. By following the privacy rule teachers forfeit the opportunity to display their successes, but they also gain the security of not having to face their failures publicly and losing face.' (In Miller, 1996 p 94)

Hargreaves (1993) suggests,

> 'The culture of individualism means that most teachers are content to do their main work, classroom teaching, on their own. Sometimes this leads to isolation, loneliness, and lack of practical and moral support; but it also means being able to have one's own way without interference or hindrance from a co-professional. Not surprisingly, many teachers feel ambivalent about this professional autonomy, but will not readily choose to work with another teacher in the classroom because of its high risk of tension, disagreement or conflict.' (p 4)

Much depends, of course, on what is meant by 'enforced isolation'. It further depends on what the school encourages (or not) as colleague support, collaborative practice and professional development.

There is a creative tension regarding collegiality and collaboration when it addresses isolation as if it is a 'one-side solution' and 'collegiality as automatically good' (Fullan, 1993).

> 'Pushed to extremes collegiality becomes ''group think''; uncritical conformity to the group, unthinking accepting of the latest solution, suppression of individual dissent.' (p 34)
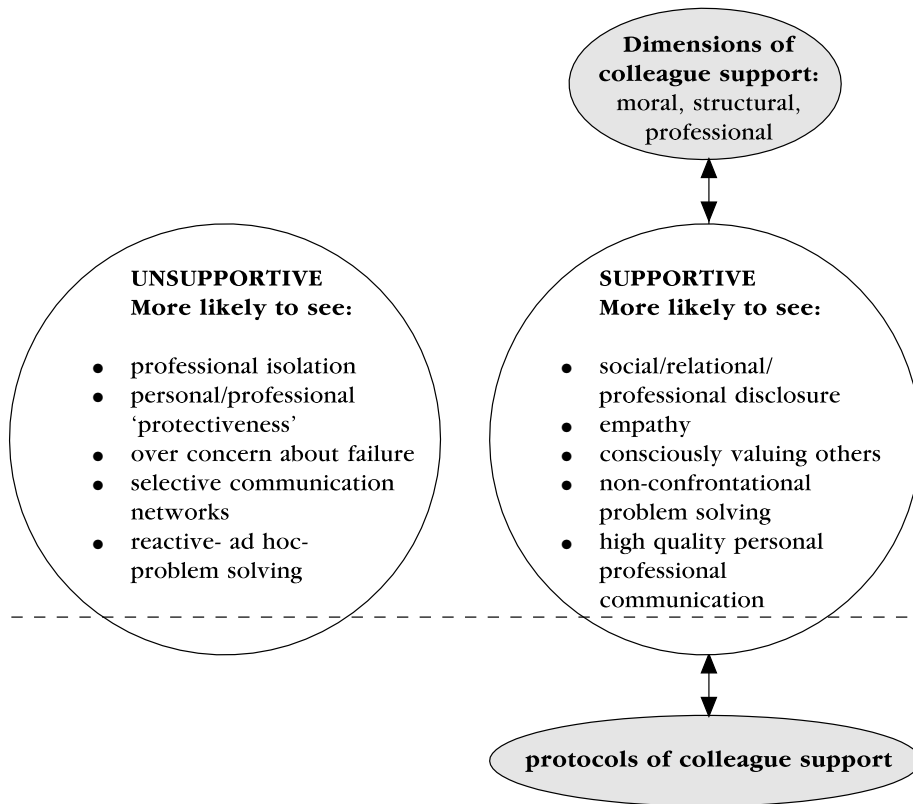
Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) note that in response to the problem of isolation 'greater collegiality is becoming one of the premier improvement strategies of the 1990s'. They go on to note that in seeking to eliminate 'individualism' (habitual patterns of working alone) we should not eradicate 'individuality' (voicing of disagreement, opportunity for solitude) (p 43). Individuality (not autonomy) can generate 'creative disagreement and risk' that can be a 'source of dynamic group learning'.

