

https://dspace.org/

Exploring principals' institutional instructional leadership practices in primary schools: a case study of two underperforming township primary schools in Ekurhuleni South District, Gauteng province

Vilakazi, Nicholas Sibusiso

2016

http://hdl.handle.net/10539/20786

Vilakazi, Nicholas Sibusiso (2016) Exploring principals' institutional instructional leadership practices in primary schools: a case study of two underperforming township primary schools in Ekurhuleni South District, Gauteng province, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/20786>

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

EXPLORING PRINCIPALS' INSTITUTIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF TWO UNDER-PERFORMING TOWNSHIP PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN EKURHULENI SOUTH DISTRICT, GAUTENG PROVINCE



by

NICHOLAS SIBUSISO VILAKAZI

STUDENT NUMBER: 444100

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2015ECE005M

A thesis submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education

Supervisor: PROF. FELIX MARINGE

UNIVERSITY OF WITWATERSRAND, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

JOHANNESBURG, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES..... VII

DECLARATION..... VIII

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS IX

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND DEPARTMENTAL CIRCULARS..... X

ABSTRACT.....XI

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY 1

.....1

1.1 Introduction.....**1**

1.2 Problem Statement.....**2**

1.3 Main Argument.....**4**

1.4 Research Assumptions.....**5**

1.5 Aim of the Study.....**6**

1.6 Research Questions.....**6**

1.7 Background to the Study of Instructional Leadership.....**7**

1.8 Motivation of the Study.....**7**

1.9 Structure of the Research.....**8**

1.10 Conclusion **8**

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 10

2.1 Introduction.....**10**

2.2 Overview of Instructional Leadership in South African Primary Schools 10

2.3 Conceptualisations of Instructional Leadership 11

2.4 Instructional, Transformational and Distributed Leadership Models 15

2.4.1 Transformational leadership.....15

2.4.2 Distributed leadership.....16

2.5 Conceptual Framework.....16

2.5.1 Defining the school mission 16

2.5.2 Promoting school climate.....17

2.5.3 Managing the instructional programme.....19

2.6 Other Dimensions of Instructional Leadership.....21

2.6.1 Talking with teachers (dialogue) to promote reflection.....21

2.6.1.1 Making suggestions.....22

2.6.1.2 Giving feedback 22

2.6.1.3 Modelling.....23

2.6.1.4 Using enquiry and soliciting advice and opinions 24

2.7 Under-Performing/Failing Schools.....27

2.8 Findings from International and South African Empirical Studies 28

2.8.1 The International perspective 28

2.8.2 South Africa 31

2.9 Challenges Facing Principals as Instructional Leaders 32

2.10 Conclusion 32

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 34

3.1 Introduction.....34

3.2 Data Collection.....34

3.2.1 Methods of data collection.....35

3.2.1.1 Interviews.....35

3.2.1.2 Questionnaires 36
3.2.1.3 Observation 36

3.2.2 Data collection procedures **37**

3.2.3 Methods of data analysis **37**

3.3 Ethical and Legal Considerations **38**

3.4 Challenges **39**

3.5 Conclusion **40**

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA 42

4.1 Introduction **42**

4.2 Description of school A **42**

Land'ukukhanya Primary School and the Immediate Community **42**
4.2.1 Presenting the teacher questionnaire data 43
4.2.2 Presenting the teacher interview data 45
4.2.3 Presenting the principal's interview data 47
4.2.4 Presenting the observation of the principal's instructional practice 48

4.3 Description of school B **49**

Thuto-Lefa La Sechaba Primary School and its Immediate Community **49**
4.3.1 Presenting the teacher questionnaire data 50
4.3.2 Presenting the teacher interview data 56
4.3.3 Presenting the principal's interview data 57

4.4 Conclusion **59**

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS 60

5.1 Introduction **60**

5.2 Themes that Impact Positively on Instructional Leadership **60**

5.2.1 Strong knowledge of curriculum issues 60
5.2.2 Protecting the instructional time 61
5.2.3 Shared Instructional Leadership 61

5.3 Themes Having a Negative Impact on Instructional Leadership **62**
5.3.1 Lack of a clear mission 62
5.3.2 Mission not constantly articulated 63
5.3.3 Principals do not promote professional development 63
5.3.4 Teachers are not engaged in professional learning 64
5.3.5 Lack of instructional supervision and evaluation by principals 65
5.3.6 Principals do not set high expectations and standards for learners 66
5.3.7 Insufficient resources to carry out instructional responsibilities 67
5.3.8 No incentives for teachers and learners 67
5.3.9 High visibility not maintained 68
5.3.10 Elderly teachers are too tired to teach 68

5.4 Conclusion **69**

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 71

6.1 Introduction **71**

6.2 Summary **71**

6.3 Limitations **72**

6.4 Recommendations **76**
6.4.1 Consider qualifications for practicing as a principal 76
6.4.2 Review policy on union participation for principal recruitment 77

6.4.3 Development of teachers as researchers of their own practice **77**
6.4.4 Introduce performance contracts for principals 77
6.4.5 Develop a strong visible principal presence 78
6.4.6 Contextualise professional development of school leaders 79
6.4.7 Change the attitude of prospective and current principals about principalship 80
6.4.8 Strengthen district support across all underperforming schools 80

6.4.9 Principal recruitment to be administered by knowledgeable panels on educational issues 81
6.4.10 Eliminate all instructional time wasters 81
6.4.11 Encourage the formation of and participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and research activities amongst teachers 83
6.4.12 Innovative ways of teacher development must be developed and implemented 83
6.4.13 Co-ordinate the components of Curriculum for teacher development 84
6.4.14 Time to specialise in primary school learning 85
6.4.15 Replace elderly teachers with young ones 86
6.4.16 Strategise means for increased parental involvement in the school matters of their children 86
6.4.17 Conclusion 87

REFERENCES 89

LIST OF APPENDICES 93

APPENDIX A: ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER 93

APPENDIX B: GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER 94

APPENDIX C: EKURHULENI SOUTH DISTRICT RESEARCH APPROVAL 96

LETTER 96

APPENDIX D: CONSENT LETTER 97

APPENDIX E: INFORMATION SHEET 98

APPENDIX F: 99

LETTER REQUESTING TO CONDUCT RESEARCH TO THE PRINCIPAL AS SITE MANAGER 99

APPENDIX G: PRINCIPAL OBSERVATION PROTOCOL 100

APPENDIX H: THE PIMRS 101

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1: A model of instructional leadership

Figure 2: An example of a class visit/lesson observation schedule

Figure 3: Example of a feedback schedule

Figure 4: Teachers' perspectives on the principal's IL functions at Land'ukukhanya Primary School

Figure 5: Teachers' perspectives on the principal's IL functions at Thuto-Lefa La Sechaba

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research report is my own and unaided work. Wherever other sources have been used, they have been acknowledged. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree, award or examination at any other University.

Signature: …… on this day the 09th June 2016

Nicholas Sibusiso Vilakazi

Student Number: 444100



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to give thanks to the Lord God my redeemer for the staying power, health, wisdom and insight to commence and to complete my research, for in Him there is no failure.

My heartfelt gratitude and appreciation is directed to:

My wife Yvonne, 'Sisi' for her support, care, love, patience, courage and understanding that kept me strong and motivated through and through.

Dr Zakhele Mbokazi, my former supervisor for his inspiration and understanding.

Professor Felix Maringe, my supervisor for his guidance, coaching and mentoring throughout the writing process.

Doctor Georgia Parshiadis, her husband Professor Petrus Parshiadis of Cyprus for their presentation at the Edu-Lead International Conference which shed some light on Instructional Leadership and for sending me very useful articles on IL.

Professor Jan Heystek of the University of Potchefstroom and his team for organising the International Leadership Conference (April 2015) which gave me insights on Educational Leadership (particularly Instructional Leadership) from the African, European and American perspectives.

My colleagues Innocent Sibomana, Brianneta Hoosier and Gloria Erima for their coaching and sharing of ideas.

Mxolisi Kunene, my friend and colleague for his enduring support throughout the research process.

Javier Ndayeni and Zile Zwane, my colleagues for giving me the strength and courage to work harder.

The principals and their staff members from the two schools for their willingness to be part of my study, this final report wouldn't have been possible without them.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND DEPARTMENTAL CIRCULARS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ANA	Annual National Assessment
ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
CCEM	Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers
CIRCULAR 38/2007	Framework for a District-Wide Continuous School Improvement Strategy
CMM	Curriculum Monitoring Model
CPTD	Continuous Professional Teacher Development
C2005	Curriculum 2005
DoE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ELAA	Education Laws Amendment Act
ESSP	Education School Support Project
GA	General Assistant
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HoD	Head of Department
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IL	Instructional Leadership
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
MBWA	Management By Wandering Around
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MGSLG	Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance
MTL	Management of Teaching and Learning
NCS	National Curriculum Statements
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
PIMRS	Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale
PIRLS	Progress In Reading and Literacy Studies
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Plan
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statements
SACMEQ	Southern and east African Consortium for Measurement of Education Quality
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SASA	South African Schools Act
SASP	South African Standards for Principalship
SDT	School Development Team
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
TIMSS	Trends In Mathematics and Science Studies
USA	United States of America

ABSTRACT

Instructional Leadership has been researched extensively in secondary schools in South Africa, and not much is known about it in South African primary schools. Instructional Leadership is concerned with teaching and learning and the behaviour of teachers in enhancing student or learner performance as the core business and function of schools. However, many principals in the low-functioning township primary schools do not conceptualise instructional leadership as such. Many of these schools continue to perform poorly academically. In a longitudinal study for the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) it was discovered that more than 500 school principals in Gauteng province did not conceptualise instructional leadership as their main role. The management of teaching and learning was ranked only seventh out of ten leadership activities. Principals shift their instructional leadership role to deputy principals and Head of Departments. This research explores principals' structional leadership practices in relation to student achievement. This study employs a mixed-method approach which incorporates a qualitative and quantitative design and observation of principals' instructional leadership practices. The participants in the study involve all levels of the teaching force which includes the principal, the deputy principal, the Head of Department (HoD) and the teachers in two township primary schools. The research findings reveal that school principals shift their instructional leadership to their lower level management colleagues.

Key words: *Instructional leadership, distributed leadership, student achievement, under-performance, curriculum management*

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Since 1994 the South African education system has experienced unstable learner performance levels characterised by low learner achievement in predominantly township schools. This situation was influenced by, amongst other factors, the eradication of the apartheid curriculum and the introduction of the then new Curriculum 2005 (C2005) in 1997 which was also followed by other curriculum reform policies, for example the Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS, Grades R-9); National Curriculum Statements (NCS, Grades 10-12); and currently the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). This instability resulted in multitudes of teachers getting confused and frustrated about what and how they were expected to teach their learners. Township schools implemented C2005 immediately after it was promulgated. However, teachers in these schools were not properly trained in the implementation of the new curriculum, which focused on everyday knowledge and was not rich in scientific concepts. Unfortunately the learners were at the receiving end of these misperceptions. On the other hand, former Model C schools delayed the implementation of the confused C2005, and instead sifted through and used the methodology while continuing with the old content knowledge that taught scientific concepts. Teachers in these schools, unlike their township counterparts, had the knowledge of curriculum and methodology and therefore knew what was best for their learners.

The school ethos in the former Model C and private schools is that teachers working at these schools must have their own children of school-going age attend these schools so they do not miss curriculum meetings and teacher development workshops because of their obligation to fetch their children from other schools. This is not the case with township school educator parents. Whilst others critique township school teachers for not having their children attending schools where they are employed and blame them for offering a service of low standard and quality because their children are better off than their township counterparts, educator parents who move their children from township schools where they work to former Model C schools or private schools argue that they do so because they want quality for their children. The educators maintain that in the schools where they are employed there is lack of shared leadership practice by principals, meaning that their suggestions are not considered by

management, and that school principals are not strong instructional leaders. For example in most township primary schools classroom observation by Heads of Department (HoDs) and deputy principals is a rare practice. School principals retreat to their offices and shift the instructional responsibility to the HoDs (Hoadley et al, 2009).

The purpose of this thesis is to establish the relationship between Instructional Leadership and student academic achievement. I contend that weak Instructional Leadership is the main contributor to student underperformance.

This chapter introduces the study by addressing the following: statement of the problem; purpose statement; the main argument; research assumptions; aim of the study; research questions; background to the study; motivation of the study; definition of concepts; and the structure of the study.

1.2 Problem Statement

The state of South African education is currently disheartening. Research reveals that about 80% of schools are dysfunctional (De Clercq, 2008; Taylor, 2008); most of these schools are located in the townships. The other 20% of schools are in suburban settings. The conclusion which can be drawn from these statistics is that school children from the townships perform worse than their former Model C counterparts. These figures necessitate probing the leadership practices of the principals in Managing Teaching and Learning (MTL) (Bush & Glover, 2009) in the settings where there seems to be a problem, i.e. the townships. Msila (2005) discovered that black parents continue to move their children away from township schools because of the belief that township schools, or the historically black schools, are failing their children. Among other factors cited by parents is that management in various historically black schools continue to deteriorate in the face of teacher apathy and incompetence. Not only do parents in general move their children away from township schools, but so do educator parents working in township schools. The reason they cite is that they want quality education for their children. Does this mean these teachers do not provide quality education where they work? Not at all, they say; the fingers point to the principals, who do not ensure schools have sufficient resources to carry out their instructional responsibilities effectively. However, it is worth noting that school effectiveness research reveals there are a few township schools that excel under challenging contexts (Christie, 2010) and a few suburban schools that do not excel as purported by many, (Ekurhuleni District, 2014).

The South African historical school context is one in which principals were involved in the actual teaching of students; currently most school principals no longer teach, as their work is characterised mainly by administrative duties. This has resulted in principals losing touch with the realities of the classroom contexts, i.e. "how learners learn, what problems they experience in their quest to acquire knowledge and what pedagogic improvements are necessary for teachers to help their students achieve better results, and issues of discipline". Nowadays the scope of work of the principal has been increased due to the pressures of school effectiveness, efficiency and accountability and the global trends which include amongst others decentralisation of governance powers to the parents, league tables, and marketisation of education.

"The expectations have moved from demands of management and control to the demands for an educational leader who can foster staff development, parent involvement, community support, and student growth, and succeed with major changes and expectations" (Van der Berg et al., 2011: 3). These demands, which they have serious challenges to address, have shifted the principals' focus from being instructional leaders.

Instructional Leadership prowess is a key prerequisite if schools are to contribute to student achievement; its effects supersede those of other leadership models. Robinson (2007: 21, in Bush & Glover, 2009) suggests that the closer leaders are to the core business of teaching and learning, the more likely they are to make a difference to students' academic performance.

This research recognises that principal competencies, which include amongst others skills, knowledge and capacity, are important in determining the role played by the principal in managing teaching and learning. The current South African education context, as in other parts of Africa, is that school leaders (principals, deputies and middle managers) are not prepared prior to their appointments; they are appointed on the basis that they excelled as classroom teachers and on the assumption that that they will also do well as managers (Bush & Oduro, 2006). Unfortunately this does not seem to be the case. Kitavi and Van der Westhuizen (1997: 251-2) argue "good teaching abilities are not necessarily an indication that the person appointed will be a capable educational manager". Principals, deputy principals and HoDs do not undergo any preparatory training as managers or leaders. This status quo creates a problem because it means that the managers are not enlightened about an array of leadership models or styles, in particular Instructional Leadership, what it is, and how leaders can apply it in their contexts to bring the best out of their students. The question that needs to

be asked is how can school principals lead instruction successfully when they are not prepared for principalship in general and have not done an in-depth study of Instructional Leadership in particular? However, the focus of this study is not based on the competencies or qualifications of principals but rather on their practice, on what they are doing to manage teaching and learning.

Instructional Leadership is one of the key functions in which every school principal or educational leader should ideally be able to perform to ensure learners achieve the best results from the learning and teaching processes. Teaching and learning is the core business of schools, therefore schools must make every effort to ensure that teachers, managers and governors are serious about ensuring education provision to the communities they serve is meaningful. To this end school leadership must transform the learners for the better. For example, education must eradicate their state of poverty; provide them with knowledge to lead healthy lives and skills to survive in the complex, ever changing and dynamic world. Schools need to simplify the complex world we live in through education.

The purpose of this research is to explore the Instructional Leadership practices of two school principals given that the schools they head are categorised as underperforming or 'Priority Schools'. The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE, 2014) decided to rename the category of these schools as "priority" schools because they intend to give these schools first priority in terms of monitoring to improve learner outcomes, and because 'underperforming' sounds derogatory.

