

**TITLE:**

How Can Schools and Teachers Benefit from Human Resources Management? Conceptualizing HRM from Content and Process Perspectives

**AUTHOR:**

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**4Fold by: Nadine Keyworth****Problems posed in the article:**

*How do you take a model not originally designed with educational institutions in mind and effectively apply it to education?*

*How do you adjust from control based to commitment based in education?*

**Purpose of the Article:**

To propose how the HRM model can be utilized in schools

**Beliefs held by the author:**

HRM is key in raising school performance, specifically by increasing teacher competence and commitment resulting in an increase in teacher performance which will yield higher student outcomes.

HRM model increases employee participation and engagement by motivating teachers to contribute to school objectives.

HRM model continuously evaluates and makes improvements to the system through built in opportunities for continuous professionalization.

HRM model increases the recruitment and retention of teachers and decrease turn over.

**Main Ideas**

- 1. HRM as a method for enhancing employees' commitment to their work and their own professional development**

**Examples/personal reflections**

Teachers are given the opportunity to participate in professional development of their choice. It is making the assumption that all people are able to self-regulate and will make choices that will move their practice forward. Administrators can performance manage and encourage; we cannot mandate professional development. There is a level of trust inferred through the process. However, many teachers do not take professional development opportunities as a chance to move forward instead choosing to do something 'fun'.

- 2. Need to take a commitment approach to HRM not a controlling approach.**

When administrators tell teachers how to do their jobs, they may get compliance; however, the teacher will most likely not be engaged in their learning. It's important for leaders to develop trust in their staff. Giving them opportunities to be part of the agenda of the school learning and culture. However, how what about teachers who just want to be told what to do and don; want to be part of the conversation?

<p><b>3. Ability-enhancing HRM practices which includes staffing and professional development</b></p>	<p><b>Staffing</b> is a key component of this domain. The idea that there needs to be a ‘fit’ between the teacher and the job. However, in a union system with a collective agreement that favours seniority first, best fit is not always possible. A teacher can be qualified for a job but may not be the best fit for them. This would be why then, principals should always interview, even in when they must select the most senior person. This way principals can be very clear about what the job will look like for the teacher at the school. Interestingly, when I was in Edmonton, seniority was not the deciding factor in hiring, fit could be considered, for their collective agreement made this possible. To move towards an HRM model, principals would need to have more say in who they can hire and be less tied to seniority.</p> <p>This section also suggests that teacher teams be more involved in who should be hired at schools, noting what their team needs. Again, this is not possible, because principals cannot hire teachers based on whether they will ‘fit’ in with the rest of the team.</p> <p>Finding a professional development model that allows for a balance between what a teacher needs to develop and what they may want to develop is difficult to balance.</p> <p>Many principals I have worked for have tried to include professional development in staff meetings. This has been met with mixed results. If it is placed near the end of meetings, time has often run out. If it is poorly rolled out, teachers don’t fully engage. Also, what do you do with teachers who are always missing meetings for a variety of meetings. Professional development days can be problematic to, for they are established with the understanding that teachers will do what is best for their own professionalization.</p> <p>The idea of career stage teacher based professional development really resonated with me. I truly believe that we need different opportunities out of professional development at different stages of our careers, and often teachers are not going to the right professional development for what they need. This may be why some mid to late career teachers disengage from pro-d because it is the same old thing again.</p> <p>Finally, I love the idea of working into the week</p>

	<p>opportunities for informal professional development, such as reflective journaling. It is interesting to me that we have teacher candidates coming into the profession who are journaling and reflecting throughout their learning at university and through their practicum, and then this just stops. Some may have the self-regulation to continue, or the self-awareness to do this. But imagine the power if we had built in time each week to reflect on our practice. Actually, sit down and spend time formally reflecting through journaling or with a 'reflective buddy'. Many practicing teachers do this with a trusted colleague, but not always. Many of us know that we should spend more time reflecting on our practice, but it becomes one more place where we just feel that lack of time to formally do so. Instead we vent, instead of thinking about how we can improve. Why did things go the way they did? Is it my lesson, is it my routines?</p>
<p><b>4. Motivational-enhancing HRM practices which includes performance appraisal and reward systems</b></p>	<p>As pointed out by the author reward systems in schools are extremely difficult. In BC, the collective agreement does not allow for teachers to be rewarded with extra pay. Therefore, it is necessary to find more creative ways to reward teachers for their hard work. Thank you notes go a long way, when principals take the time to show gratitude for what they have done for the school. Acknowledging the good work of teachers at staff meetings and in parent newsletters also goes a long way. It makes teachers feel valued in the hard work they are doing.</p>
<p><b>5. Opportunity-enhancing HRM practices which includes job design and participation</b></p>	<p>At middle school we are given built in collaboration opportunities to work with our teams. This is a great opportunity for us participate in the decision-making process for our grade. As a member of the leadership team, I am also given a teacher-voice at our leadership meetings each month. Having a team of teachers work with administration is powerful, for as leaders we are given the chance to share our teams opinions on what is important for us and our students.</p>
<p><b>6. Process perspective and Creating a strong climate: When employees perceive HRM as distinctive and consistent, and if they perceive consensus, they understand what is expected of them and what will be rewarded, and this will</b></p>	<p>When a staff feels valued by their principal, I have seen them do really great things together for students and each other. Teacher's perform when they feel they are heard; they don't necessarily need to get their way. If they understand the choices their leaders make, then</p>