The Elton Report on Discipline in Schools (1989) speaks of a tradition of 'classroom isolation' that particularly affects teachers who may be struggling in their teaching and discipline. Within such a 'tradition' teachers may believe that asking for assistance 'telegraphs' weakness, ineptness or 'incompetence'. 'Professional etiquette' may then imply that an offer of assistance from others is perceived as an implication one is ineffective. As one colleague noted to me:

> 'There's this ludicrous idea that when someone is really struggling we have this ''hands-off mentality'' – just in case we do, or say, the wrong thing. It's stupid really especially when we *know* they need help.' (cited in Rogers, 1999)

COLLEAGUE CULTURES

I have noticed that schools have varying degrees of 'consciousness' about colleague support as it is understood (and operating) in their school (Rogers, 1999 and 2001). In some schools colleague support is incidental, ad hoc,

Dimensions of colleague support: moral, structural, professional

UNSUPPORTIVE
More likely to see:

- professional isolation
- personal/professional 'protectiveness'
- over concern about failure
- selective communication networks
- reactive- ad hoc- problem solving

SUPPORTIVE
More likely to see:

- social/relational/ professional disclosure
- empathy
- consciously valuing others
- non-confrontational problem solving
- high quality personal professional communication

protocols of colleague support

Figure 1. Contrasting cultures of support

dependent on both opportunity and trust. In schools with a 'low consciousness' of colleague support senior staff may be unaware of the need for opportunities, forms, structures, processes and procedures that specifically address the *espoused* needs of staff.

Form follows function in colleague support; the function of colleague support is the meeting of the staff needs – their fundamental needs (as a person) and their particular needs as a professional. We all have basic needs to feel valued, affirmed and to 'belong'; we all have a need to be treated as a professional and supported as a professional. 'Forms' that enable such support may be as basic as an effective 'time-out' system for one's classroom discipline and reasonable opportunities for meeting times to share common concerns through to collaborative policies that enable and support our day-to-day teaching and management.

If staff are genuinely consulted and involved in the development of these opportunities, forms, policies and plans, they feel both valued and supported.

DIMENSIONS OF COLLEAGUE SUPPORT

When I've discussed colleague support with teachers across a wide range of schools (Rogers, 1999) they commonly focus on several 'dimensions' of support.

Sharing

Sharing with colleagues, such as the sharing of ideas, resources and professional advice. Such sharing is often transitional, 'dyadic' (one-on-one), even ad hoc, but nonetheless regarded and valued for that.[1] Teachers are busy people; the assuring word and confirmation we are 'on the right track' is highly valued in a busy day. Of course such collegial sharing also operates in more formal teamings when we discuss, share, 'off-load' and plan together.

Coping under stress

Colleague support often enables staff to cope when under stress. The sharing of common concerns, needs and problems can help reframe, give assurance and reduce the stress of coping alone. There are countless studies that illustrate how colleague support buffers the normative stress of teaching, reduces emotional exhaustion and increases shared identity and problem solving. This is related to what Russell *et al* (1987, p 272) terms 'reliable alliances', where colleagues are available to give feedback, advice, encouragement and direct support. Iscoe (1974) refers to this aspect of support as describing 'the competent community' – the kind of community that fosters 'healthy connections among people' and 'catalyses and nurtures their linkages . . .' (In Hobfall, 1998, p 203).

Of course this kind of research does not simply conclude that benefits to stress reduction are directly – causatively – related to colleague support. It can be reliably inferred, however, that there is a positive relationship between 'stress buffering', 'stress reduction', 'increased coping ability' and 'social support' (from one's colleagues). See also Bernard (1990), Kyriacou (1987), Rogers (1996, 1999 and 2001). Of particular note is that measures of physical and mental health as they relate to stress management and coping are positively correlated with uncritical support from senior colleagues (supervisors). Studies by Hart *et al* (1994, 1995) illustrate that supportive leadership provides the organisational relationship that underpins all other areas of staff management; it is the 'anchor variable' that can increase or decrease staff morale.

Supportive leadership is valued when the leadership team (not just the head teacher) are 'realistically available'; where they 'enable staff to be self-reflective about professional practice as well as enabling perspective taking (of others)'. Staff feel valued when 'they are consulted on issues that count and informed on those that are routine'. Supportive leaders 'allow time for reflection on change

requirements, allowing time for differences to be aired'; 'they direct support to team relationships and build team morale across the school by acknowledgment of a teacher's practice as well as affirmation, encouragement and support'; 'they make time to engage in some face-to-face communication'; 'they invite, initiate and support skills in their colleagues they may not have seen in themselves; when giving feedback they give such descriptively – with support'. Most of all, 'they invite and model respect thus inviting collegial trust'.

