

**Name:**

**Lecturer:**

**Course:** EDSU 630 School Improvement.

**Book:** Enhancing Student Achievement: A Framework for School Improvement,  
Charlotte Danielson (2002).

**Question:** Write a report that describes two of her ideas that you might like.

Growing up as a child I can clearly remember how the schools I was enrolled in were organized. In Basic (kindergarten) school there were just three (3) classes having three teachers of which one of the three was the principal therefore, the principal had to teach a class and also do school administration on a daily basis and if the cook was not present within the canteen for a day a teacher/ principal had to take on that mantle too. So, I would say that these individuals were all rounder's even though it displays forms of disorganization. In Primary (Middle School), there was structure but it was based on "My Job Description, and I will not go outside of it". The Principal did "School Administration" but he never did much interaction with the students and was considered as an "Authoritarian" by most persons. Teachers have their individual classes but, on the other hand some students who were labeled as being "slow" was placed aside/ ignored by that class teacher. This teacher would pay more attention the "brighter students", if it came to the point where the class teacher got frustrated with these students they were streamed into a lower class at any time within the school year. In High School there was a change of how the principal, teachers, student, parents and also community members operate. Although it wasn't a traditional high school the principal created a warm school atmosphere/culture which leads itself into a tradition. The principal was an "Authoritative Leader", thus causing other teachers to display this type of leadership within their form classes and also to the other students they also teach based on subject areas.

The Book titled Enhancing Students Achievement: A Framework for School Improvement written by Charlotte Danielson (2002) spoke about how one as "Educators" can create a good school structure for students to realize their fullest potential in all aspects of life, despite the present situations they are in the cycle of ignorance and poverty can be broken. Only if us, as educators/leaders will make a change within our students lives, knowing that we cannot sit back and wait for other persons to react then follow. The Author also spoke about ensuring that upon leaving school, these students will have confidence, skills and also a solid education. The two ideas

the Author presented on, which I can relate to are School Organization (Chapter 5) and Team Planning (Chapter 11).

Why are some schools successful and some are not? The answer that I can give is that a school is successful when all units within it is organized causing it to run in an orderly manner. If there is a unit within the school that is disorganized then it will affect each unit in some way or the other. School Organization refers to how schools arrange the resources of time, space and maximum effect on students learning chapter 5, pg 48, paragraph 1. I had previously mentioned my basic (kindergarten) school having three teachers including the principal taking on various tasks within the day depending on the availability of auxiliary staff/ teachers. In my opinion, I would consider this school as be unorganized even though I had obtained my early years of formal education within this particular type of setting. My belief is that "too little hands make the work harder to be completed". In a situation as this an unorganized school affects the students learning, knowing that the teacher/student learning interaction would be reduced preventing the students from achieving their fullest potential academically. Also, bearing in mind that students left unsupervised can create mayhem for everyone causing the environment unsafe. In Chapter 5, pg 45 Danielson also spoke about the components of school organization one aspect I believe in is having schedules for the days, week and months activities that will take place. This will allow everyone to be more organized, whenever a staff member is absent for the day preparations would have been in place causing the day's activities to run smoothly. Being informed ahead of time is a reliable asset for anyone who is an organized individual.

Grouping Strategies within chapter 5 pg 46, is another area that I also believe in, I had previously mentioned the primary school that I had attended where students were considered slow/lazy little and also given little or no attention; then as time passes they would be taken to a lower stream class. Grouping strategies is quite important in any class, within the second paragraph the author spoke about grouping students she stated that "Short- Term skill grouping, however, can be highly beneficial for all students.....Hence teachers need flexibility to create skill groups when needed, particularly for concepts that are prerequisites for later lessons." Whenever a child is grouped according to his skilled level within a particular subject area he/she will be motivated by working hard to accomplish the task given by the teacher, knowing that it is not above their level. He/she can then move through a smooth pace transitioning from one level to the other, without being labeled or cast aside. Other than helping the students grouping can also help the teacher where the level of frustration would decrease knowing that the learning levels of each child varies, therefore they have to create different types of learning strategy based on the group the students are placed in.

"United we stand, divided we fall", I have learnt about this quote at a very early stage in life. Within a school setting to be united shows that everyone are willing to work in a collaborative manner putting all differences aside, no matter what obstacles that may arise. Team Planning is very important within a school, it show how organized the school is which is based on the actions of the educators working with their students. In chapter 11, pg 93 paragraphs 2 the writer spoke about team work, she stated that "Teachers who work in team can exercise greater flexibility when forming instruction group than they could be working on their own, as students in any group have different levels of knowledge and skills" . The High School that I had attended was based mostly on "Team Planning", where it was instigated by the principal, who believed in it thus everyone came on board. Based on my understanding the Principal before never did that so the school was not performing the way it should. I could remember us a student's excelling in all areas academic and extra- curricular, this was due to team planning done by teachers. I could remember there was some evening when teachers of various departments would stay back after work hours to plan for their classes, even if one had a problem with a particular class they would come up with a solution. How do I know this? I was always at the side of the staff room studying or catching up on class notes. Within the same chapter on pg 93, sub topic "Background" of Team Planning Danielson (2002) stated that "When teachers plan instructions together their focus is on the continuous improvement of student learning; when they come together to improve instruction, on the other hand, their focus is on enhancing their own skills". Improving oneself as a teacher will motivate another to improve themselves thus the positive energy will be transferred to the students your even teaching. The most important thing about team planning is that even though it is created for students to benefit them are not the only ones, who do other teachers benefit from it including the parents and community members. Being that as a parent whenever I see my child learning and achieving in all areas within school, I am willing to be more actively involved with my child's education being actively involved with all aspect as it relates to the growth and development of the school.

As educators we need to see how well we can improve our schools, knowing that all schools are not perfect and needs help/ improvement in one way or the other. Most times we have already identified the problems but choose not to take up the mantle to adjust, minimized or improve the problem even though it is breaking down the existing standard set by previous individuals. We take the back seat by criticizing the individuals who have a desire to make a change. It's now time for us to continue within the race by receiving the baton, knowing that at the end of the day we can make a great deal or a difference within our education sector challenging the students into the right direction.

*My head was spinning as I was reading your report. Maybe that is because your head was spinning as you read Danielson's book. Her book makes my head spin – all those suggestions for what teachers should do. Why those suggestions and not others? I guess we should just take it on faith that what she suggests will be a good idea in our specific school/classroom.*

*Good report -- 4*