In this study I will be investigating the extent to which two school principals practice instructional leadership to enhance learner achievement. Instructional Leadership and MTL will be used interchangeably. The research will be a mixed-method design employing the qualitative and the quantitative approaches.

1.3 Main Argument

In this research I argue that the shifting of Instructional Leadership functions from the principal down to the lower levels of management without accountability and mentoring leads to the responsibility not being carried out effectively. In their study of Instructional Leadership of South African Secondary Schools principals Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2009) found that "a majority of South African principals do not regard the oversight of curriculum and teaching as their main task, but feel that responsibility for this lies with subject

heads and HODs". This being the case, instruction becomes ineffective because teachers become lax and underperform, which ultimately results in learner underperformance. This research recognises that the new policy framework has drastically changed the work of school principals (Motilal, 2007; Christie, 2010) from Instructional Leadership to an office-based executive who is detached from the school's instructional activities. I discuss this issue later in the literature review. School principals do not have the capacity to challenge the system that created these conditions. They seem to be silently in denial of the fact that they are not leading and managing instruction in their schools but focusing more on administrative duties. This denial is further exacerbated by the districts and provincial education departments not emphasising Instructional Leadership as the core and essential responsibility of the schools. Hallinger and Murphy (1987: 55) argue that "district decision-makers must reduce the barriers that keep principals from performing their Instructional Leadership role". On the issue of district expectations, Hallinger and Murphy (1987: 56) raise this concern: "that most districts place a higher priority on managerial efficiency and political stability than on instructional leadership which is reflected in norms simply understood by both principals and district office administrators". They propose that school districts use appraisal methods that not only serve accountability purposes, but also assist principals in their professional development. Being in denial is like a person suffering from a chronic ailment and taking no action to address it; the results are fatal. If principals continue to ignore Instructional Leadership functions and focus on other activities, education will suffer because it is teaching and learning that schooling is all about and if that is non-existent, so is education, and schools must cease to exist.

1.4 Research Assumptions

Instructional Leadership is concerned with teaching and learning, including the professional learning of teachers as well as student growth (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). The principal is the nerve centre of school improvement. When principal leadership is strong even the most challenged school will thrive. When it is weak schools fail or badly underperform (Fullan, 2006). Fullan further maintains "all examples of school failure include weak or ineffective leadership" (2006: 5). On the basis of poor student achievement or underperformance this research makes the following assumptions:

- The overall student under-performance or underachievement is as the result of the principals' lack of focus in managing and leading teaching and learning (Reynolds in Stoll & Myers 1998, Stoll in ditto, Teddlie and Stringfield 1993).

- The new policy framework has changed the focus of principals' work as a instructional leader (Motilal, 2007; Christie, 2010).

- Lack of teacher development strategies by the principal as an instructional leader to address teachers' poor pedagogical content knowledge and subject knowledge contributes to learner underachievement (De Clercq, 2012).

1.5 Aim of the Study

The purpose of schools is first and foremost the provision of quality education where effective teaching and learning take place. Schools are managed and led by principals and their management teams; districts set achievement targets or benchmarks to try and improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. If schools perform below the set targets, they are categorised as underperforming or dysfunctional and principals are summoned to account for their schools' failure. Therefore, the general aim of this research is to investigate the relationship between Instructional Leadership practices of principals in underperforming schools and learners' underperformance in two primary schools.

1.6 Research Questions

This research centres on the principals' role in leading and managing teaching and learning in their schools. The following question is useful in gathering accurate and relevant information:

- How does the school principal contribute to effective teaching and learning as a core duty of the school?

In order to respond to the above question, the following subsidiary questions were examined:

- What strategies does the school principal set up to effect teaching and learning as a core business of the school?
- What are the barriers in leading teaching and learning at the school?
- How do teachers, HoDs and deputy principals perceive the role of their principals regarding Instructional Leadership?

1.7 Background to the Study of Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership is a concept that emerged in the early 1980s, influenced largely by research that found effective schools usually had principals who stressed the importance of leadership in this area (Brookover & Lezotte, 1982). In the first half of the 1990s, attention to Instructional Leadership seemed to waver, displaced by discussions of school-based management and facilitative leadership (Lashway, 2002). Recently, however, Instructional Leadership has made a comeback with increasing importance placed on academic standards and the need for schools to be accountable.

1.8 Motivation of the Study

The study was influenced by my observation as a teacher in a school where the principal did not maintain high visibility. Often, his presence was detached from the teachers' instructional practice; he was in his office doing administrative duties or having meetings with parents and the School Governing Body (SGB) chairperson. He was too occupied with non-instructional activities such that it was unclear whether he behaved in a manner anticipated by the school leadership perspective as an educational or instructional leader, i.e.management of teaching and learning to enhance learners' performance (Bush & Glover, 2009). Hoadley et al., (2009: 381) found that principals do not spend the majority of their time on aspects of instructional leadership but rather on administrative duties and learner discipline. Teachers enjoyed the laxity because they knew the principal and the management team did not manage teaching and learning by ensuring it took place through lesson observations. The principal delegated the task of instructional and curriculum management to the deputies who in turn delegated the responsibility to the HoDs. The middle managers, confused by their role as HoDs, were further perplexed by the additional roles assigned to them by senior management. Adding further to the HoDs' stress was that a majority of the teachers, affiliated to the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), were against the idea of lesson observations by management, ascribing this to union stance. So, if a manager came to class to observe lessons, they were not welcomed. There were no internal developmental programmes planned to address these gaps. Everybody just assumed they knew what was expected of them. The school did not function as an organisation, teachers were not collegial and operated as silos. As a result, the school did not do well in terms of learner performance. The shocking statistic that 80% of schools in South Africa, a majority of which are located in the townships, are dysfunctional, De Clercq, [ibid] was a key motivator that led to this study.

1.9 Structure of the Research

The research study will be reported in six chapters.

Chapter 1: This is the chapter in which the background and context of the study, introduction, and statement of the problem, research assumptions, aim of the study and research questions are spelt out. The chapter also gives a brief account of the motivation of the study and clarifies the concepts.

Chapter 2: In this chapter, I present the review of the literature, where various books, journals, articles, government legislation and reports are explored. The chapter also gives an understanding of IL and underperformance, the core concepts of the study.

Chapter 3: In this chapter I present the research methodology wherein I outline the research design, methods of data collection, and analysis. The chapter also highlights the target population, data collection procedures and sampling.

Chapter 4: In this chapter I present data collected through questionnaires, interviews and observations. The data is presented per school. First, I provide a brief description of each school, then present teacher questionnaire data followed by teacher interview data, and lastly the observation data of the principals' instructional practices.

Chapter 5: In this chapter findings based on the themes that emerged from the empirical data are analysed, interpreted and discussed.

Chapter 6: In this chapter I present the summary, limitations, recommendations, and conclusions. Recommendations are influenced by the experience I have amassed over the years through my practice as a teacher and middle manager, and my observations of the diversity of school principals I have worked with in six schools in a period of 20 years.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the background to the concept of instructional leadership which provides some idea about what the researcher plans to do in the ensuing chapters. The chapters that follow provide insights to principals' Instructional Leadership practices in two underperforming township primary schools as evidenced in empirical research. As a point of departure the next chapter begins with an overview of Instructional Leadership in South African primary schools followed by the conceptualisations of the concept by various

scholars. Other typologies of leadership that form a good leadership mix with Insstructional Leadership will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide "links between existing knowledge and the research problem being investigated, which enhances significance, and to provide very helpful information about methodology that can be incorporated into a new study" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010: 73.) The chapter presents gathered information from a diverse range of researchers and sources, which include books, journals, articles, circulars and other government legislation and reports on instructional leadership and underperformance. Current issues and debates are highlighted in the views of the researchers on the afore-mentioned matters. As a point of departure, this chapter provides an overview of Instructional Leadership in primary schools in South Africa. The chapter then provides an account of Instructional Leadership as conceptualised by different researchers and draws the distinction between instructional, transformational, and distributed leadership. The two latter models have a positive effect on Instructional Leadership. A discussion of the theoretical framework which provides in-depth knowledge about instructional leadership follows. Next, the empirical findings on the practice of Instructional Leadership from international and local studies are outlined. This is followed by a discussion on the failing of underperforming schools. Finally, the challenges facing school principals in implementing successful Instructional Leadership practices are discussed.

2.2 Overview of Instructional Leadership in South African Primary Schools

Instructional leadership and management of primary school principals have rarely been mentioned in literature available in South Africa (Motilal, 2007). Most of the South African research on the subject has been conducted in secondary schools. However, international literature has an abundance of Instructional Leadership studies conducted in primary schools. Particular mention must be made of Southworth (2002), who has conducted extensive studies of Instructional Leadership practices of principals in primary schools in England.

This research report draws evidence mostly from research conducted in South African secondary and a few primary schools in terms of context specifics and from international research in terms of relevance to 'elementary' or primary schools, which is the main focus of this study.

Christie (2010: 695) argues "the different expectations of school leadership together with a new policy framework have radically changed the work of the school principal. An unanticipated – and largely unacknowledged – consequence is that the complexity of this may have contradictory effects that impede, rather than assist, school improvement in South Africa". Motilal's (2007) view resonates with Christie's that policy change has resulted in principals doing many tasks in schools, these involve finance, public relations work, management of School Governing Bodies (SGBs), educators, support staff, parents and learners, maintenance and staff development programmes. The question this research asks is 'What is it that principals are doing to turn around underperformance in their schools'?

Research by various scholars confirms there is probability for 'instruction' (the core purpose of schools) to suffer if school leadership is not competent to manage the school (Christie, 2001; Fleisch & Christie, 2004; Roberts & Roach, 2006; Taylor, 2007, in Christie, 2010). That being said, this study does not pre-empt the findings that will emerge empirically.

2.3 Conceptualisations of Instructional Leadership

Different researchers define Instructional Leadership differently; therefore an understanding of the concept lacks uniformity and is thus problematic. There is a lack of agreement around what the term means (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2010; Southworth, 2002). Since the definition of the concept is an issue within educational circles, Hallinger and Murphy (1987) suggest Instructional Leadership be defined in terms of observable practices and behaviours that principals can implement.

Southworth (2002) argues further that there is a lack of empirical evidence supporting the agreed upon definitions. Some useful and generally accepted definitions follow hereunder.

According to Smith and Andrews (1989: 23), the school principal as:

> *instructional leader* means that the principal is perceived by close associates as (1) providing the necessary resources so that the school's academic goals can be achieved; (2) possessing knowledge and skill in curriculum and instructional matters so that teachers perceive that their interaction with the principal leads to improved practice; (3) being a skilled communicator in one-on-one, small group, and large group settings; and being a visionary who is out and around creating a visible presence for the staff, students and parents at both the physical and philosophical levels concerning what the school is all about.

Leithwood et al. (1999: 8, in Bush, 2013) argue that Instructional Leadership assumes that the critical focus for attention by leaders is the behaviour of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students.

Lezotte (2001: 5, in Kirk & Jones, 2004) argues that the role of the principal as the articulator of the mission of the school is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the school:

> Instructional leadership is about effectively and continually communicating the mission of the school to staff, parents, and students. In addition, the principal understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program.

Bush (2007) refers to Instructional Leadership as a type of leadership that puts an emphasis on managing teaching and learning as the core activity of educational institutions. Southworth (2002) stretches this definition further by including the professional learning of teachers, which has an influence on student growth.

Southworth (2002: 77) distinguishes between broad and narrow views of the concept; the latter focuses on teacher behaviours that influence student learning, a view which supports Leithwood's point above. The broad view of Instructional Leadership focuses on teacher cultures and school organisation.

In their study with a group of elementary school principals, Mitchell and Castle (2005: 416) found that when asked to define Instructional Leadership the principals' comments confirmed an array of understandings. On the one hand, some articulated the broad view of the concept that "Instructional Leadership is fundamentally about teaching people how to teach people"; on the other hand, others directed their opinions to purpose, that is "Instructional Leadership is all about improving instruction for students".

Hoadley and Ward (2009) argue that at the core of Instructional Leadership is the notion of 'distributed leadership'. In the light of the discussions above, it is evident that contemporary principalship is inundated with leadership activities so excessive that the principals' core function of leading and managing teaching and learning is not often considered by many principals. It would be prudent for principals to assume a distributive leadership role in their schools to allow other members of management or staff to lead instruction in order to realise the schools' instructional goals rather than to leave Instructional Leadership in the hands of one person.

Fullan (1991: 161 in Mestry, 2013), concurs with Hoadley & Ward and explains that "instructional leadership is an active, collaborative form of leadership where the principal works with teachers to shape the school as a workplace in relation to shared goals, teacher collaboration, teacher learning opportunities, teacher certainty, teacher commitment and student learning" (Mestry, 2013 p.120). The National Guidelines for head teachers in Wales (National Assembly for Wales, 2005: 3, in Bush & Glover, 2009: 7) state "one of heads' main functions is 'leading learning and teaching'; the head teacher creates the conditions and structures to support effective learning and teaching for all through working with the staff and governors". This resonates with the South African Standard for Principalship (DoE, 2014: 14) that "the principal working together with the Governing Body and School Management Team and others is responsible for assuring the quality of teaching and learning in the school".

Mestry (2013: 120) defines Instructional Leadership as "those actions that the principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in students' learning". Mestry explains that "in a practical perspective, instructional leadership means that the principal ensures educational achievement by making instructional quality the top priority of the school" (2013: 120).

It is evident from the definitions provided by researchers above that contemporary instructional leadership will work better if paired with distributed leadership.

Horng and Loeb (2010) argue that these conceptualisations of Instructional Leadership follow a traditional and conventional way of theorising the concept. They call for a different view of the concept, one that includes broader personnel and resource allocation practices as central to instructional improvement. A different view of Instructional Leadership emphasises organisational management for instructional improvement rather than day-to-day teaching and learning. Shatzer et al. (2013) counter-argue these newer conceptualisations of the concept on the basis that the current study of Instructional Leadership theory does not include the additional dimensions attributed to these newer conceptualisations. They further argue that these newer conceptualisations should rather be considered different theories of leadership, which show promise but lack an extensive empirical support (Mayrowetz, 2008; Reitzug, 2008).

Horng and Loeb [ibid] have conducted extensive empirical studies to support their conclusions. A six-year study of school leadership commissioned by the Wallace Foundation concluded that school leaders primarily affect student learning by influencing teachers' motivation and working conditions. By comparison, a leader's influence on teachers'

knowledge and skills has far less effect on student learning. Thus, the authors caution against conceptions of Instructional Leadership with a narrow focus on classroom instruction (Louis et al., 2010). Horng & Loeb's [ibid] research at Stanford University has reached similar conclusions. They have examined school leadership in three large urban school districts, surveying more than 800 principals, 1 100 assistant principals, and 32 000 teachers. In addition, they did more than 250 full-day observations and comprehensive interviews of principals. Despite the differing contexts and district policies represented by these three districts, the authors consistently found that schools demonstrating growth in student achievement are more likely to have principals who are strong organisational managers. These principals do not fit the conventional definition of instructional leaders, but do fit the new, expanded definition of Instructional Leadership that includes organisational management. This account shows ample empirical evidence that strengthens Horng and Loeb's (2010) findings, thus defeating such sceptics' views, such as Shatzer et al. (2013) that these newer conceptualisations would rather be considered different theories of leadership, which show promise but lack extensive empirical support. The proponent of Instructional Leadership, Hallinger himself seems to agree with Horng and Loeb that the effects of principal leadership are largely indirect. In a study conducted by Hallinger and Heck (1998) it was found that principals appeared to impact student learning by creating conditions in the school that would have a positive impact on teacher practice and student learning (Hallinger, 2012).

The draft document on the South African Standards for Principalship concurs with the thinking above. The expectation is that principals need to know about building and developing a nurturing and supportive environment for effective teaching and learning, as well as the approaches and current trends in building and developing the school as a learning organisation. Therefore, Horng and Loeb's new conceptualisation of Instructional Leadership is in line with the South African framework for principalship in South Africa and is thus relevant. From the discussions above it seems quite evident that transformational and distributed models of leadership can be a matching pair to Instructional Leadership.

The next section draws a distinction between instructional, distributed and transformational leadership.

2.4 Instructional, Transformational and Distributed Leadership Models

The reason for choosing the two models of leadership as integral to the discussion on Instructional Leadership is that of the several leadership theories in literature, instructional and transformational leadership have received the most attention (Robinson et al., 2008 in Shatzer et al., 2013). Literature supports and recommends both models of leadership for school principals (Louis et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 2008 in Shatzer, 2013). Previous studies reveal that Instructional Leadership accounts for higher gains in student academic achievement than transformational leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003; Robinson et al. 2008 in Shatzer et al., 2013). As Hallinger and Murphy (1987) have pointed out, Instructional Leadership lacks a uniform conceptual model (discussed in this chapter), while transformational leadership, some researchers have proposed, is ideal to address this gap.