Few head teachers have all these qualities at all times. It is important, however, that the *leadership team* consider these aspects of supportive leadership. (From wide staff surveying on supportive leadership in Rogers, 1999 and 2001.)

Professional development

Professional support in colleague cultures enables an individual teacher's on-going professional reflection, practice and development. In supportive school cultures professional support includes on-going discussion, planning and development within the teacher's professional role and responsibilities. Professional support also needs to include feedback; both incidental encouragement and feedback on teaching and management as well as more focused professional feedback and appraisal. Our collegial peers are a significant source of knowledge, experience and skill that can be shared through informal and team-based peer discussion through to elective peer mentoring.

These 'dimensions' of colleague support are obviously inter-related and the degree to which they are *consciously* encouraged and developed by staff determines how useful, dependable and effective such support can be.

The protocols of colleague support

In the countless informal and formal discussions I have had with teachers and schools on this topic I have also noted a clear underlying aspect that teachers affirm in a supportive school culture – that of 'no-blame' support (Rogers, 1999 and 2001). In a supportive colleague ecology staff feel that they can share a range of concerns at both incidental and more formal levels without being perceived as inadequate, ineffective, or (worse) incompetent. In such schools the term 'struggling teacher' is not a simple pejorative; teachers do not believe that they have to cope alone in a kind of degrading survivalism.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) describe how teacher exhaustion is affected by school culture:

'One [kind of exhaustion] arises from lonely battles and unappreciated efforts, losing ground and growing and gnawing feeling of hopelessness that you cannot make a difference. The other type of exhaustion is the

kind that accompanies hard work as part of a team, a growing recognition you are engaged in a struggle that is worth the effort and a recognition that what you are doing makes a critical difference for a recalcitrant child or a discouraged colleague. The former type of exhaustion ineluctably takes its toll on the motivation of the most enthusiastic teacher. The latter has its own inner reserve that allows us to bounce back after a good night's sleep. Indeed the first type of exhaustion causes anxiety and sleeplessness, while the second induces rest and regeneration of energy. School cultures make a difference in what kind of tiredness we experience.' (p 107)

I have also noted that 'consciously supportive' schools (Rogers, 1999 and 2001) are characterised by notable 'protocols' that both describe and, in a sense, delineate the 'ecology of support' present within its culture. These underlying aspects of colleague support – present in the following protocols – cross the dimensions of colleague support: moral, structural and professional. They embrace dyadic as well as the more whole-school 'structural' expressions of support – they are the enabling conditions of a consciously supportive school.

▶ **Mutual respect and mutual regard** are axiomatic to supportive collegial relations. Mutual regard refers to the regard we have (and give) for colleagues as fellow professionals and as fellow human beings. Even *basic* civility is a mark of professional respect; civility can moderate the easy selfishness that can arise when we forget what it means to be a professional and collegial community. The 'humanising' of one's professional life is well noted by Johnson (1972):

'In humanising relationships, individuals are sympathetic and responsive to human needs. They invest each other with the character of humanity, and they treat and regard each other as human. It is the positive involvement with other people that we label as humane. In a dehumanising relationship, people are divested of those qualities that are uniquely human and are turned into machines and objects. In the sense that they are treated in impersonal ways that reflect unconcern with human values.' (p 12)

Scott-Peck (1993) notes that the concept of 'personal value' is also related to 'social engagement' a 'feature of belonging essential to mental health' (p 23). This is affected, further, by the not uncommon historical aspect of classroom teaching as an isolated role experience; isolated from adult peers but ensconced with minors in classrooms.

▶ **Tolerance of (but not merely acquiescence to) fallibility in ourselves and others**: especially in areas where colleagues cope with uncertainty, normative failure and change. We won't always get it right: we forget, we 'fail', the worksheets weren't photocopied, the report wasn't in on time, the lesson didn't go the way we planned, from the bad-day-syndrome of tiredness

and mistakes to Murphy's Law (or even O'Toole's Law: 'Murphy was an optimist'). Tolerance of fallibility – further – means that when we need to address (and support) others in their failure and struggle we do so with regard to their feelings and needs – within professional probity without pettiness or unreasonable criticism. I have known teachers in unsupportive school cultures who have to cope with significant stress in their teaching and discipline and exist in a kind of degrading survivalism (Rogers, 1999 and 2001). Sadly the leaders in unconsciously unsupportive schools may be unaware that their management behaviour and the way they characteristically treat struggling teachers, may be contributing to a teacher's inability to cope.

