

## DELEGATION AND THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

JOHN McMAHON

If the Principal of the Catholic Secondary School is to lead a normally human life, that person must delegate. Over the past few years, when looking for some literature on journal writing, I came across a book by Morton Kelsey, titled *Adventure Island*. In this book the author describes the activities of his own personal life, according to the following headings:

My work, a job

My wife and family

My writing

My lecturing and teaching

My religious practice, prayer and meditation, journal writing, and time in sacramental life

My time with students and consellees, in person and on the telephone

My recreation, time in rest and to play, to enjoy life, to exercise.

My reading time for filling the gaps in my knowledge

My friends, keeping in touch with them by telephone or in person

My sleep

My wasted time

I have recently had the opportunity of reflecting on how I spend my personal time. Basing my categories on those of Morton Kelsey, I have decided on the following.

School or meetings

Family or community

Religious practice

Recreation and social

Study and wider reading

Sleep

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This analysis made me realise how little I control how I spend my time. For example, as a school principal, I now realise how much time I could spend on study and wider reading. The data listed below indicates the amount of time, per day, I spend on these six areas of activity, the left-hand column referring to week days and the right hand column to Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. These calculations have been carried out over the past two years.

*Principal's personal time*

	<i>WD</i>	<i>S.S. HOL</i>
School or meetings	8.1	2.1
Family or community	3.8	4.9
Religious practice	1.6	1.7
Recreation and social	1.6	4.9
Study and wider reading	0.9	1.4
Sleep	7.9	9.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total (hours)	23.9	24.0

In acknowledging that my average time at school or at meetings is 8.1 hours, per day, I realized how important it is to choose the tasks that I carry out while at school. This necessitates the delegating of numerous other duties to deputy principals, and other people in positions of responsibility. Patrick Duignan, of the University of New England, has produced a package, titled *Self analysis diary for educational administration*. He refers to the following six areas which are a basis for analysing how a principal occupies school time. These areas are listed as:

- Talking face-face
- Talking on telephone
- Reading or looking at any printed material
- Writing
- Other desk work
- Other activities

My analysis of the time I spend at work has been recorded according to the amount of time I spend with the following groups of people, whether in meetings or on an individual basis:

The results of this analysis are indicated below:

<i>Principal's Work Time</i>	
Executive	1.1
Staff	2.7
Parents	1.2
Students	0.3
Ceremonial	0.6
Catholic Education	2.0
Wider Community	0.2
Total (hours)	<hr/> 8.1

Finally, therefore, there are three questions which I believe are relevant for those of us in principal roles within Catholic Secondary Schools.

How do I want to spend my time daily?

How do I want to spend my time at school?

How much say do I have about how I spend my time?

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## EDITORIAL

Articles of survey, analysis, research or opinion, in any field of educational administration (from preschool to tertiary) and associated interdisciplinary studies are welcome for future issues from anywhere in the world. Reviews and suggestions are also sought.

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