The second leadership model included in this discussion is 'distributed leadership' because there is consensus amongst researchers that as principals have difficulty focusing on leading learning, sharing leadership with others can make a difference in student achievement. As mentioned above, this resonates with Hoadley (2008) who places distributed leadership at the core of Instructional Leadership. Though this research is confined to Instructional Leadership practices of the school principals, it is significant to mention the other models because no one model can work alone to produce desired student results considering the fact that school principals are so overwhelmed by management activities other than managing teaching and learning. The purpose of including the other models is to show how they have an effect on Instructional Leadership. To avoid repetition, the following section will focus only on a distinction between transformational and distributed leadership.

2.4.1 Transformational leadership

Gunter (2001: 69 in Bush & Glover, 2009) defines transformational leadership as a model which is about "building a unified common interest between leaders and followers". Leithwood et al.'s (1999: 9 in Bush & Glover, 2009) definition is rather detailed; they maintain transformational leadership assumes that the central focus of leadership ought to be the commitments and capacities of organisational members. Higher levels of personal commitment to organisational goals and greater capacities for accomplishing those goals are assumed to result in extra effort and greater productivity. It follows from these definitions that contemporary principalship must consider integrating this form of leadership to complement Instructional Leadership.

2.4.2 Distributed leadership

This form of leadership is not about an individual, as in the form of the school principal operating as a lone wolf also known as trait leadership, but is about a group or network of individuals in which group members pool their expertise (Bennet, 2003: 3 in Bush & Glover, 2009). Harris (2004: 16 in Bush & Glover, 2009) argue that "successful heads recognise the limitations of a singular leadership approach" and adopt a form of leadership "distributed through collaborative and joint working".

The discussions of the two models of leadership above give insights into how Instructional Leadership can be matched with other models to yield positive learner achievement. This suggests that where principals' work is characterised by a legion of other non-instructional activities which keep them from performing their core duties, they can create conditions for organisational members to lead through the application of the afore-said models. This means instructional, transformational and distributed, or shared, leadership are a good leadership mix which can yield higher gains in student achievement.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

This research is embedded in the following concepts, outlined by Hallinger and Murphy (1987).

2.5.1 Defining the school mission

This dimension has to do with the leader setting a clear vision of what school goals need to be accomplished. These goals are developed and communicated to the entire school community. In this way the school leader instils a sense of shared purpose by all and that purpose is accountability and instructional improvement. This is relevant for South Africa because the South African Standard for Principalship provides that:

> the school principal must work with the School Governing Body (SGB), the School Management Team (SMT) and others in the school's community to create a shared vision, mission and strategic plan to inspire and motivate all who work in and with the school and to provide direction for the school's ongoing development.
>
> The vision and mission encapsulate the core educational values and moral purpose of the school and takes into account national educational values and the values and beliefs of the school's community. Shaping and sustaining school improvement and for empowering the school to be active and effective in its ongoing development, the strategic planning process is fundamental, (DoE, p. 13).

2.5.2 Promoting school climate

This dimension is about norms and attitudes of the staff and students that influence learning in the school. The principal is involved directly and indirectly in shaping the learning climate. S/he maintains high visibility in order to communicate priorities and model expectations; creates a reward system that reinforces academic achievement and productive effort; establishes clear, explicit standards that embody the school's expectations of students; protecting instructional time; and selecting and participating in high-quality staff development programmes consistent with the school mission. Figure 1 below shows the model which explains the principal's instructional role at whole school level relevant to the South African context.

Looking at the conceptual framework, and taking into consideration that it was developed outside of the South African context, I developed a model which employs the similar frame of concepts by Hallinger and Murphy (1987) which I believe can work better to address Instructional Leadership from the perspective of the South African context. The model describes the operations of the principal as a co-leader with his/her teachers. The principal is central to the effectiveness and success of the school.

The principal is responsible for communicating the goals and objectives of the school which are contained in the school's vision and mission. S/he is also required to define these goals in terms of observable practice by all. The model outlined in figure 1 places the principal at the centre of the instructional practice which involves all role players in the day-to-day teaching and learning activities. It suggests that at the end of each year the principal and the SGB facilitate a planning meeting or conference to be attended by all the stakeholders where the school vision and mission developed at the level of school governance is outlined in the presence of the entire school community including departmental officials at macro level (district or provincial). Upon pronouncing and defining the school vision and mission, the school plans its instructional practice for the coming year.

Bush et al. (2008 in Bush & Glover, 2009) simplified Hallinger and Murphy's (1987) three dimensions. They claim that a principal who focuses strongly on management of teaching and learning would undertake the following activities:

- Oversee the curriculum across the school.

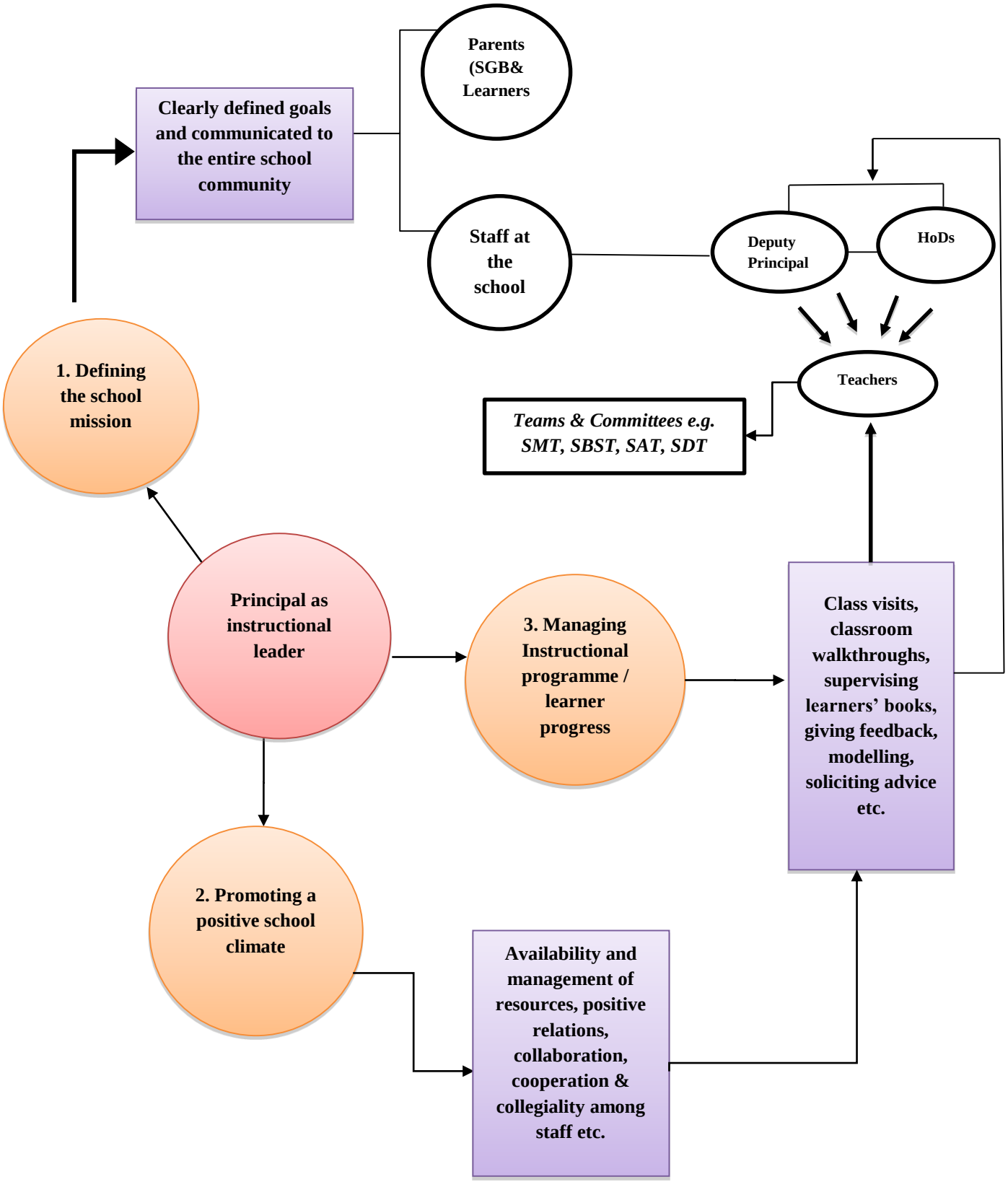


Figure 1: A model of Instructional Leadership (adopted from Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; and Kruger, 2003)

KEY: Principal as the central figure in the school's instructional programme

Principal's instructional leadership dimensions

Instructional activities at different levels of the school organisation

- Ensure that lessons take place.
- Evaluate learner performance through scrutiny of examination results and internal assessments.
- Monitor the work of HoDs, through scrutiny of their work plans and portfolios.
- Ensure that HoDs monitor the work of educators within their learning areas.
- Arrange a programme of class visits followed by feedback to educators.
- Ensure the availability of appropriate Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM).

In a study conducted by Louis et al. (2010) in London on the Specific Leadership Practices Perceived to Help Improve Instruction, 83.3% of principals and 37.7% of teachers supported the activity of monitoring teachers' work in the classroom. It emerges from these statistics that a majority of teachers still do not support being visited in their classrooms. It also emerges that not only does this affect schools in South Africa but is a universal problem. Kruger (2003) and Bush et al. (2010) argue that leaders must ensure a sound culture of learning and teaching in their schools at all times. The concept "sound culture" seems somewhat inexplicit, however the assumption I deduce from it is that leaders must create conditions conducive for teaching and learning.

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997: 43) identify the following aspects of a sound culture of learning and teaching: "where all role players value the processes of teaching and learning; where practices reflect a commitment to teaching and learning; where the resources needed to facilitate this process are available; where the school is structured to facilitate these processes". These are the dimensions and activities against which the principal's instructional behaviour will be analysed utilising the responses of the rating scale from the teachers. These will be discussed in-depth in chapter 5 of this report. The research employs the "data-near device" which refers to "moving theory to talk to data; relating theory to teachers" account or data leading to generalisations.

2.5.3 Managing the instructional programme

The principal's role under this dimension is to work with staff in the evaluation, development, and implementation of curriculum and instruction; coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student progress.

RAINBOW PRIMARY SCHOOL: SCHEDULE OF CLASS VISITS (Lesson observation) TERM 2 13th April – 12th June 2015

DEPARTMENT: ENGLISH (FAL), LIFE SKILLS & LIFE ORIENTATION GRADES 4-7 *HOD: Mr N.S. Vilakazi*

Name of teacher	Subject	Period no.	Time	Venue	Grade	Week	Date	Done tick(/)	
								Yes	No
1. Mrs TJ Buka	English (FAL)	1 & 2	08:00 09:00	Grade 7C	7	3	28 April 2015	✓	
2. Mr X Khombani	English (FAL)	4 & 5	09:30 10:45	Grade 7C	7	3	28 April 2015	✓	
	Life Orientation	6 & 7	11:15 12:15	Grade 7D	7	4	29 April 2015	✓	
3. Mrs H Zethu	English (FAL)	1 & 2	08:00 09:00	Grade 6A	6	3	29 April 2015	✓	
4. Mr Y Mfuleni	English (FAL)	3 & 4	09:00 10:00	Grade 6B	6	3	29 April 2015	✓	
	Life Skills	7	11:15	Grade 5D	5	5	15 May 2015	✓	
5. Ms O Mtshweni	English (FAL)	1 & 2	08:00 09:00	Grade 5D	5	3	30 April 2015	✓	
6. Mr Z Hlobani	English (FAL)	10 & 11	13:15 14:15	Grade 5B	5	3	30 April 2015	✓	
	Life Skills	2 & 3	08:30 09:30	Grade 5B	5	5	12 May 2015	✓	
7. Mr Q Vilankulu	English (FAL)	3 & 4	09:00 10:00	Grade 4C	4	4	06 May 2015	✓	
	Life Skills	1 & 2	08:00	Grade 5A	5	4	07 May 2015	✓	
	Life Orientation	1 & 2	08:00 09:00	Grade 7D	7	5	13 May 2015		✓
8. Ms Moleba	English (FAL)	8 & 9	12:15 13:15	Grade 5A	5	3	30 April 2015	✓	
9. Mrs C Dlula	English (FAL)	3 & 4	09:00 10:10	Grade 4A	4	4	04 May 2015	✓	
	Life Skills	11	13:45 14:15	Grade 4A	4	4	05 May 2015	✓	
10. Mrs R Shoni	English (FAL)	1 & 2	08:00 09:00	Grade 4B	4	4	04 May 2015	✓	
11. Mr S Dladla	English (FAL)	6 & 7	11:15 12:15	Grade 4D	4	4	05 May 2015		✓
12. Mr TM Letshwenyo	English (FAL)	8 & 9	12:15 13:15	Grade 4E	4	4	12 May 2015		✓
	Life Skills	3 & 4	09:00 10:00	Grade 6C	6	5	12 May 2015	✓	
13. Mr N Ngwenya	English (FAL)	6 & 7	11:15 12:15	Grade 6C	6	4	07 May 2015		✓
14. Mr S Tsietsi	Life Skills	5 & 6	10:15 11:15	Grade 6C	6	5	15 May 2015	✓	
15. Ms M Delide	Life Orientation	3 & 4	09:00 10:00	Grade 7C	7	5	19 May 2015		
16. Mr J Tyule	Life Skills	1 & 2	09:00 10:00	Grade 6B	6	4	13 May 2015	✓	
17. Ms N Loine	Life Orientation	8 & 9	12:15 13:15	Grade 7E	7	4	05 May 2015	✓	

Figure 2: An example of a class visit/lesson observation schedule

The principal must be involved in monitoring student progress both within individual classrooms and across grades. According to Louis et al. (2010: 71) managing the instructional programme "includes practices that focus on teaching and learning. They are staffing the

program, providing instructional support, monitoring school activity, buffering staff from distractions to their work, and aligning resources".

2.6 Other Dimensions of Instructional Leadership

Marks and Printy (2003) suggest that principals involve the teachers in a sustained dialogue and decision-making about educational matters in a ploy to enlarge the leadership capacity of schools to improve their academic performance. Their suggestion resonates with Blasé and Blasé's (1999: 359) theme "talking with teachers to promote reflection".

Blasé and Blasé's (1999: 130) empirical research, which they conducted in the USA, reveals two themes and 11 strategies of effective Instructional Leadership, i.e. "talking with teachers (dialog) to promote reflection and promoting professional growth". In the South African context, many school principals are not academically prepared to become leaders, therefore may not necessarily be informed about this literature which suggests they engage in dialogue with teachers for instructional improvement. They retreat to their offices and avoid talking to teachers except to give them directives. However, there are benefits in talking with teachers.

2.6.1 Talking with teachers (dialogue) to promote reflection

This theme resonates with Southworth's (2002: 80) aspect of effective Instructional Leadership, namely: "talking with teachers" (conferencing). On the one hand, Blasé and Blasé's dialogue consists of five primary talking strategies, which include "making suggestions, giving feedback, modelling, using enquiry and soliciting advice and opinions, and giving praise" (1999: 359-360). On the other hand, Southworth's conferencing is described as involving knowledge and skill in the following areas: classroom observation and data-gathering methods; teaching methods; skills and repertoires; understanding of the relationship between teaching and learning data analysis; knowing how to make the conference reflective and non-threatening; communication skills (for example acknowledging, paraphrasing, summarising, clarifying and elaborating on information); and awareness of the stage of development, career state, levels of abstraction and commitment, learning style, concerns about innovation and background of the teacher (2002: 80-81). Southworth makes reference to the five conference strategies for effective teaching and learning set out by Blasé and Blasé above. A brief description of the strategies follows hereunder.

2.6.1.1 Making suggestions

The research findings were that principals made suggestions to teachers both during post-observation conferences and informally in day-to-day interactions. These suggestions were purposeful, appropriate, and non-threatening (a skill which Southworth proposes principals must have). These suggestions were characterised by: listening, sharing their experiences, using examples and demonstrations, giving teachers choices, contradicting outdated or destructive policies, encouraging risk taking, offering professional literature, recognising teachers' strengths, and maintaining a focus on improving instruction.