This protocol – recognising our fallibility – also works against the sort of demanding perfectionism that can create significant stress in school communities. However, where there is *characteristic* laziness, indifference, insensitivity and patterns of undermining behaviour in colleague behaviour, this will need to be supportively addressed within a school's shared values and practices. Within a whole-school perspective of shared values, aims and practices the addressing of poor or ineffective behaviour and performance in teachers is made somewhat clearer – not necessarily easier. 'Acceptance of fallibility' means acceptance of the person without denying the need, at times, to address their behaviour and support them in their struggle and failure. It is seeing a colleague's failure and struggle, not seeing *them* as a failure. In a supportive school failure is genuinely seen as a learning experience if, and when, a colleague is supported through their failure.

Humour can often play a part acknowledging and reframing our fallibility. I have noted that supportive colleague cultures exhibit shared expressions of humour: staff banter, in-house jokes, the *bon mots*, the 'court jesters', even the wry smiles that give a 'coping edge', a feeling of temporary uplift, a defusing of tension; a reframing of frustrating reality! Humour can often affirm our shared identity in a stressful profession (Burford, 1987 in Rogers, 2001).

► **Watchfulness and mindfulness of one another** – 'perspective taking', 'looking out for one another', 'thinking of' and 'acting for' the 'common good' of our colleagues, is a crucial protocol of colleague support. As one colleague notes, 'it is bearing one another's burdens, it is the reciprocity of good-will'. A colleague covers a class for you when you're running late; photocopies a worksheet when you're in a hurry and pigeon-holes it for you; notices your bad day and makes you a coffee; supportively notices when things are difficult and offers a 'collegial hand' and later, a chance to off-load and talk things through. Colleague 'watchfulness' can occur in the many ad hoc and transitional settings in a school day through to a conscious awareness by the leadership about what is really going on and being aware of, and sensitive to, the needs of their colleagues. In every school this aspect of 'making time for others', 'being aware of others' needs' is valued highly (Rogers, 2001). Such a 'protocol' – like that of mutual respect – carries a

meaning of active effort exercised for another. It includes related meanings such as 'reliance on others' and 'dependability' and 'being sensitive to the needs of colleagues', 'looking out for one another', 'being there for others', and 'acting for the common good'. As one colleague noted, 'I know most people here would cover me if needed,' (he meant in terms of 'covering a class' – if running late – or supporting him in a crisis situation in terms of 'back-up' (Rogers, 1999).

▶ Affirming, and maintaining, a **non-competitive collegial ethos**.

▶ **Trust in both our colleagues and in supportive processes** (such as teaming, parallel planning, whole-school behaviour management policy and practice); trust in 'forms' or 'structures' of support that meet our common professional needs. Without basic trust (in our common professional role and for our common needs) it is difficult for a school to w*ork* collegially. It is important to place trust in people *and* processes; not merely in people alone.[2] Thoughtful procedures, plans and policies, while subject to human constraints and fallibility, are also vehicles for human action. Such processes can give a sense of shared purpose; of dependable organisational structure, of back-up – in short, support. Of course such processes need to be broadly and characteristically worthy of trust: time, assurance and usage will give such confirmation or otherwise. There is also *risk* with trust: I receive another; I identify with another; I extend my goodwill to another in the hope it will be accepted in good faith, honoured, even reciprocated. 'Trust has also to be exercised to be enjoyed – and that's the potential risk. But we say to the kids that they learn by ''risking'' – that's an acceptable ''risk'' ' (senior teacher; in Rogers, 1999).