<p><b>enhance employee and organisational performance.</b></p>	<p>they are more likely to work hard for the leaders in their buildings.</p>
<p><b>7. Success depends on how teachers perceive HRM and team leaders are key to creating consistency and consensus.</b></p>	<p>This can be applied to the idea that in middle schools and high schools we have teacher team leaders from different departments. These teacher team leaders are a critical piece of any initiatives. These leaders help principals and vice-principals implement schools vision and goals. Team leaders, when used properly can help shape culture of tier school. Part of their role should be helping with the creation of consistency and consensus in schools. However, some principals do not fully leverage the power of the team leader in helping them with building culture and vision. However, if only being used as messengers, then the ability of them being able to enhance learning in the building is not being fully executed.</p>

**REFLECTION:**

At the school level, principals need to provide instructional leadership by “improving the quality of teaching and learning for students and adults”(BCPVPA, 2019, p. 7) Furthermore, “Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for effectively influencing culture and relationships to support student and adult development, engagement, and learning”(BCPVPA, 2019, p. 8). Both of these concepts are echoed in the article, as goals that can be reached through the implementation of human resource management (HRM). After reading the article, two big questions resonated with me: 1. How can administrators help refine teacher engagement through tailoring professional development opportunities to meet individual teacher’s needs? 2. How can we achieve ‘best fit’ in schools in a unionized environment when the collective agreement does not have a suitability clause?

The complexity of what professional development is and how it should be structured is something I think about regularly, and it has been a passion area of mine for year. I am often frustrated by teachers who take the ‘easy way out’ with professional development opportunities and waste this valuable opportunity by choosing to ‘opt out’ or by taking ‘easy’ professional development. I believe this helps feed a belief held by some that we are just ‘playing’ or ‘doing nothing’ on these days. The idea that “professional development policies should cover all the stages in teachers’ careers and think of how guidance for pre-service-teachers should be shaped, how

induction programmes for young teachers could best be organised and what should be offered to experienced teachers” fits my view of what could be possible with professional development in schools (Runhaar, 2017, p. 644). Teachers need to develop from where they are at with goals in mind of where they would like to be. Recently, I went to a large conference where the district pays the expensive entry fee of close to \$400. There are many offerings, for all levels of teachers, like suggested in the article; furthermore, obviously the expectation is that teachers attend sessions each day for the duration of the conference. However, what happens when teachers go to sessions that really don’t fit their stage of their career. Is the professional development then effective? One of the teachers in our group was an early career teacher, who was at a different stage of her career than many of the rest of us who attended. Instead of attending sessions that would move them forward, they followed teachers and administrators into the sessions they had chosen for themselves. Because this teacher is newer to the professions, the sessions about school culture and teacher coaching had no purpose or relevance for them at this stage in their career. If a teacher is still learning how to manage and create culture in their own classroom, how can they attend to and understand how to participate in conversations around school and district culture? After this conference I believe strongly that there is value in helping early career teachers develop personal growth plans around their professional development. Early career teachers should be mentored and guided towards sessions that fit where they are in on their own learning journey. Quality mentorship and targeted professional development will help early career teachers feel more supported in their early years, helping them actively develop their skill set.

Secondly, I got ‘stuck’ on the idea of hiring best fit in schools. Unfortunately, in British Columbia, the collective agreement does not allow principals to hire teachers that are the best fit for their schools. Instead, they must honour the seniority rules. This makes full implementation of HRM difficult, because if teachers are working in environments where it isn’t a good fit, how are they able to fully feel engaged in the culture of the school? There are ways principals can tweak where staff teach and with whom, but they cannot get rid of teacher or deny hiring a teacher because of suitability. This is unfortunate, for I have seen teachers ‘stuck’ in places where they took a position because it was close to home; unfortunately, their style of teaching didn’t jive with the culture of

the school. As a result, they became disengaged from teaching, hiding out in their room. I don't believe that any teacher goes into teaching to just get a paycheque, other factors lead them to withdraw from the joy of teaching and into their own rooms. We need to find a balance between what the collective agreement mandates and what is truly best for teachers and students. However, this is a huge issue to tackle with a lot of complexities surrounding it and in an ideal world would be an easy fix, but in our current realities, not possible.

### **References**

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