Amongst these characteristics, I think 'offering professional literature' can have positive effects in enhancing teaching and learning in South Africa because the teachers' practice in most schools is not informed by current research discourses and schools do not even have a single educational journal. One wonders what forms the basis for the decisions leaders make in schools. Some knowledge in the textbooks which schools use become outdated and it is not possible to replace a textbook immediately after new discoveries are made, which nullifies the knowledge already contained in the textbooks. This calls upon teachers to research the subjects they are teaching and to be knowledgeable about their fields of specialisation.

2.6.1.2 Giving feedback

The study further revealed that principals gave feedback that focused on teachers' positive practice. This builds teachers' confidence and encourages teachers to learn more and introspect about their own teaching. Feedback provides more opportunities to make suggestions. It also helps teachers to accept negative feedback without being disheartened and helps them develop an attitude of willingness to take risks.

This is in opposition to the South African context because principals in South Africa are like executives who are office-based and more concerned with bureaucratic functions than teaching and learning. The study noted the principals' positive interactions with students. Principals used informal coaching and mentoring and were in and out of classrooms observing teacher practice. Regrettably, this is not the case in the South African context.

2.6.1.3 Modelling

Modelling entails leading by example more like practising what one preaches. Teachers reported that effective principals demonstrated teaching techniques in classrooms and during conferences. For example, in figure 3 the principal commented that the teacher should have brought honey to class to make the lesson more interesting. Learners would have been able to make self-discoveries of what honey is by using their senses of taste, touch (feeling the honey), and sight (seeing the colour of honey).

FEEDBACK SCHEDULE FOR CLASS VISIT		
Name of teacher: Ms Shoni		
Subject: English (FAL)	**Grade: 4**	
Skill: Listening, speaking, reading, writing	**Tick (✓)**	
	Yes	No
Did the teacher set clear learning objectives and are these objectives clear to the learners?	✓	
Is the introduction arousing the interest of the learners to learn?	✓	
Are the learners actively involved in the lesson experience?	✓	
Does the lesson build on previous knowledge taught?		✓
Lesson content is in line with the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP)?	✓	
Are the activities at the level of the learners in the grade?	✓	
Are the learners disciplined throughout the lesson?	✓	
Teacher has pedagogic content & subject content knowledge and displays confidence in teaching?	✓	
Learners' books observed: 1. Mandla Masango 2. Andries Mathe 3. Juliet Sikhosana		
Support/challenges (teacher): I had to code-switch at times to address learners' barriers to understanding the text or questions because English is their second language**.** Resources are insufficient to teach and learn effectively. Overcrowding of learners affects focus on each learner's individual needs by the teacher. There is a knowledge gap in the learners for example word spacing, spelling, transcription etc. ***Signature: R Shoni*** ***Date: 12 May 2015***		

Figure 3: Example of a feedback schedule

This means that having observed that the teacher did not use sufficient resources to achieve the lesson objectives, the principal may do a demonstration lesson so that the teacher could observe how it could be done differently. Observation should not just end with a comment. In this case the principal could bring into the classroom a flow chart showing the process of honey-making by the bees and how humans use bee products, for example 'propolis' to protect themselves from diseases. The principal will model teaching and learning to emphasise that the teacher needs to go one step further to ensure he/she grasps the content in order for the students to do well in the tests.

2.6.1.4 Using enquiry and soliciting advice and opinions

Effective principals use an enquiry approach with teachers by frequently soliciting the teachers' advice about instructional matters. Using enquiry and soliciting advice yields positive impacts on teacher motivation because it shows that the principal has confidence in his/her teaching staff. Teachers feel encouraged to be reflective about their practice because the principal asks questions about teachers' intentions about what they do in class. This in turn causes teachers to be evaluative about their practice. However, in South Africa teachers are told what to do by referring them to policy, but there is no dialogue between the principal and teacher. It is therefore time for South African principals to change their beliefs and attitudes towards teachers and adopt a talking strategy to enhance teacher performance and student outcomes.

2.6.1.5 Giving praise

As in giving feedback, giving praise has positive impacts on teachers. It targets specific and concrete teaching behaviours.

In an empirical study by Blasé and Blasé (1999) teachers reported that this talking strategy raised their confidence as well as their motivation and efficacy. It made teachers reinforce effective teaching strategies and creativity. Principals' praise made teachers search for new and innovative strategies for teaching on their own because the principal acknowledges the good work they are doing.

In figure 3 the principal's feedback praises the teacher for the good use of flash cards, a good teaching strategy that helps to increase learners' English vocabulary. This gesture by the principal has been proven by research both locally and internationally to boost teacher confidence and uplift teacher morale in schools. Principals also enhanced teachers' reflective

behaviour by distributing professional literature, encouraging teachers to attend workshops and conferences, and encouraging reflective discussions and collaboration with others. This strategy can have positive effects in South Africa, in particular in the underperforming primary schools.

Mitchell and Castle's (2005) study found that elementary school principals viewed IL as having both formal and informal dimensions. The formal dimensions include conferences, workshops, and sessions in which specialists disseminate information to teachers and the principals viewed themselves as having limited capability. In the informal dimension, however, principals saw themselves being more involved through motivating others and creating a learning environment. The principals used these strategies to execute their informal roles: chatting casually with teachers, providing positive feedback to teachers, discussing teaching strategies, arranging mentoring opportunities, modelling teaching, modelling reflection, conducting performance appraisals, and providing materials and resources. These strategies by Mitchell and Castle (2005) (both formal and informal) resonate with Blasé and Blasé (1999) strategies for having a dialogue with teachers on the one hand, whilst on the other hand resonating with Southworth's (2002) strategies for conferencing or talking with teachers. It follows therefore that the findings by Blasé and Blasé in 1999 were confirmed by Southworth in 2002 and by Mitchell and Castle in 2005 but expressed differently. They all agree on the following strategies: promoting/modelling reflection, giving/providing positive feedback, modelling teaching/good practice, and conferencing.

Kruger (2003) suggests specific ways in which leaders can contribute to better teaching and learning relevant to the South African context; they include:

- *Defining and communicating a clear mission, goals and objectives*: He suggests that the mission, goals and objectives must be set up jointly with the staff members to realise effective teaching and learning. Blasé and Blasé (1999) call this principal-teacher interaction.
- *Managing curriculum and instruction*: This must be done in a coordinated manner such that teaching time can be used optimally. He suggests that principals need to support the teaching programme and provide the resources that teachers need to carry out their tasks.

- *Supervising teaching*: This aspect is about the principal ensuring that educators receive guidance and support to enable them to teach as effectively as possible. Here the focus should be more on staff development than on performance appraisal.
- *Monitoring learner progress*: Monitoring and evaluating the learners' progress by means of tests and examinations. Using the results to provide support to both learners and educators to improve as well as to help parents understand where and why improvement is needed. Teachers make use of the analytic tool to analyse the results to develop intervention strategies for both teachers and learners.
- *Promoting instructional climate*: Creating a positive school climate in which teaching and learning can take place. In a situation where learning is made exciting, where teachers and learners are supported, and where there is a shared sense of purpose, learning will not be difficult.

Kruger's (2003) aspect about managing curriculum and instruction is in congruence with Lezotte's (1991: 4) correlate of effective schools: "Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task, the First Generation". Effective school teachers dedicate a substantial amount of classroom time to teaching and learning in the essential skills. A higher percentage of this time students are engaged in whole class or large group, teacher-directed, planned learning activities. As mentioned above, the First Generation correlate standard is a prerequisite condition for the Second Generation correlate standard to happen. The Second Generation focuses on teachers' ability to practise "organized abandonment" meaning that teachers in effective schools are willing to separate the important things from the non-important ones when more curricular content is added and there is no time to cover it all. This is a characteristic that schools in South Africa need to develop so that teachers, at the lower levels than matric, are unable to complete the syllabus.

In a study of schools that have succeeded against the odds, Christie (2001: 5) says it is important to note that her research:

> supports the findings of other research into effective schools and school improvement that 'time on task' is an important ingredient of success. In contrast to many of the schools around them, schools in the study claimed that they used all available time during school hours and sometimes scheduled study time after hours for teaching and learning. Lateness and absenteeism on the part of both staff and students were not condoned and were kept at a minimum.

2.7 Under-Performing/Failing Schools

School underperformance is defined by the GDE (2007: 6) as those schools with "high retention rates, those achieving below 60% pass rates in the Senior Certificate Examination and schools that are achieving more than 60% in their overall pass rates, but whose pass rates dropped by more than 10% in the Grade 12 Senior Certificate Examinations". These can also be referred to as failing schools. As instructional leadership has been researched extensively in secondary schools in South Africa, it is worth noting that it was in 2007 when Circular 38/2007 was developed, and the focus was on secondary schools and not necessarily on primary schools. However, through improvement initiatives all levels of schooling in South Africa are now included. This means that Circular 38/2007 includes primary schools, 60% being the national target. This is so because the Department of Education (DoE) has realised that the poor matric results are caused by learning deficits which happened at the primary school level (Spaull, 2013). Districts also set their own learner performance targets which are normally higher than the national targets. The two schools that this study investigates (Grades 3 and 6) fall under the Ekurhuleni South District whose learner performance target is 83%.

Failing schools are often paralysed, incapacitated and incompetent (53988_Browne_CH_6. Pdf). Whenever innovations pertaining to instruction are introduced in schools, for example C2005, RNCS and the CAPS, principals are seldom considered for training, as focus is on teachers. Principals depend on teachers for feedback. This challenge affects many principals.

Leithwood et al. (2010) argue that the reasons for school failure are rarely one-dimensional or singular. The reasons are multifaceted and interrelated, for example poverty remains a global, social and economic issue and research reveals a relationship between poverty and underachievement. However, in South Africa the government has taken an initiative to establish no-fee schools, categorised as quintile 1 schools (the poorest schools), and the national nutrition programme in order to ensure that the poor learners have access to education by providing them with healthy meals to cope with the academic demands during the formal school day and after. Therefore, poverty is not an excuse for poor learner achievement, but is acknowledged in academic terms as a powerful explanatory factor. Given this account, this research probes the principals' Instructional Leadership practices in underperforming schools. A workload too large for the principal to handle, daily disruptions, lack of support from subject specialists (districts) and parents, are issues that form barriers and constrain principals from executing their duties as instructional leaders with diligence.

Principals see themselves as managers and not as instructional leaders (Taole, 2013). Bush and Heystek's (2006) baseline research for the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) shows that "South African school principals do not conceptualise their role as instructional leaders" (Bush & Glover, 2009: 6). Their study made a finding that the management of teaching and learning was ranked seventh out of ten leadership activities in a survey of more than 500 Gauteng principals (Mestry, 2013; Bush & Glover, 2009; DoE, 2008). At the top of the list was finance management and administration. The evidence suggests that school principals do not devote much of their time leading and managing teaching and learning, which is the core and most important business of the school. This results in poor learner performance in the Annual National Assessment (ANA) and other international standardised assessments like the Southern and East African Consortium for Measurement of Education Quality (SACMEQ) (Taylor, 2008; Van der Berg, 2011), Progress In Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS), and Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), hence the majority of schools are categorised as dysfunctional and/or underperforming or using the new terminology, "priority schools" (DoE presentation, 2012). Figures from the PIRLS study indicate that South African schools spend significantly less time on reading, the foundation for all other learning, than the majority of other countries who participated (Taylor, 2008).

Lack of leadership preparation is another challenge facing school principals to manage instruction effectively. Though this is not the focal point of this research, principal knowledge of the different leadership typologies and their application in the day-to-day management of teaching and learning can contribute to improved learner achievement. Diverse school contexts are major determinants as to which leadership mix schools should employ to bring about enhanced student performance.

2.8 Findings from International and South African Empirical Studies

2.8.1 The International perspective

In a study conducted by Southworth (2002) in the USA with ten school principals, six themes emerged: (1) working hard, (2) determination, (3) positive dispositions, (4) approachability, (5) teamwork, and (6) school improvers. This evidence emerged from research conducted in a small school sample. This is worth noting because Southworth (2002) did research in both large and small schools. One of the two schools under investigation for this research report is a large school with the enrolment of 1 300 learners and the other a small school with the

learner enrolment of 650. The context, in terms of 'school size', matches that of Southworth's, where the principals:

> spoke about wanting to avoid complacency within the school, of pupil results rising, of under-achievement being eliminated, the children's attitudes to learning becoming more positive and of the schools' ethos changing for the better. All of the heads wanted to improve on their previous best. (2002: 83-84)

In a study conducted by Blasé and Blasé in 1998 (in Southworth, 2002: 79) in the USA on "how really good principals promote teaching and learning", the Blasé' findings suggest three interrelated aspects to effective Instructional Leadership behaviour: (1) talking with teachers, (2) promoting teachers' professional growth, and (3) fostering teacher reflection.

Another study conducted by Smith and Andrews (1989) in the USA looked at the actual time principals spend at their jobs. Their analysis confirmed that high school and middle school principals spend more hours at their jobs than do their elementary (primary school) counterparts. The analysis of the study also reveals that the additional time spent by these principals at their jobs is devoted to supervising the students and managing the school. This tells us something about primary school principals. In the South African context it may be that primary school principals are not given as sufficient support as high school principals because of the focus on matric results (see GDE, 2007). I have discussed earlier that Bush and Heystek's 2006 study revealed that more than 500 principals did not conceptualise their role as instructional leaders. In contrast, McEwan's (2003) study with over 500 Illinois school principals in the US identified the following behaviours/skills/tasks as being most critical to the success in the principalship:

- Evaluating staff performance,
- Setting high expectations for students and staff,
- Modelling high professional standards,
- Establishing and maintaining vision, mission and goals,
- Maintaining positive interpersonal relationships,
- Maintaining a visible presence,
- Establishing a safe and orderly environment,
- Developing a School Improvement Plan,
- Establishing an internal communications system,
- Interviewing candidate for teaching positions, and
- Complying with mandated educational programs. (McEwan, 2003: 2)

These behaviours suggest that the principals in Illinois conceptualised their role as instructional leaders. It is no wonder that South African students/learners perform poorly in

international standardised tests, as they come from schools where principals do not see themselves as instructional leaders.

Smith and Andrews (1989) made another important finding: when principals responded to the questions, Why do school principals attach importance to certain dimensions of their jobs?, and Why do they feel that they have difficulty being instructional leaders?, they cited three general barriers that prevent them from doing the Instructional Leadership parts of their job, namely (1) the organisational context of schools, (2) a set of professional norms, and (3) the principal's lack of skills and district expectations. These are the barriers that Hallinger and Murphy (1987) suggest must be removed if we want principals to be strong instructional leaders. Principals said they lack time for supervision of instruction because they do not have adequate secretarial assistance or support staff to handle routine duties; their hands are tied when they try to bring about changes in staff and programmes because of union collective bargaining agreements, and the nature of policy-making. In addition, the administration of policy from the district level often makes them feel unsure of what actions they should perform or make. The latter is typical of South African school principals.

Agunloye (2011) argues that poor leadership begins with lack of an articulated vision, direction that is purposeful, and actions for education that are measurable. Agunloye further argues that poor leadership also manifests when a leader displays lack of knowledge of schools' context and inability to critically identify and analyse the germane needs of the school, the students and the community. The latter point concurs with the principals' response in 1 above (Smith & Andrews, 1989). Louis et al. (2010) also maintain that successful leaders have mastered both the basics and the productive responses to the unique demands of the contexts in which they find themselves.

In the South African context, the many education policies, for example the South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996, the Education Laws Amendment Act (ELAA) 31 of 2007, and the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) 27 of 1996, stipulate a number of activities that school principals must perform, a combination of which makes it difficult for principals to excel as instructional leaders. This has led to the realisation by the DoE that principals are overwhelmed by activities that confuse them and has developed a new draft on the South African Standards for Principalship (SASP, 2014) which has only eight performance standards that principals must focus on. The standards prioritise Instructional Leadership by putting "Leading the Learning School" (p. 8) at the top of the eight performance standards.

This will change the former situation where school principals ranked Instructional Leadership seventh out of ten leadership activities in the Bush and Heystek's (2006) longitudinal study with more than 500 school principals in the Gauteng province, but it will be a long time before the SASP becomes a working document due to the consultative process. Until then, the situation may remain the same if not worse if it is not attended to with the urgency it deserves.

2.8.2 South Africa

Bush et al. (2010: 3), in their study of MTL in Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces found "many principals have only a limited role in MTL". According to the research findings, two out of four Mpumalanga principals do not adopt a proactive management role in this area and could be regarded as laissez faire leaders. One primary school principal restricts his role as an instructional leader to ascertain that teachers and learners are in their classrooms. Some of the principals ensured that teaching and learning takes place by monitoring the work of HoDs.