There are, naturally, levels of trust in a school community, from ideas sharing and generation to having a mentor–coach relationship through to personal disclosure where private (and professional) confidences are risked. I have spoken with many colleagues who regretted even professional self-disclosure with some of their colleagues. It is not easy to rebuild trust with an individual, a team, even a whole-school staff once trust is broken and people feel 'let-down'. Without basic trust it is difficult for a school to work collegially. When staff have shared aims and structures that are dependable – such as purposeful teams, workable policies, shared planning, supportive feedback – trust is enhanced.[3] The 'risk' of trust is often rewarded. I have seen leaders who have been able to stir-up, motivate and develop skills and abilities in their team and allow and accommodate failure with encouragement and support and in doing so build up the professional growth of their staff. It is those features of trust I have noticed mostly in consciously supportive schools.

▶ **Balancing the positive and negative features** of school life and professional demands: 'keeping the bigger picture in mind', 'living with uncertainty in the long haul . . . '.

▶ **Acceptance of difference in others** (within shared values, aims and practices). A school community has a wide range of personality styles and professional expressions in teaching. There are colleagues who prefer a more 'individual' style, and those who prefer a more collegial teaching style. There are those who are more demonstrably outgoing and extrovert when sharing and teaching and those who are more reticent, less outgoing or extrovert, but no less effective as teachers. This is important when addressing the issue of differences in ideas, approaches, opinions and teaching/management style and practice.

Colleagues frequently noted that in more collegially supportive schools their differences were accepted; even acknowledged (Rogers, 1999). Differences of opinion and practice, even healthy conflict, are part of a school's social and organisational fabric. People in a team should be able to argue without destroying the team. This, in fact, may be a strength of the team when:

'New norms that directly pertain to complex and difficult problems include: bringing uncomfortable issues out into the open (and) persist in drawing attention to problems even if others seem reluctant to consider the implications of what you are saying; listen to other members' viewpoints even if you disagree with them; encourage zany and bizarre perspectives to ensure that nothing important and possible has been overlooked; make people aware when a topic that should generate a heated debate has not.' (Kilmann, 1985, p 66)

A healthy organisation responds neither passively nor rebelliously to demands from outside itself. Because it equates growth with a collaborative style it is likely to measure goals from a flexible stance, but with a keen eye for that which is good from the past; not mere change for change's sake as a new form of pedantry. Collaboration is a means of adaptation; it has *in place* problem-solving mechanisms enabling it critically to face new pressures and demands.

▶ **Shared professional assurance**: at the dyadic and transitional (ad hoc) level, as well as the more involved team level. The need for assurance that one is meeting one's professional obligations is an important professional need.

▶ **Being purpose-driven rather than merely task-driven**. This feature of colleague support is strongest when aspects of teaming and teams is functional, purposeful and on-going. A notable feature of supportive collegiality occurs when the team's existence has meaning not just for meeting their professional obligations and the needs of the individuals in the team but for the school's purpose and mission. A key feature – perhaps the main feature – of school-wide consciousness of support is highlighted in the observable, conscious difference between mutual obligation as a 'personal

construct' and mutual obligation as a characteristic 'school-wide expression' of school values and practice. As one of my colleagues notes, in contrasting her past school with her current school: 'The difference here is, **I could rely on anyone not just a particular colleague at a particular time**; or if the mood was OK . . .' (colleague's emphasis; cited in Rogers, 1999).

▶ **The 'certainty of uncertainty'**; this seemingly paradoxical protocol reminds us that things do not always go to plan – certainly in day-to-day teaching. This does not negate the obvious and essential need to plan, structure, develop policy and seek to manage our part of the world as teachers with some reasonable consistency. It does reduce the unrealistic and stressful striving for perfection. As one wag once wrote 'for every complex problem there is a simple solution and that solution is wrong.'

▶ **Commitment to face-to-face communication**. This feature of collegiality is evidenced in dyadic and team contexts. What staff value is the moral support that face-to-face communication gives from the transitional 'whinge' (coping support and moral support) through to the effective practice of collaborative communication in teams (Rogers, 1999).

DEVELOPING A SUPPORTIVE COLLEAGUE CULTURE

In consciously supportive schools the 'consciousness of colleague support' moves from a 'personal construct' to a 'social construct' in key areas such as:

▶ **purposeful teaming** with an emphasis on professional planning and coping strategies, as well as aspects of social coping such as managing stress by directly talking things though with one's colleagues in the team. Such professional sharing provides relief not just of normative stress but it also works for shared, 'owned' solutions in the longer term.

▶ **a consistent, school-wide policy framework and practice**, particularly in the naturally stressful area of behaviour management and discipline.