Hoadley's (2012) review report about teaching and learning in South African primary schools made the following findings: there was lack of print material in classrooms, especially textbooks; lack of opportunities for reading and writing (oral discourse dominates); classroom interaction patterns that privilege the collective (chorusing); low levels of cognitive demand; weak forms of assessment and lack of feedback on learners' responses; and slow pacing. The latter suggests the class worked at the pace of the slowest learner. Hoadley (2012) also reported that slow pacing was detrimental to curriculum coverage. Coupled with this was the erosion of instructional time, both by official and unofficial school activities. Given these circumstances, curriculum coverage is unlikely in many schools. The question one may ask is, What strategies did the principals as instructional leaders use to address the findings as reported? Certainly, if the status quo remains unaddressed, learners and schools will continue to underperform because common examination papers are designed by districts who simply look at the Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) which determine what topics or themes should have been covered by the end of the term and questions are set accordingly. If syllabus coverage is not satisfactory, then learners will fail or underperform.

For example, in the same report, Hoadley (2012) noted problems related to the descriptive features of primary literacy and language classrooms as: lack of learner opportunity to handle books and bound text; limited teaching of reading and writing; students mainly reading isolated words rather than extended texts; little or no elaboration on learner responses;

learning largely being communalised rather than individualised; little formal teaching of vocabulary, spelling and phonics; lack of (good) print material in classrooms; and numerous language challenges where the majority of learners learn in an additional language which is not their home language.

2.9 Challenges Facing Principals as Instructional Leaders

Kruger (2003: 207) identified six factors that contributes to the lack of a sound culture of learning and teaching in some of our schools:

1. Negative attitude amongst learners and teachers which are remnants from the opposition against the segregated education system of the apartheid era.
2. The poor state of repair of school buildings and facilities.
3. Severe shortcomings in the provision of resources, facilities and equipment.
4. Overcrowded classrooms.
5. Lack of management skills needed to deal with the challenges of school management which are crucial to forming a culture of learning and teaching in a school.
6. Poor relations amongst principals, educators, learners and parents.

Hallinger and Murphy (1987) suggest three conditions that must be met before principals can be called upon to be strong educational leaders:

1. District decision-makers must reduce the barriers that keep principals from performing their Instructional Leadership role.
2. Instructional Leadership must be defined in terms of observable practices and behaviours that principals can implement.
3. Assessment methods must generate reliable, valid data on Instructional Leadership behaviour and provide information principals can use in their professional development.

Jenkins (2009: 37) argues "if principals are to take the role of instructional leader seriously, they will have to free themselves from bureaucratic tasks and focus their efforts toward improving teaching and learning".

2.10 Conclusion

It emerges from the review of literature above that instructional Leadrship is about teaching and learning and student achievement. The driving force behind this is the principal, however

the new policy framework prevents school principals from leading and managing teaching and learning the way they ought to and this leads to their schools being categorised as underperforming. This is an issue which raises serious concern and calls upon all stakeholders in education to come together to remedy the situation. Moreover, it is arguable from a critical realist's perspective that the dimensions of Instructional Leadership suggested in literature are ideas developed from contexts where they work which may not necessarily be the case in the South African context. For example, in South Africa the collective agreements between the DoE and the labour unions representing teachers hinder principals from enacting their roles as instructional leaders for fear they may be perceived as oppressors of teachers in their schools. For example, literature guides that principals should do class visits to observe lessons amongst other functions is viewed by some teachers who belong to a particular teacher union as an oppressive strategy that seeks to invade teachers' privacy in classrooms. It takes a very strong and knowledgeable principal to enforce Instructional Leadership in order to enhance student performance. The question is, how many principals in the underperforming schools are skilled and strong instructional leaders and can exercise resilience to improve learner achievement?

It is also worth noting that South African teacher unions played a pivotal role in the struggle against apartheid and are still major stakeholders in decision-making on issues of national education. However, the focus of their agenda must change from militancy to thinking about improving teaching and learning for better student achievement. The next chapter outlines the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present data collection, methods of data collection, the interviews that I conducted with the research participants, data collection procedures, methods of data analysis, and ethical considerations. The ethical considerations focus on steps taken to access underperforming schools, working with participants from these schools and how this affects validity and trustworthiness of findings. Six participants per school were sampled based on their formal appointments as teachers and members of the school management team (SMT). Although the main focus of the study is the principal, members of the school management team were included to maintain triangulation and reduce bias. Initially, parents were invited to participate in the study but they declined. The presentation of the research design and methodology follows hereunder.

3.2 Data Collection

The study follows a mixed-method research design which incorporates qualitative and quantitative designs and observations of the principals' instructional leadership practice. A qualitative research study is an inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010: 395). Two public township primary schools were purposively chosen to participate in the study. Purposive sampling was employed to promote an understanding of the research problem. The participants were chosen on the basis of their formal positions as principals, deputy principals, HoDs, and teachers. The initial plan was to include parents as an instructional support structure, but the few parents who were approached expressed their uncertainty about their security and fear that they might respond in ways that would make the school principal uneasy given the status of the school as an underperforming one, even though it was guaranteed that their identities would not be revealed. Therefore, the researcher decided to leave parents out. The participants were chosen because they were likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena the researcher is investigating (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Southworth (2002) argues that studies of what head teachers had to say about school leadership, particularly in primary schools, need to be

accompanied by studies into deputy headship and other leaders to get their perspectives and expectations of their leaders. He makes reference to Day et al.'s (2000 in Southworth, 2002) study of effective leadership which provides one of the most comprehensive enquiries because it includes the perspectives of teachers, students, ancillary staff, parents and governors, as well as head teachers. Leithwood's introduction to Day et al. (in Southworth, 2002: 74) states "data collected from the teachers about effective heads' leadership tells us something about how well the heads' practice conform to teachers' mental models of what leaders do: their leader prototypes". It follows from this premise that all stakeholders' perspectives and their construction of leadership need to be included because "if leadership is a social construct, then we need to make it truly social and not a singular construction" (Southworth, 2002: 74).

The sampling for this study serves two purposes. First, it serves to facilitate triangulation of the responses to questions regarding instructional leadership and to reduce bias. Second, it serves to obtain the perspectives of leaders at other levels of the management hierarchy.

The research was conducted by collecting data from SMT members and teachers of the two selected township primary schools through interviews, questionnaires, and observation of the principal's instructional leadership practice, which included observing the principal in staff meetings and in the classroom as well as monitoring his/her informal talks with teachers; observing what they say to their teachers that is connected with instruction.

3.2.1 Methods of data collection

The study focused on a sample of two primary school principals one in Katlehong and the other in Thokoza in Ekurhuleni, south of Johannesburg. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews; questionnaires and observation of the principals' practice were used to collect data.

3.2.1.1 Interviews

The interviews focused on several issues, including the interviewees' views about the characteristics of their principals in practice; how the principals led the schools' turnaround strategy; and whether and how the principals influenced the quality of teaching and pupils' learning (Southworth, 2002). Validity and trustworthiness was ensured by the fact that I am a colleague in relation to the research participant. I am familiar with the language of the discourses and debates in the field of primary school education. The knowledge of the

primary school helped me to ask relevant questions during the interviews to ascertain that the research questions are satisfactorily responded to by the participants. During the interviews, the participants sensed that I am well aware of what the teaching practice entails, thus they gave me the true reflection of the practice of their principals to a large extent and where I suspected bias I reflected on their questionnaire responses and indicated to them that their interview responses are in disagreement with what they were saying in the interviews. After observing that the two data collection tools were linked, they were able to give me responses that were balanced between these tools. In this way I am definitely certain that the data is trustworthy, thanks to the triangulation technique.

3.2.1.2 Questionnaires

The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) was employed as an instrument used worldwide to measure principals' instructional leadership behaviour in schools. The questionnaires were used for quantitative purposes to probe the frequency of behaviours as prescribed by the principals' instructional leadership role. The original form of the PIMRS (Hallinger, 1982) contained 11 subscales and 72 behaviorally anchored items. Subsequent revision of the instrument reduced the instrument to 10 subscales and 50 items (Hallinger, 1984a, 1984b). For each item, the rater assesses the frequency with which the principal enacts a behavior or practice associated with that particular instructional leadership function. The item is rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from (1) almost never to (5) almost always. The instrument is scored by calculating the mean for the items that comprise each subscale/job function. This results in a profile that yields data on perceptions of principal performance on each of the 10 instructional leadership functions. The questionnaire also served the purpose of checking for inconsistencies between the way in which the participants responded to the interview questions and the manner in which they responded in the questionnaire. The questionnaire used for collecting quantitative data is known as the PIMRS, which was developed by Hallinger (1987). It is a five-point rating scale: 5 represents *Almost Always*; 4 represents *Frequently*; 3 represents *Sometimes*; 2 represents *Seldom*; and 1 represents *Almost Never*.

3.2.1.3 Observation

Observation of the principal in practice served to establish and confirm the responses of the principal from the interview against what happens in real practice.

The three methods highlighted above all served to reduce any subjective bias and to widen the angle of observation and to obtain triangulation.

The researcher recorded and transcribed data from the interviews and observation. Questionnaires were given to the two teachers in each school to complete and follow-up interviews were conducted with the two teachers.

3.2.2 Data collection procedures

The study used semi-structured interviews to gain detailed information about the participants' perceptions on their roles as instructional leaders on the part of the managers (school principals, deputy principals, and HoDs) and teachers as implementers or executors of the schools' instructional programmes.

Semi-structured interviews give the researcher and participants more flexibility because the researcher can follow up on any interesting aspects that may emerge from the interview; participants can give a more complete picture of their experiences.

An interview schedule was drawn up to provide the researcher with a set of predetermined questions with which to engage the participants. The data were recorded, transcribed and categorised into themes.

3.2.3 Methods of data analysis

The research moved from theory to data to establish the relationship between the general theoretical and empirical fields. This was a helpful tool to form generalisations on a small-scale level about the problem being investigated. Themes were formulated from the raw data in terms of which patterns appeared most frequently. The study applied the critical realist's approach for further analysis of the data in relation to the literature review. This means the study looked at the context of the literature review, i.e. the effective schools; and the context where the research was conducted, i.e. the townships of Katlehong and Thokoza in Gauteng province. Conclusions were drawn in respect of the findings of the study and the context of the literature review as discussed in chapter 2, which informs the study about instructional leadership. Critical realism is concerned with thinking about phenomena with a critiquing mind and this helped determine why things are the way they are, especially in the case of the majority of South African underperforming township primary schools.

3.3 Ethical and Legal Considerations

An ethical consideration binds the researcher to respecting human dignity, thereby respecting confidentiality, anonymity, and the privacy of the participants. It ensures the researcher sticks to the purpose of the study. MacMillan and Schumacher (2010) highlight that ethics are concerned with belief about what is right and wrong from a moral perspective when engaging with participants or assessing archival data.

An application to undertake this research, which involved human subjects, was submitted and approved by the University of Witwatersrand's Human Research Ethics Committee in Education (Appendix A). The process of selecting the schools involved going to the Ekurhuleni South district as the local education authority. I introduced myself as a teacher serving the DoE in the Gauteng province and that I am engaged in continued study for my own and the department's educational development. After I have introduced myself I sought a list of underperforming primary schools from the district assessment unit for primary schools. The official that provided me with the list requested that I should not expose her name to the schools earmarked for the study. I promised to observe the ethical procedures and principles (maintaining confidentiality and anonymity). I managed to access a list of ten primary schools from which I selected only two because my study focused on two underperforming Township primary schools. The criteria that I used for selecting the schools was based on the schools' underperformance considering the prioritized subects which included Home Language (HL), English as a First Additional Language (EFAL) and Mathematics as determinants for learner promotion or retention in the grade. The criteria for declaring a school as underperforming was discussed in chapter 2 above.

Accordingly, informed consent of all participants was obtained for interviews, observation, audio-tape and questionnaires prior to the commencement of the study. I met with the participants in the selected schools to discuss the purpose of the research, the expected time commitments, and the procedure for the research activities. All participants were given a guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity in reporting the information provided for the study. Further, they were assured that pseudonyms would be used in all documents and transcripts and every participant was free to opt out at any stage of the research and I explained to each participant that they would not suffer any repercussions as a result of their participation in the study. Participants were also informed that the data would be stored securely for at least three to five years. Participants received an information sheet containing

all of the afore-said information informing them about what they were committing themselves to, i.e. the conditions for the research.

A GDE research approval letter (Appendix B) was hand delivered to Ekurhuleni South District. Subsequently, the said district forwarded letters to the two schools informing the principals of the research and requesting them to grant me the permission to conduct research at their schools (Appendix C).

The following letters were hand delivered to the two schools: (a) a letter requesting permission from the principal as a school manager to use the school as the research site; (b) a letter of explanation and information about the study; (c) copies of these to those concerned with participating; (d) letters of request to use a tape recorder.

3.4 Challenges

Chapman and Harris (2004) argue there are some inherent difficulties in researching schools that are in difficulty or in a potentially failing situation. This causes the contemporary research evidence concerning 'ineffective' or 'failing' schools to be relatively small (Chapman & Harris, 2004). In addition, this research faced a number of difficulties.

I did not have prior knowledge about which schools were underperforming in the district at the beginning of the study. This meant that I had to go to the district to request a list of underperforming primary schools. At first I was given a list of secondary schools because it was easy to provide such information without further probing because circular 38/2007 on school improvement focused on secondary schools, so it is normal easy to access information about underperforming secondary schools than it is for primary schools, hence the topic on underperforming primary schools is a fraught topic. Therefore this confirmed to me that focus on 'learner underperformance' was really on secondary schools and not necessarily on primary schools, which is why the research on underperforming or failing primary schools is relatively small. When I asked for a list of underperforming 'primary' schools, the district official in charge of performance statistics, who provided the list asked not to be identified.

The empirical research coincided with anecdotal tales of corruption involving principals in a Roodepoort primary school in Gauteng province and other reports of corruption involving principals in KwaZulu-Natal (the final report of the investigations will be released in May 2016). Therefore, when I went to school B to collect data, the principal was contemplating not to participate in the study, it seemed to me that the she was suspicious that I possibly

could be an undercover agent deployed by the DoE to investigate acts of corruption at her school. The principal mentioned that the letter sent to her by the district stated clearly that participation was voluntary and she had the right not to participate in the study I had to seriously convince the principal and explain that the study was not about espionage. Eventually, four weeks after the district has sent the letter to the school, the principal agreed to participate and also allowed her teachers and members of the SMT to take part in the study. Both principals promised to give me an itinerary of their staff meetings so that a scheduled time could be put aside for the observation of principals in practice. However, this never happened and I had to follow up every time and at times this became tedious. Many questions were asked by the principals of the two schools, for example they asked me what I would be doing when I observed them in practice. This report, therefore, would not have been possible had I not requested the district and GDE to write the letters of approval to do the research in the schools. On the agreed date of the interview I struggled to have the principal audiotaped even though she initially consented to have her voice recorded. I re-explained to her that the audiotape will help me during the analysis of data and that I will observe the code of ethics I have signed with the University. When I have lost all hope about the use of the audio-tape, I heard her say "OK, let's do it, why should I fear"? She agreed to the use of the audio-tape because she "did not want her own children to go through the same ordeal" in case they embark on a research, she told me.

Another challenge was that two teachers, one from either school, decided to withdraw their participation in the study. These challenges revealed the sensitivity of the issue of school underperformance and principals' Instructional Leadership practices in primary schools.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the conventions of research as far as methodology is concerned. The chapter also gave an overview of the problems this research faced. Many studies in diverse fields experience challenges which may range from participant withdrawal, funding, resources, infrastructure etc, and the onus rests on researchers to ensure that they confront the challenges to ensure the research is a success. In this chapter described how I managed to deal with the challenges of possible withdrawal by the main participant (the school principal). The chapter also highlighted the sensitivity of the issue being investigated (underperformance and school leadership) as well as the gaps on the subject. I was not aware that I risked the

possible failure of my research for choosing a fraught topic such as this. I am happy that I managed to put the pieces together. I am thankful to my participants and the district office.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present the data according to and within each school. The data will be presented per data collection tool per school. Themes that emerged from the data collected from the 10 participants through questionnaires, interviews, and observations will be presented. Prior to presenting the data that emerged from the participants' responses this chapter will provide a brief description and context of the two schools, Land'ukukhanya and Thuto-Lefa La Sechaba primary schools (pseudonyms).

4.2 Description of school A
Land'ukukhanya Primary School and the Immediate Community

The school is situated within a RDP (Reconstruction and Development Plan) settlement. The settlement is new. The area is constituted of a population that migrated from the inner townships of Katlehong, Thokoza and Vosloorus (Kathorus area) and others from the rural areas and foreign countries. There are not many brick and mortar houses, but shacks as the area is still under construction. There is a tar road leading to the school, so the physical infrastructure is not bad. Most of the parents of the learners in the school have low levels of education and can therefore be classified as semi-literate and illiterate with a few parents who have a level of education sufficient to assist their children with school work at the primary level. It follows from this premise that the schools' socio-economic status (SES) is poor. Land'ukukhanya Primary is categorised as a quintile 1 school (a poor school) and therefore a no-fee school. The learners at the school benefit from the DoE's National School Nutrition Project since a majority of learners cannot afford decent, healthy food. The school also receives funding from the state to cover the individual costs of educational needs for every child in the school.

In January 2015 the school moved to a new building from an old structure that did not have ablution blocks or furniture, for example learners' chairs. The new school has ablution blocks and sports and recreation facilities, however there is no electricity connection at the school. The school uses a diesel-powered generator as a source of their electricity supply. The school

experiences security problems as it subject to perpetual burglaries due to the school's location within a community of people who use the school as a provider of their much needed resources. There are patrollers who serve as the school's security but are not trained as security personnel. They were recruited from the community to patrol and report what is taking place in the school surroundings. They are general workers not capacitated to deal with crime affecting the school and work on a six-month contractual basis. New patrollers are appointed at the end of the contract.

Land'ukukhanya's SMT comprises the school principal, one deputy principal, four HoDs (two of which are in the Foundation Phase and the other two in the Intermediate and Senior Phases). The total number of teaching staff in the school is 24 including the SMT. The total learner enrolment is 960. This background provides necessary information which may be useful in drawing conclusions about the principal's IL practice. In the next section I present the findings.

4.2.1 Presenting the teacher questionnaire data

When analysing the data collected through questionnaires from the four teachers about their principal's instructional leadership behaviours the following emerged.

The first of five sub-questions of the PIMRS about the school vision was: To what extent does the school principal … 1. Develop a focused set of school wide goals? 2. Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them? 3. Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development? 4. Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals? 5. Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school?

Teacher A responded that the principal does frame the school goals by rating the principal 4/5 in all the sub-questions except for sub-question 4 where she rated the principal 3/5. This indicated that the school principal frequently frames school goals according to teacher A. However, Teacher B from the same school on the same question, gave a rating of 3 on all the questions. The rating by Teacher B suggests that the school principal frames the goals sometimes. When responding to the interview questions about the vision Teacher B said that the principal had tasked him with the responsibility of developing the vision, so that puts him in a better position to know about what is happening concerning the school vision. This reflected the inconsistencies in the way teachers at the same school view the same principal's

Dimensions of Instructional Leadership	*Instructional Leadership Functions*	*RATING SCALE*									
		Almost Never		*Seldom*		*Sometimes*		*Frequently*		*Almost Always*	
		1		2		3		4		5	
		TA	*TB*	*TA*	*TB*	*TA*	*TB*	*TA*	*TB*	*TA*	*TB*
1. Defining the School Mission	1. Frame the School Goals					✓			✓		
	2. Communicate the School's Goals					✓			✓		
2. Managing the Instructional Programme	3. Supervises & Evaluates Instruction					✓	✓				
	4. Coordinates the Curriculum					✓			✓		
	5. Monitor Student Progress			✓					✓		
3. Promoting the School Climate	6. Protects Instructional Time				✓			✓			
	7. Maintain High Visibility			✓			✓				
	8. Provides Incentives for Teachers					✓			✓		
	9. Promotes Professional Development					✓	✓				
	10. Provides Incentives for Learning							✓	✓		

Figure 4: Teachers' perspectives on the principal's IL functions at Land'ukukhanya Primary School (see Appendix F for principal IL behaviours)

KEY: *TA = Teacher A; TB = Teacher B*

= *Effective*

= *Mediocre*

= *Ineffective*

Teachers' ratings on principals' institutional IL practice at Land'ukukhanya Primary School

Instructional leadership practice differently in as far as goal setting is concerned. Teacher B also mentioned in the interview that the school principal does not communicate the school vision constantly; that it does not appear on paper and is not visible on the walls upon entrance in the foyer in the school's administration section.

In a study that Hallinger (2005) conducted in one elementary school in California, he found the mission: (1) was absolutely clear – it was written down and visible around the school; (2) was focused on academic development and appropriate to the needs of that particular school population; (3) set a priority for the work of teachers; (4) was known and accepted as legitimate by teachers throughout the school; and (5) was articulated, actively supported, and modelled by the principal. One teacher was reported as having said "our principal expects us to spend as much time on reading, writing, spelling and math" (Hallinger, 2005: 6). At Land'ukukhanya Primary School there was no visible mission for almost a year (the data was collected during the month of August) as it was in the process of being developed. This

meant there were no goals which set the priority for the work of teachers. It can therefore be concluded that it was neither known, nor accepted as legitimate by teachers throughout the school. Since the mission was non-existent, it was obviously not articulated, not actively supported, and not modelled by the principal. The answer to the question, "what is the mission statement that guides the school's instructional activities in the absence of the visible mission"? Obviously, the school is aimless, which makes it susceptible to underperform. The principal at Land'ukukhanya Primary School mandated a mammoth task of developing the school mission to an individual teacher, not a group of teachers working as a team. I believe that developing a school mission should be a collective effort with the principal taking the lead. The principal is clearly not taking the issue of the mission seriously. Hallinger (2005: 9) argues that "instructional leaders both lead through building a mission and manage through activities that increase alignment of activities with purposes". This statement emphasises the importance of a principal's involvement in the activity of building a mission, thus realising the ideals of shared leadership and ensuring growth and development in the teachers.

4.2.2 Presenting the teacher interview data

The interviews were conducted with post-level 1 teachers (non-management post), HoDs, and deputy principals (middle and senior management respectively). The views of the teachers are herewith intertwined.The questions that were asked focused on the mission of the school which is the most fundamental element of instructional leadeship because of its focus on providing direction the school ought to take. The other questions focused mainly on teaching and learning and how it is monitored to ensure effective teaching. Lastly, the questions investigated the challenges which school principals experience that block effective teaching and learning causing the school to underperform.

The teachers at the school, except the school principal, agreed the school has no mission statement that guides the instructional activities at the school. One HoD stated that the school mission was still at the development stage. On the instructional leadership dimension of supervision and evaluation of instruction with particular focus on classroom observation, the principal already stated during her interview that the function had been delegated to the deputy principal. When teachers were asked, how does the principal monitor instruction in their classrooms? The teachers responded that the principal does do classroom observation, but that HoDs request learners' books and check if what is contained in the books is in line with the ATP. This lack of curriculum supervision and evaluation clearly leaves the school

vulnerable, as learners can be instructed to write all the activities they did not write for the previous three weeks, and get it marked and submitted to the satisfaction of the HoD, however this is anecdotal. This is not equal to effective teaching and learning, it is cheating. When asked about the monitoring of her work by the principal, the Foundation Phase HoD confirmed that the principal delegated the function to her deputy. According to the HoD, her work was never monitored by the deputy principal nor the principal for the past year. She mentioned that the deputy is unreliable and that the SMT is fragmented and needs development. The HoD further noted that the principal is intelligent at communicating ideas and drafting plans, but fails to implement these. She maintained that *'if one does not adhere to plans, this points to poor management'*.

The Intermediate and Senior Phase HoD, however, responded differently saying that the school principal does monitoring randomly. She explained that the principal requests the HoD to submit learners' books to check whether the work content is in synergy with what the learners were supposed to be taught (ATP). However, this strategy remains flawed for monitoring instruction. The principal also demands monthly reports about teaching and learning and the learners' performance. Still, without observing the lessons in practice the principal is prone to receiving falsified reports because she does not have proof whether the contents of the reports are a true reflection of what really happened in class. Clearly, there is no supervision and evaluation of instruction at the school. The Foundation Phase HoD also mentioned that the school principal used to observe lessons but since she became the principal two years ago, has not once observed teaching and learning in practice. This confirms literature and the argument that principals shift the instructional leadership responsibility to their deputies and HoDs and focus on non-instructional activities most of the time.

Teacher development manifests itself as another problem at the school. The literature reveals that effective schools continuously develop their workforce and engage in research activities in the creation of an effective school organisation. Teachers reported that there are no internal teacher development initiatives at the school, instead the principal relies on and motivates her teachers to attend training workshops organised by the district. It is a known fact that these district developmental workshops use a one-size-fits-all kind of approach and their weighting lacks quality. Shalem, (2003) maintains that teacher training, is too localised and fragmented, and for offering short courses or workshops that do not put sufficient emphasis on content knowledge. The workshops ignore the unique and diverse nature of schools. Rogan and

Grayson (2003: 1174) argue that "any theory of implementation will need to take the diversity of schools into account". I argue that teacher training needs to be differentiated for implementers from different schools. The schools themselves are better placed to do this on their own because they understand their contextual needs. Unfortunately this is not happening, so they attend workshops and listen to someone who will give them a strategy s/he learnt from another school, but the fact remains, schools are not the same. Teachers have a tendency to use ready-made materials developed from other settings than their own. However, there is always a contextual clash when it comes to implementation and that is why it is important for instructional leaders to be masters of their contexts. The issues raised by the teachers during the interviews may be the reasons for the school's underperformance and are cause for concern. The sooner the school engages itself in implementing turnaround strategies, the better.

4.2.3 Presenting the principal's interview data

The principal of Land'ukukhanya primary school has served the department of education at all the school hierarchical levels. She started working as a junior teacher in Kwa-Zulu Natal. In 2005 she became a HoD, two years later she was promoted to deputy principalship until 2013. In 2014 she saw herself being promoted again to principalship. The highest qualification she has is an Honours Degree in psychology. All these promotions were recommendations at the same school. This background gave me some hope that the principal must be knowledgeable about the topic "instructional leadership". However, I realized that the school principal has not been prepared to lead and manage a school. The appointment was made on the basis of her excellence in the classroom. Kitavi and Van der Westhuizen's [ibid] argument that being a good teacher does equal a good manager. When I asked her about the mission statement of the school which is the driver towards realizing and accomplishing the goals of the school, she responded that the school does not have a mission. Immediately, I sensed a problem. The problem here was that it was the third term already and the entire school does not have a shared sense of purpose that define them as a school. On the contrary, when I asked her about her roles as the instructional leader she mentioned the most fundamental function "providing direction", ironically there was no map. How does one reach his or her destination without an important resource to get there?

The interview with the principal also revealed that she does not supervise and evaluate instruction. This responsibility is shifted to the deputy principal who is not clear about the

instructional leadership role description. This confirmed literature that school principals do not regard instructional leadership as their main role. Literature also provides us with information that principals retreat to their office and focus on non-instructional activities. This was found to be true with the principal of Land'ukukhanya primary school. The principal did not maintain high visibility for ensuring that lessons take place. This resulted in her inability to model good practice where it was necessary. If the principal implemented these function, she could have been able to identify gaps in the pedagogic practices of her teachers and this would form the basis for teacher development. There is no internal teacher development at the school except meetings to discuss curriculum issues. The principal metioned that she allows teachers to attend district development workshop as a strategy to develop her teachers. I argue that this is not her strategy, but it is compulsory for teachers to attend these workshops whether principals want them to or not. These are the most fundamental instructional leadership functions that the principal is ineffective to implement. Out of ten instructional leadership functions she was able to perform only one effectively, namely: "provide incentives for learning". I am sceptical about the accuracy of the principal in awarding incentives for learning because she does observe teaching and learning, therefore how is she that learning has really taken place? The other six out of ten instructional leadership functions namely: "frame the school's goals, communicate the school's goals, coordinates the curriculum, monitor student progress, protects instructional time and provides incentives for teachers, I found the principal to be too mediocre on the basis that she does these activities seldom or sometimes (confirmed by teacher interviews). There is no strong emphasis on their importance on the part of the principal, thus the principal is ineffective in her practice as an instructional leader.

4.2.4 Presenting the observation of the principal's instructional practice

This data collection tool was used for a dual purpose. First, to gather information about the principal's practical implementation of instructional leadership functions expressed by the principal and her teachers during the interviews. Second, it was used to maintain triangulation of the responses from the research participants. The duration of the observation was five days split over two weeks i.e. three and two days respectively. The observation focused on the following principal behaviours: communicate school goals, encourage collaboration and cooperation among teachers, giving feedback to teachers, classroom walkthroughs to monitor teaching and learning, classroom visits and lesson observation, model good teaching and

maintaining high visibility. Out of all these functions, not a single one of them was practiced by the principals in both schools. I found that the principals did not promote collaboration among staff but teachers reported that principals practice favouritism which promotes division among staff instead of unity and cooperation.

4.3 Description of school B
Thuto-Lefa La Sechaba Primary School and its Immediate Community

The school was established in 1962. It is situated within a stable community of Thokoza Township in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, south of Johannesburg. The infrastructure around the school is generally good with a tar road. There are useful facilities in the vicinity of the school including a public clinic, a sports stadium, a park, a shopping centre, a petrol station and many other privately-owned facilities including surgeries and Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres.

The school's physical structure is made of brick and mortar. There are ablution blocks for teachers and learners and general assistants (GAs). The school also has guards who patrol the school for 24 hours a day and are appointed on a six-month contractual basis. The school benefits from the GDE's initiative to assist learners who cannot do their homework at home through the Education School Support Project (ESSP). The ESSP personnel's main function is to assist learners with their homework in school after the formal schooling hours. The manner in which the ESSP employees work differs from one school to another. There are no clear guidelines or job descriptors that guide their scope of work.

Unlike Land'ukukhanya Primary School, the parents of the learners at Thuto-Lefa La Sechaba Primary School have mostly reached matriculation level in terms of education and many others have tertiary qualifications. The learners in the school do not come from the school's immediate community, but from a remote area and are bussed to school. Their transport to school has been tendered by GDE. There is another primary school just nearby, so the competition between the schools is high. Parents prefer not to take their children to an underperforming school when there is another alternative and this is why some learners come from somewhere else other than the school's neighbourhood. Some local learners attend former Model C schools away from the township because their parents have the perception that education is better there.

The school is situated not far from the main road. Public transport is easily accessible for teachers who do not have their own transport.

The school's organogram is made up of the principal, one deputy principal, four HoDs (two in the Intermediate and two in the Foundation Phases) and 14 post-level-one teachers. There are 20 teachers in all. The enrolment is currently 879 learners. The principal has been working at the school for 37 years and was appointed principal in 1995. The deputy principal was redeployed from another school. The school was dominated by teachers who were very old and who did not hold the minimum entrance qualification, but that has changed in the past five years. These teachers were forced by the department to upgrade their qualifications to the minimum entrance for practising as a teacher in South Africa (categorised as REQV 13) to avoid being declared unqualified. Of these teachers seven out of 20 (35%) are approaching retirement, many of them have since retired.

4.3.1 Presenting the teacher questionnaire data

The ten instructional leadership functions, which are delineated from the three instructional leadership dimensions discussed in the literature review in the conceptual framework, include: (1) frame the school goals; (2) communicate the school goals; (3) supervise and evaluate instruction; (4) coordinate the curriculum; (5) monitor student progress; (6) protecting instructional time; (7) maintain high visibility; (8) provide incentives for teachers; (9) promote professional development; and (10) provide incentives for learning. The data collected through the PIMRS questionnaire revealed that out of the ten instructional leadership functions, the school principal was effective in only three that is: coordinate the curriculum; monitor student progress; protect instructional time. Out of five instructional leadership behaviours under the main instructional function 'Frame the school goals' the two teachers, Ms Lebo and Ms Ntema agreed that the school principal '*did not develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals*' and was ineffective in carrying out the other four instructional behaviours (see figure 5). This resonated with the response given by the principal when responding to the question about goal setting. The principal does not consider it necessary to frame new goals for the new academic year, as she feels the school's mission serves as the school's goals.