▶ **back-up support in discipline situations,** notably in the use of short-term 'time-out' practices and conflict resolution processes with difficult students, classes and even parents! Such back-up is essential in enabling and supporting teachers (and students) in crisis management and follow-up.

▶ **professional feedback** and professional development as teachers consciously take time to reflect on their teaching, pedagogy, management and discipline.

Colleague support, of course, cannot be mandated: '. . . we cannot mandate what matters to effective practice . . . the more complex the change the less you can force it' Fullan, 1993, (p 21). The anomaly regarding colleague support is that a

central feature of our professional life and personal coping cannot simply be forced from (or on) our colleagues; it is more likely to characteristically occur when staff value, endorse, encourage and model collegiality and support within an ecology of mutual regard rather than mandating such support. This is particularly important for school leadership a concept explored by Fullan (1987, 1993), Hargreaves (1993). Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) point out that 'many staff initiatives take the form of something that is done to teachers rather than with them, still less by them' (p 17).
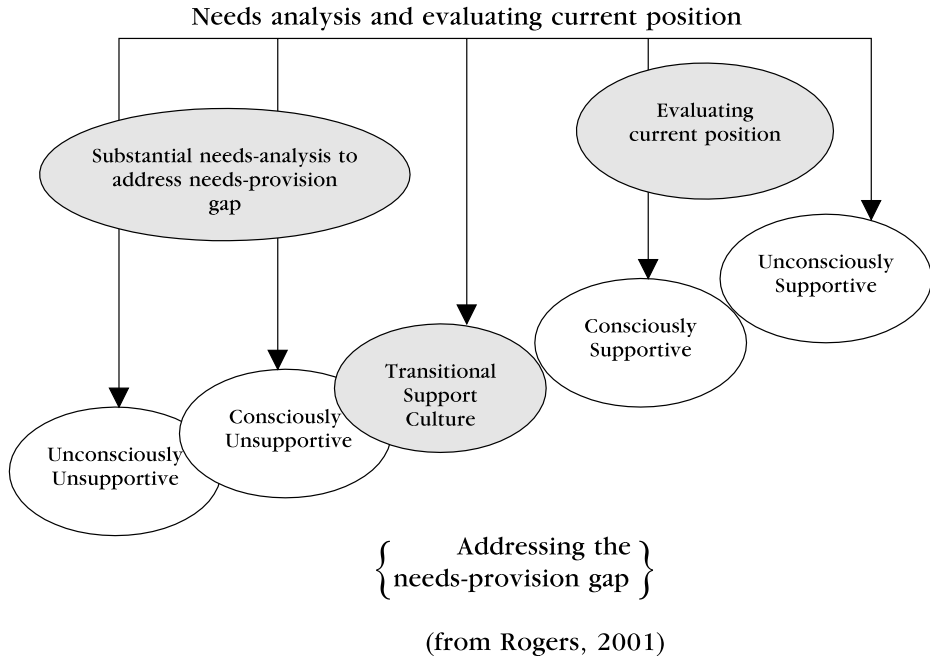
Form *follows* function; the function of colleague support is to meet colleague needs. One of the ways to determine colleagues' needs is to undertake a periodic school-wide review (informally and formally). There is a difference between perceived needs and espoused needs. Where a school leadership takes colleagues' needs seriously (based on such a review) staff feel valued, supported and motivated to engage with change.

This is a point acknowledged in the Elton Report on School Discipline (1989):

'The way in which a school is run can be changed. We know this is not easy. Changing the nature of an institution can be a long, complicated and uncomfortable process. We recognise that the difficulties involved in breaking into the vicious circle of ineffective performance and low morale can be very great, and that some schools may need a great deal of help in achieving this breakthrough. We are convinced however from what we have seen in schools, from research evidence, and from experiences described to us in other countries that successful change can be achieved. The first or important requirement is a positive commitment to change by the head teacher and other senior staff. The second is for them to carry as many of the rest of the staff as possible with them and to be open to their suggestions.' (p 90)

Schools are at differing levels of school-wide 'consciousness' about colleague support; its provision, its normative expression, its 'utility' (Rogers, 2001). If a school is to move beyond dyadic and 'transitional' expressions of support it will need to provide regular (and dependable) forms, options, structures, processes and policies that enhance and enable colleague support, particularly in the area of behaviour management and discipline.