On the second leadership function 'Communicate the school goals', the teachers' responses revealed that the school principal was ineffective in the execution of this instructional leadership function. This confirmed the response that the school principal gave during her interview with the researcher. When asked about the strategy that she used to communicate the school goals she said *'we do have the mission in the foyer where everybody can see it*

upon entrance into the school reception area but I do not constantly talk about it to the teachers, and other members of the school community, to be honest'. One of the Foundation Phase teachers, Ms Ntema, who has been working at the school for more than five years, rated the school principal ineffective in discussing the school's academic goals with teachers at Phase meetings. The teacher was referring to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers, ensuring that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (for example posters, or bulletin boards), emphasising academic progress, and referring to the school's goals or mission in forums with students in assemblies or discussions. However, Ms Lebo, the Intermediate Phase teacher (Grades 4-6), who has recently completed her second year as a teacher, rated the principal effective in only two out of five instructional behaviours, i.e. the principal was effective in *'discussing the school's academic goals with teachers at Phase meetings and referring to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers'.*

Both teachers rated the school principal's supervision and evaluation of instruction ineffective. On the one hand, Ms Ntema's ratings revealed that the principal did not supervise and evaluate instruction, and on the other, Ms Lebo's ratings revealed that the principal executed this action seldom. Maintaining high visibility is a key instructional function that school principals need to effectively execute. As expressed in the Old English saying 'when the cat's away, the mice will play', so shall it be with the teachers if the principal retreats to his/her office out the teachers' sight.

The teachers' responses to the questionnaire on this issue revealed that to some extent the school principal tries to maintain high visibility but is not effective due to a lack of consistency. We have learnt from the literature review that principals in elementary schools "did not feel their day is successful unless they are in every classroom every day" (Smith & Andrews, 1989: 45). During my visit to Thuto-Lefa La Sechaba Primary School the principal never went to any classes to observe instruction and how learners learn.

The principal is occupied by management activities other than her instructional responsibilities. When asked about how the principal monitors teachers' work one HoD, Mr X from the Intermediate and Senior Phases, responded that the principal delegated that task to the deputy principal (the principal mentioned this fact in the interview). Mr X expressed concern that the deputy did not do the tasks delegated to him by the principal, for example he did not monitor instruction even once.

Dimensions of IL	*IL Functions*	*RATING SCALE*									
		Almost Never		***Seldom***		***Sometimes***		***Frequently***		***Almost Always***	
		1		**2**		**3**		**4**		**5**	
		TA	*TB*	*TA*	*TB*	*TA*	*TB*	*TA*	*TB*	*TA*	*TB*
1. Defining the School Mission	1. Frame the School Goals			✓	✓						
	2. Communicate the School's Goals			✓			✓				
2. Managing the Instructional Programme	3. Supervises & Evaluates Instruction	✓			✓						
	4. Coordinates the Curriculum							✓	✓		
	5. Monitor Student Progress							✓	✓		
3. Promoting the School Climate	6. Protects Instructional Time							✓	✓		
	7. Maintain High Visibility		✓			✓					
	8. Provides Incentives for Teachers		✓	✓							
	9. Promotes Professional Development				✓	✓					
	10. Provides Incentives for Learning		✓	✓							

Figure 5: Teachers' perspectives on the principal's Instructional Leadership functions at Thuto-Lefa La Sechaba (see Appendix F for principal Instructional Leadership behaviours)

KEY: *TA = Teacher A; TB = Teacher B*

= *Effective*

= *Ineffective*

Teachers' ratings on Principals' Institutional Instructional Leadership practice at Thuto-Lefa La Sechaba Primary School

Mr X went further to say *'I do not remember a day when I was developed by my deputy …'* This evidence points to the fact that there is no high visibility at the school by the school principal and those delegated with the task. Even if middle management wants to, they do not know what to do because there are no teacher development initiatives at the school, either by the school principal or the deputy. Responding to the question, How do you execute the instructional supervision at the school?, the deputy said he had delegated the responsibility to the HoDs and further stated that the HoD was expected to ensure that teachers' lesson preparations were done, and that every teacher maintained punctuality. As reported above, the HoD did not understand what it was that he was supposed to do.

Teachers are on their own. Mr X also mentioned *'I am involved in a number of non-instructional activities in the school, so I am unable to assist the teachers I lead as effectively as I wish to'*. The other activities that Mr X does at the school include capturing learner marks for the whole school, raising funds for the school, coordinating sports, arts and culture events. It is surprising to learn that the school does not have qualified administration personnel to do data capturing.

This was not reported by any of the participants, but by reading the situation, it seemed so. If the school has administration clerks, why were they not doing their work? It could be that the administrators are not competent in information and communications technology (ICT); still a question may arise, why were people who do not meet the specific job requirements employed?

It is highly important for school principals to motivate and compliment teachers for their efforts or performance in order to obtain outstanding learner performance. School principals can reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos, compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance, acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files, reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition and creating professional growth opportunities as rewards for special contributions to the school (Hallinger, 1987). Ms Lebo's response revealed that the latter three almost never happened at the school, whilst Ms Ntema's responses revealed that all of the five behaviours almost never happened at the school.

These responses are indicative of the fact that the school principal neither recognises good practice nor gives praise where praise is deserved. In the literature review, Blasé and Blasé's (1999) empirical study in US schools found that the IL dimension 'giving praise' had positive impacts on teachers. Teachers reported that this talking strategy not only raised their confidence to higher levels but also their motivation and efficacy. It made teachers reinforce effective teaching strategies and creativity. Principals' praise encouraged teachers to search for new and innovative strategies for teaching on their own because the principal acknowledges the good work they are doing. In the case of the schools for this research the principal was found lacking in this dimension. The results are low teacher morale and demotivation, which ultimately leads to learner underperformance.

Promoting professional development includes such behaviours as ensuring that in-service activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals; encouraging the use of knowledge and skills acquired during in-service training in the classroom; obtaining the participation of the whole staff in important in-service activities; leading or attending teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction; and setting aside time at Phase meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from in-service activities (Hallinger, 1987).

The developmental workshops organised by districts do not invite school principals so they too can acquire the skills that teachers are taught. This would enable principals to lead instruction effectively as they would know what is it exactly that teachers are expected to do. This point was alluded to in the earlier discussions that whenever there are innovations introduced in education, principals are not considered for training, but teachers are. This exclusion disempowers and weakens the principals' position because it means teachers become more knowledgeable and better experts in curriculum issues than the principal. The question is, 'How does one strike a balance between a principal who is not knowledgeable and a teacher who is an expert'? A turnaround strategy would be to include school principals as part of the developmental workshops, either together with teachers or through separate workshops on the same topics as teachers, including leadership-centred developmental training.

The teacher participants at Thuto-Lefa la Sechaba Primary School remarked that staff development almost never happened or if it did, it was only sometimes. This confirmed the principal's response when she was asked, 'How do you conduct staff development at the school? Her answer was that teachers only attend in-service training organised by districts. When asked about the school's internal development initiatives, the principal said *'I do not do it, we depend on district training'.* The problem about district workshops is that they include many groups of schools and are therefore too general to address the schools' individual contexts. Such workshops use a one-size-fits-all approach and the nature of some of the training workshops are not always qualitative. Some facilitators have information deficits and depend on attendees to help them in the workshops. It is up to the schools to refine and customise the information they obtain from the workshops to suit their context. It follows then that the principals must know the capabilities of their staff and allow them to share information. It does not have to be the principal who facilitates in the school's internal developmental workshop. Teachers can collaborate and reflect on their practice for instructional improvement. The principal is expected to lead this process.

Of all the five behaviours under the instructional function 'Promote professional development', the principal was rated ineffective as she seldom practised this behaviour, according to Ms Ntema and sometimes, according to Ms Ntema. The one behaviour that Principal Selepe was able to carry out effectively was 'Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important in-service activities'. This means that the principal lacks prowess in promoting professional development at her school. It is worth noting that in every school principals are successful in obtaining the participation of the whole staff in in-service activities when *'teachers are given transport fare'*. Some, after receiving the fare, decide not to go to the in-service training because they are not asked to give feedback or share information and skills from the training. Others ask their colleagues to bring them hardcopies of slides from the workshops so they can quickly study them and give feedback should they be instructed to do so. Another point worth noting is that the workshops are not very effective in changing teachers' beliefs and attitudes about curriculum implementation and delivery, so teachers are reluctant to attend these workshops.

The last question in the questionnaire asked, 'to what extent does your principal provide incentives for learning'? The principal was rated outright ineffective by Ms Ntema, meaning that out of five behaviours the principal was given a rating of 1 on four instructional behaviours, which represented 'almost never'. Both Ms Ntema and Ms Lebo rated the principal at 5 and 4 respectively on this behaviour: 'Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions', which suggests that she is good at communicating student improvement but does not contribute effectively to instructional improvement initiatives by staff. According to the teachers the principal is ineffective in recognising students who do superior work. This could be done through formal rewards such as an honour roll or being mentioned in the principal's newsletter, using assemblies to honour students for academic accomplishments or for good behaviour or citizenship, recognising superior student achievement or improvement by inviting students to her office with their work, or supporting teachers actively in their recognition and/or student contributions to and accomplishments in class (Hallinger, 1983). These are the findings that emerged from the questionnaires completed by the two teachers at Thuto-Lefa la Sechaba. The following section details the findings from the interviews conducted with the teachers, including the SMT, about their perspectives of the principal's instructional practices or behaviour.

4.3.2 Presenting the teacher interview data

Clear goals are the school's most important guide for effective instruction. An in-depth discussion in the literature review in chapter 2 reflects that there is agreement among researchers on the importance of school goals as they set the direction that leads to effective teaching and learning and improved learner achievement, which is the core function of schools. However, at Thuto-Lefa La Sechaba Primary School, the participants, teachers and SMT members, including the school principal, all agreed that the school does not have clear goals but a broad school mission which is vague, meaning it is not explicit as to what the teachers are expected to do. Teachers cannot make links between their teaching activities and the existing school mission. It was noted in the discussions in the literature review that in a study conducted by Blasé and Blasé (1999) in a US elementary school, teachers reported that their school principal emphasised reading as the main goal of the school and that the principal knew the reading ability of every learner in the school, and the mission was posted in every wall in the school building including the classrooms. The principal observed teaching, gave feedback, and modelled good teaching practice. Also, the principal constantly communicated the school mission with teachers during teacher talks and dialogues. This provides evidence of the links between the mission and instruction. However, in the schools where this research was conducted, this was not the case.

Teachers at Thuto-Lefa la Sechaba reported that the school principal does management by wandering around (MBWA). She does not necessarily observe the lessons to check if the teachers' practice is in accordance with the school mission; whether the learners benefit from the pedagogical styles of the different subject teachers; and to what extent the teachers' behaviour enhances learners' outcomes. The reason this happens is due to the fact that the mission is not based on implementable goals, it is vague; for her to go to class is confusing because the staff do not know the specifics of what she is going to observe. The principal did not prepare observation and feedback schedules as useful tools for monitoring teaching and learning and giving feedback to teachers as demonstrated in the literature review in chapter 2 (figures 2 and 3). When asked about principal instructional monitoring, one teacher reported that the principal comes into class *'especially if she hears noise'*. It seems the principal reacts to and manages noise and acts as if she is monitoring the curriculum. The teachers said the principal monitors curriculum by using the Curriculum Monitoring Model (CMM). In this model, a template is used which requires the monitor to complete the template by observing the learners' work in their books against the ATPs which requires the teacher to cover work

at particular times during a term. Should it happen that there is no synergy between the ATP work coverage guide and the learners' work then the teacher is expected to develop a catch-up strategy to cover the topics that were not taught and submit to management (many times this does not happen, and if it does happen, the catch-up programme is not implemented). Sometimes teachers avoid having to develop catch-up plans which means they give learners a lot of work without properly teaching them just to satisfy the requirement in terms of the number of activities and topics they are expected to teach. Once this is achieved, the teacher is deemed to have done excellent work, according to the HoD, deputy principal and principal, when in fact the learners do not understand the bulk of work in their books. This is evident in the fact that at examination time, the learners perform poorly especially in the examination question papers that are set externally. The idea of CMM is not bad, but it needs to be done together with lesson observation to ensure lessons take place, and observers of lessons must understand what they are doing. Important to note is that CMM is a district directive with which every school must comply. Sadly, this reveals that curriculum management in schools is about compliance as school leaders in general do not have the capacity to design CMMs that define their contexts. At Thuto-Lefa La Sechaba Primary School the principal delegated the task of monitoring the instructional programme to the deputy who further shifted the responsibility to the HoD. This confirms Hoadley and Ward's (2009) findings that principals do not regard the oversight of curriculum and teaching as their main task, but that of the HoD's. The HoD at the school was too busy with other activities in the school so there was no time to attend to his responsibilities, which left teachers all by themselves.

4.3.3 Presenting the principal's interview data

The principal is ineffective in developing and communicating a clear mission for the school. Many scholars agree that the school mission sets the direction that teachers ought to take in their day-to-day instructional activities. Literature on schools that have succeeded against all odds tells us that school leadership must set the direction if they are to succeed (Christie, 2001). The mission developed for Thuto Lefa La Sechaba is 'not clear', it is a piece of writing that was crafted to satisfy the departmental requirement that all schools should have a mission. The principal communicates the mission to the stakeholders on a once-off basis only.

During the interview the principal mentioned that staff development is not taking place at the school and she took blame for lack of such programmes at the institution; she knew that it

was her terrain to create an environment for teacher development, but still did not do so. The reasons she cited for lack of staff developmental programmes is that the teachers have a negative attitude towards their own development, so '*I do not do it*' was her direct response to the question, How do you facilitate the process of staff development at the school? However, the principal acknowledges this as a flaw from her side.

In the literature review it was stated that effective schools set high standards for teachers and learners. However, when asked about setting high standards the Thuto Lefa La Sechaba principal did not give a direct response, but noted that a presenter at a principals' conference told them not to set high standards for learners who cannot attain at a higher level. The official, according to the school principal, further explained and convinced the attendees at the meeting that this had been happening since the days of apartheid. The official reminded the principals that during apartheid, students who obtained 40% for matric still passed, but the question remained, "how many of them were admitted to institutions of higher learning"? Only a few who obtained outstanding results went on to study further and the rest with their 40% went on to serve the whites as labourers. The official made it her business to promote mediocrity in the principals and the danger is that this will be transferred to the teachers. The principal was convinced that what the official said was correct; the principal's body language also supported her belief, she expressed this with confidence. The principal's body language was coupled with her smile and analysing this gesture I reached a conclusion that the district official has provided the principal with a shield to protect herself should it happen that district summons her to account for her failure to set high expectations for learners and teachers. The problem with such beliefs and attitudes with regard to learner performance is that if one aims at mediocrity, once s/he slips, the possibilities of underperformance at all levels of the school as an organisation (from the principal, SMT, teaching staff and learners) are high. It is lamentable to observe how the legacy of apartheid continues to live in the minds of the now supposedly liberated people who are meant to be turning the situation around, and not regressing. It is true that during apartheid students passed with 40%, but it was the objective of the system to produce people who would be subservient to whites (Tabata, 1979). Certainly, students who obtained 30% to 50% pass rates at any level of their schooling were not deemed to be good enough by the very same people who designed such policies. These students obviously did not meet the entrance requirements to study at universities. Therefore, it seems obvious that some barriers to good instructional leadership do not lie with the principals but from outside agencies like districts.

The principal did not implement instructional leadership; instead she delegated the instructional leadership functions to the deputy principal who further assigned the function to the HoD. The principal, after delegating the instructional leadership tasks to her colleagues, she did not ensure they did their work through regular monitoring. This underrates the principal's instructional behaviour because she does not perform the key instructional leadership functions.

4.4 Conclusion

The data presented in this chapter revealed that the principals in both primary schools under study did not perform the instructional leadership role in their schools as their main activity or responsibility. Instead, they shifted it to their deputy principals who further delegated the role to the HoDs. This confirmed the literature that school principals do not regard the oversight of curriculum and teaching as their main task, but shift it to the HoDs. It follows therefore that there is no proper management of curriculum in the schools. The principals do not practice being an "instructional resource" or "communicator" (Smith & Andrews, 1989: 20, 23).

Two major findings are that both schools: (1) do not have the mission that guides the instructional activities in the institutions. Bamburg and Andrews (1988: 24, in Smith & Andrews, 1989) argue that "principals in effective schools consistently demonstrate a commitment to academic goals. They are able to develop and articulate a vision of instructional goals that prioritize school and classroom activities"; (2) there is no internal staff development programme. The staff is developed through district workshops which employ the one-size-fits-all approach and does not necessarily address the schools' needs as diverse entities with diverse problems and issues into account.

Having said this, it is worth noting that the assumptions stated in chapter 1 are true that: (1) the overall student underperformance or underachievement is as the result of the principals' lack of focus in managing and leading teaching and learning (Reynolds, in Stoll & Myers 1998; Stoll in ditto, Teddlie and Stringfield) 1993); and (2) lack of teacher development strategies by the principal as an instructional leader to address teachers' poor pedagogical content knowledge and subject knowledge contributes to learner underachievement (De Clercq, 2008). In the next chapter the themes that emerged from the empirical data are analysed and discussed.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction

Thus far we know that instructional leadership is concerned with teaching and learning and the behaviour of teachers, not excluding the school principal, in enhancing student results.