Those 'more consciously supportive' schools will often be evaluating their current expressions of, and provision of, colleague support. Some schools may only need to fine-tune or adapt current structures or policies. Other schools will need to engage in substantial change. Those schools that are less consciously supportive will need a more extensive needs-analysis, as their structure and forms of support may be limited, unhelpful or not focused on (or meeting) colleague needs. In such schools awareness-raising about the benefits of focused colleague support as well as addressing appropriate forms and structures will also be helpful (Rogers, 2001).

Needs analysis and evaluating current position

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{Addressing the} \\ \text{needs-provision gap} \end{array} \right\}$$

(from Rogers, 2001)

Figure 2. Needs analysis 'continuum' and consciousness of support

In pursuing adaptive facility, from the 'typology of consciousness of support' (see Figure 2) schools will enter into some kind of school-wide review that will need to address issues such as:

► Where is the school now in terms of its 'consciousness' of colleague support?
► How *acknowledged* are the individual and collective needs of colleagues?
► What changes need to be made to address, and seek to meet, staff colleague support needs?
► What changes to current forms, structures, processes or plans will we need to make?

While the review process will vary in degree, the fundamental process will:

► Acknowledge the need for colleague support beyond natural, transitional, expressions of support.
► Identify needs (espoused needs) and evaluate needs-provision among staff.
► Appraise the needs-provision gap (some needs will be more generic, some more specific).
► Decide on the focus for any changes and possible areas for change (always

explaining any changes and providing support for the change process), emphasising mutual responsiveness and mutual regard for 'our common lot'.

▶ Develop action options and plans to enhance and motivate task engagement and management.

▶ Commit to an on-going review process.

CONCLUSION

The English novelist George Eliot said 'What do we live for if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?' At the heart of colleague support is that shared humanity, without which any meaningful common activity is much more difficult. The days are long gone when teachers had to work in professional isolation, anxious perhaps that others might negatively assess and rate them. Collaboration and collegiality are not simplistic notions or some easy formula for 'successful support'; rather they are the necessary condition for likely, constructive and purposeful support in our profession. When colleagues believe and feel they are valued, both their basic human needs as well as their professional needs are more likely to be met. When a school leadership *consciously* values, affirms, models and develops supportive options, structures, policies, teaming and behaviour, then there is a basis for an ecology of support. When the 'protocols', noted earlier, are normatively present (even on our 'bad days') teaching will not be as stressful as often, as long – indeed, within such an ecology of support our teaching will have that professional collegiality necessary for professional assurance and professional esteem.

ENDNOTES

Note: Some of the material in this article is drawn from an article in *Educare*: Colleague Support: Making a difference (2000); some is drawn from Rogers, 1999 (unpublished doctoral dissertation) and some from a work in print (Rogers, 2001), *I get by with a little help . . .*

1 As Middlebrook (1974) notes 'The two-person group (dyad): it is important to note (that) a great deal of social interaction takes place on a one-to-one basis (pp 412–416).

2 A point well made by Hargeaves (1994): 'Trust can be invested in persons or in processes – in the qualities and conduct of individuals, or in the expertise and performance of abstract systems. It can be an outcome of meaningful face-to-face relationships or a condition of their existence' (p 39).

3 As Shaw (1987) develops this concept he notes that: 'trust-based relation-ships presuppose a broad measure of shared goals within the institution, so that there is ample scope for social rather than economically calculated exchanges. From the point of view of school management, ''goodwill''

which assumes a readiness to undertake unspecified obligations is much preferable to contract, where attempts are made to impose particular obligations – low trust is made more explicit, non-reciprocal exchanges are demanded, and a power conflict atmosphere draws a step nearer.' (p 783).

4   Saul (1990) gives a salient reminder here: 'The virtue of uncertainty is not a comfortable idea, but then a citizen-based democracy is built on participation, which is the very expression of permanent discomfort. The corporatist system depends on the citizen's desire for inner comfort. Equilibrium is dependent upon our recognition of reality, which is the acceptance of permanent psychic discomfort. And the acceptance of psychic discomfort is the acceptance of consciousness.' (1996, p 195).

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