This chapter presents the analysis of the empirical data. After data was carefully examined, it was coded and categorised and themes emerged. The themes, which are analysed and interpreted in this chapter, were grouped into two sections: first, those that have a positive contribution on teaching and learning; and second, those that contribute negatively to instructional leadership. The latter presents reasons for school underperformance.

5.2 Themes that Impact Positively on Instructional Leadership

5.2.1 Strong knowledge of curriculum issues

The findings revealed that the principals in the two schools hold some knowledge of curriculum issues which include amongst others content knowledge, syllabus (ATP) coverage, curriculum monitoring and assessment. However, their knowledge does not translate into good student achievement. As discussed earlier in the introductory chapters, whenever there are district teacher developmental workshops principals are not considered for training, anecdotally, they have their own separate workshops. However, the content of their training is questionable because at the level of implementation the principals and their deputies shift the instructional leadership functions to the middle managers. For example, it is the HoDs who must ensure that teachers are in class teaching, ascertain that the learners' books contain work in accordance with the pace setters, and check that teachers plan and teach lessons. HoDs are also involved in the LTSM committee and the School Development Team (SDT). HoDs must also monitor learner and teacher attendance and are responsible for submitting documents for Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) to the districts. In the light of the above it is clear that the principals have shifted most of their instructional leadership functions to the HoDs, thus rendering them ineffective. In summarising this issue, I conclude that the principals of the two schools have the knowledge of curriculum but lack

the strategy to apply the knowledge so that it benefits instruction and deals with underperformance at their schools.

5.2.2 Protecting the instructional time

Data from the questionnaires and interviews revealed that the principals in the two schools have a watchful eye on ensuring that instructional time is protected. Instructional time-waste often occurs when teachers visit each other in classrooms during teaching time and interrupt instruction. The most common instructional time procrastination occurs when schools engage in athletics training during the formal school hours.

5.2.3 Shared Instructional Leadership

As argued in chapter 1, the contemporary principal's job is inundated with lots of activities. Marks and Printy (2003) suggest shared instructional leadership (an opponent of trait leadership) as a strategy that can be employed to ensure that the principal is closer to the activity of teaching and learning through working with others, as principals cannot do it alone. The principals at the two schools reported that they delegate the instructional leadership function to their management colleagues. However, it was clear from the responses of the teachers that the principals and deputy principals did not monitor their classroom practice. Teachers worked closely with the HoDs. Also, after delegating the responsibility of curriculum monitoring to the HoDs, neither the principals nor deputy principals monitored the HoDs' work. Shared instructional leadership refers to the practice whereby staff members or SMT jointly or collectively work collaboratively and systematically to accomplish the goals of the school. Shared instructional leadership refers to a concerted effort by leadership to participate in the process of improving teaching and learning to avoid school underperformance. In the case of the two schools under this study, it appears that the principals do not participate in the process of managing teaching and learning. The role has been shifted to the deputy principals. The deputies do not perform the role and the principals are not even aware of this. What makes matters worse is the fact that there is no effort to coach the HoDs. If shared IL denotes taking part and principals fail to do so, their conceptualisation of shared leadership is somewhat skewed.

5.3 Themes Having a Negative Impact on Instructional Leadership

5.3.1 Lack of a clear mission

The heads of the two schools have both been reported to be ineffective in formulating a clear mission for their schools. Since a clear mission is a prerequisite for effective teaching and learning, the absence of this important characteristic of effective schools implies that the members of a school as an organisation, in their daily operations are purposeless. Therefore I deduce from this premise the schools lack a good point of departure. If I were to use an analogy to describe schools and their core function, 'teaching and learning', I would use a journey by ship where the skipper and the sailing crew, prior to undertaking the journey, ascertain that the primary resource needed for the success of and safe arrival at the planned destination is available. This resource is the map which will guide the crew in the direction they must follow. The science of the weather patterns at different locations and seasons of the year will count not only as an advantage, but as a requirement, so the captain may safely lead the crew and the occupants of the ship throughout the journey. It will assist them in knowing how to deal with or avoid areas where there are strong tides and storms and use alternative routes as they navigate the waters if the situation necessitates.

The relevance of this analogy with reference to a leader providing direction to the followers, is that it is imperative that the principal as an instructional leader provide a clear mission that will guide the instructional actions of the school staff. In this case the mission will be the map by which the teaching staff will be navigating instruction. The seasons represent the different terms of the year. Planning for the new year of schooling begins at the end of the current year. This is where the principal, using the academic results of the ending year must formulate the mission for the coming year, a new vision. It should not always be the same vague mission that hangs in the foyer year after year. This mission must always provide a clear direction and be constantly communicated. This was found not to be the case with the two schools under study.

The principal is also required to have knowledge and the skills of the curriculum so that s/he can use this to make informed decisions and give clear guidance during the different school terms. In the beginning of the first term the instructional activities are mainly diagnostic which involves baseline assessments, the results of which teachers use to plan and improve future teaching and learning activities. This is done to improve teaching and learning quality

and to avoid underperformance. The principals' missions must contain such information and must be subject-specific.

5.3.2 Mission not constantly articulated

The study also found that the two principals fail regularly to communicate the mission to the entire school community and his coincides with their failure to constantly monitor the instructional programme. Like many others, both principals continually ignored 'consistency' to ensure things happened as planned and failed to make frequent follow-ups and communicate a mission that was implementable and not vague. In one of the schools, the mission was still in the process of being developed in the third term, which meant that for three terms, the teachers did not have the specific school mission and were being guided by policy provisions that did not address the school's specific needs. In the other school, the school mission was so vague that the teachers did not know what was expected of them.

5.3.3 Principals do not promote professional development

In order to keep the educational fires burning schools need to keep the educational flame burning. It is the duty of the principal to identify the teachers' skills and to use those skills for the total development of the staff. Principals cannot do it alone. They need other members of the school community to assist them and teachers need to develop one another. Teacher development is another important characteristic of effective schooling and the absence of this essential aspect in the organisational life of the school upsets effective curriculum delivery and student achievement. The DoE stipulates seven roles of educators, one of them being "a scholar, researcher and lifelong learner" (Government Gazette 20844, 2000, p. 12 & 19), whose practical competencies include:

- being numerically, technologically and media literate
- reading academic and professional texts critically
- writing the language of learning clearly and accurately
- applying research meaningfully to educational problems
- demonstrating an interest in, appreciation and understanding of current affairs, various kinds of arts, culture and socio-political events
- upholding the principles of academic integrity and the pursuit of excellence in the field of education.

The foundational competencies include understanding:

- current thinking about technological, numerical and media literacies with particular reference to educators in a diverse and developing country like South Africa
- the reasons and uses for, and various approaches to, educational research
- how to access and use common information sources like libraries, community resource centres, and computer information systems such as the Internet
- and using effective study methods.

The reflexive competencies include:

- reflecting on critical personal responses to literature, arts and culture as well as social, political and economic issues
- reflecting on knowledge and experience of environmental and human rights issues and adapting own practices.

Promoting professional development links with the role of being a researcher, scholar and lifelong learner. It is therefore the principal's responsibility to ensure that the staff engages in internal developmental programmes, and does not rely on the workshops organised by the DoE (districts) alone. For example, the school may identify hardworking teachers and recommend that they engage in further study and have their fees paid by the school. These teachers will in turn share the knowledge with the rest of the staff during and after the completion of their studies.

5.3.4 Teachers are not engaged in professional learning

CAPS was introduced in South Africa in the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3) in 2011; in the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) in 2013; and in the Senior Phase (Grades 7-9) in 2014, yet teachers have still not mastered the curriculum. Teacher development, therefore, plays a crucial role in assisting teachers. A negative attitude towards teacher development will have a negative effect on the business of teaching because the nature of teaching calls for educators to keep abreast of developments in education and the best way to do that is through taking a lead in one's own development. But, teachers complain about the quality of the developmental workshops and often end up not attending, which means they are unable to implement teaching and assessment strategies for the different subjects and are unable to implement departmental directives and policies. For example, at the end of each term schools

are expected to submit the end of term schedules to their districts for approval prior the issuing of report cards (feedback about learner performance) to parents. The term schedules are a summary of learner performance for each grade in a school. Usually, there are changes that are introduced which need to be implemented in this regard and these changes are explained in the workshops. If teachers do not attend the workshops they tend to input incorrect information and on submission their work is turned back for correction. I found that the school always submits late because they do not have the knowledge to complete the term schedules, which results in the school giving parents late feedback about their children's academic performance. The principal is stressed by the type of staff she has, but as she is also left with only a year or so before retirement, she does not do much to address her concerns. Whilst all of this happens, the learners suffer.

Finally, about 35% of teachers at Thuto-Lefa la Sechaba are elderly and most of them have only a few years before they exit the education system. So for them, in-service training and further study are not priorities.

5.3.5 Lack of instructional supervision and evaluation by principals

Principals in the two schools have the inclination to delegate the function of monitoring instruction to their deputies. The deputies themselves are incapacitated and further assign the responsibility to the HoDs. As discussed in the literature review in chapter 2, as a result of the many educational policies and other non-instructional activities with which principals are inundated, it seems rational to them to delegate the function to their deputies. However, they make the mistake of assuming that the deputies know what to do and so delegate without explaining particular tasks. They forget that the role of the deputy is to assist or deputise for the principal; s/he works with and 'under the guidance of the principal'. In addition, none of them ever correctly practices instructional supervision and evaluation which results in teachers taking advantage of not being observed and their work not being monitored. This results in the learners not being taught as teachers experience deficits in curriculum coverage and the school underperforming. This in turn leads to the school principal, as was the case at one of the schools, being summoned to account for learners failing the national yardstick. This involved the principal having to present an improvement strategy to the district panel explaining how she was going to turn around underperformance.

Though according to the South African School Act (SASA) 84 of 1996, the principal is responsible for the day-to-day professional management of the school, she was also expected

to table the improvement plan before the SGB as well, in accordance with the provisions of Education Laws Amendment Act (ELAA) of 2007. Through teacher development, school principals can improve the performance of their schools and avoid having to appear to account before the district panel.

When principals do not monitor the curriculum, supervise and evaluate instruction by monitoring the HoDs' and deputy principals' work, the HoDs and the deputy principals do the same by not monitoring educators' work. Ultimately there is no meaningful curriculum monitoring taking place except for checking learners' books. The activity of checking learners' books against pace setters or work schedules is not synonymous with management of teaching and learning. Management of teaching and learning entails amongst other things lesson observations and suggesting pedagogical strategies to teachers in order to tackle particular problem topics to simplify content to learners so they can improve their underperformance. Checking learners' books alone cannot be used as a measure to manage or monitor curriculum. For example, learners may be given work with the correct answers without being tested as evidence that they have learnt, but at examination time, they underperform because they were not taught to work out problems and find answers on their own. Those that are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that they manage instruction must do so with pride and authority and without apologising for doing what is within their scope of responsibility, and those people are the principals.

When asked about the strategy that the school principal used to monitor her work, the Foundation Phase HoD responded that she does not remember the last time the principal did so. *'She no longer monitors the work of HoDs, before she became a school principal, she used to monitor our work when she was still a deputy principal, but since she became the school principal three years ago she no longer does curriculum monitoring'*. The HoD further explained '*the principal delegated the task to her deputy who does not know whether she is coming or going'*.

5.3.6 Principals do not set high expectations and standards for learners

The principal at Thuto-Lefa la Sechaba, when responding to the question, How do you set high expectations at the school?, responded that one district official who was addressing them at a principals' conference in Kopanong, Benoni advised them not to set high standards for their schools on the basis that the learners at their schools come from poor SES backgrounds. For me this implied that because the learners are not exposed to the same scientific concepts

and learning resources as their affluent counterparts; and because their parents are poor and have low levels of education, these learners will not reach high standards and will therefore fail. I contend that this thinking is misleading because contemporary IL (Horng & Loeb, 2010) emphasises organisational management in which the principal is expected to ensure that the school has the necessary resources to facilitate effective teaching and learning. The thinking by the district official is a barrier to effective instruction and must not be considered. It is unfortunate that the school principal asserted and subscribed to such negative belief. I concur with Hallinger and Murphy's (1987) suggestion that some barriers are caused by districts and must be removed if we want school principals to be instructional leaders. It follows therefore that some principals have been fed misconceptions which need to be remedied otherwise our schools will continually produce mediocre and underperforming teachers and learners. This contradicts the speech made by the Gauteng MEC (Member of the Executive Council) for Education, Panyaza Lesufi, at the launch of the ICT gadgets (school tablets loaded with Internet) that the Gauteng child does not compete with the child in Limpopo, North West, Eastern Cape etc. but with a child in London, America, China and so on. His speech confirmed that his office encourages international competition and that his department is equipping learners with resources to compete with the best in the world. This is what I refer to as setting high standards.

5.3.7 Insufficient resources to carry out instructional responsibilities

The two schools under discussion only have the basic resources in the form of textbooks and photocopiers; there are no libraries and no computer laboratories for teachers and learners to do research, yet we live in an information age where knowledge changes very fast. The truth as we know it one day may be a myth the next day, so knowledge or facts known to be true are printed in textbooks and taught to learners, but may rapidly become outdated. For example, there are teachers who when they teach the solar system in geography or astronomical sciences they still refer to 'Pluto' as a planet when we know that Pluto was disqualified as a planet in 2004, more than a decade ago.

5.3.8 No incentives for teachers and learners

It emerged from the findings that neither of the two principals ever mentioned anything about awarding incentives to either teachers or learners for good work. Awarding incentives has the tendency to raise standards and motivates and encourages teachers to perform far above mediocrity because the principal recognises their effort. This in turn results in improved

learner performance because the learners know there is recognition for excellent performance. This increases positive competition amongst learners and raises the performance levels of teachers and the learners, as a result of improved instruction. The absence of motivation normally results in low teacher morale and a lack of confidence in the learners. This was evident in the teachers' responses from the interviews; teachers did not show any enthusiasm in the way their principals enacted IL to the effect that they were motivated and inspired to perform beyond the expected levels of performance.

5.3.9 High visibility not maintained

High visibility is maintained when the principal "interacts with Staff and students in classrooms and hallways, attends grade-level and departmental meetings, and strikes up spontaneous conversations with teachers" (Smith & Andrews, 1989: 26). Smith and Andrews further maintain that a principal's presence is felt in both formal and informal observations of classroom teachers, as the principal communicates praise verbally and through informal written notes. The authors argue that the visible presence appears to be most keenly felt when the principal serves as rewarder, giving positive attention to staff and student accomplishments. Effective elementary school principals feel discontented with their day if their presence is not felt in every classroom every day.

These attributes of the principal's visible presence were not evident at the two schools during the visits, neither were the principals heard expressing words of encouragement to the teachers and the learners in meetings and assemblies respectively. The principals were always in their offices having meetings with individual teachers and other stakeholders from outside the school.

5.3.10 Elderly teachers are too tired to teach

The demands of the teaching profession have increased in the past 15 years from teacher-centred to learner-centred approaches. The lack of ICT teaching resources in schools for teachers to use the Internet to research good materials that will help them carry out their instructional roles effectively is stifling progress to improve teaching and learning. However, elderly teachers refer to themselves as BBTs (Born Before Technology) and do not want to see themselves before the computer, despite its benefits to enhance teaching and learning (if used appropriately). These teachers are not willing to learn new things, to be innovative and productive. As a result, they struggle to teach the children of this age who are techno-wise.

The contemporary teacher is expected to keep abreast of developments in education by attending Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) and other in-service teacher development initiatives. In the process of their development, teachers need information literacy to do research. Teachers who are not computer literate find it difficult to perform such activities. It is even worse with elderly teachers who have worked for so many years and are expected to be compatible with these demands. As noted earlier, many teachers at Thuto-Lefa la Sechaba are old and they have a negative attitude towards teacher development, yet they do not have the knowledge to teach the contemporary learner and cannot cope with having to attend the many training workshops on CAPS implementation. In their strategic pillar 2 (teacher provisioning and support), the GDE aims to strengthen and solidify the direct support to teachers and enhance teacher development by using coaches. Despite being threatened with disciplinary action (GDE, 2014), teachers continue to be absent from the workshops and as a result instruction suffers and the learners are the end victims.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the school principals in their day-to-day instructional leadership activities. The weaknesses outnumber the strengths which indicates that the principals' instructional leadrership practices are weak. It emerged from the discussions that a number of issues still need the attention of school and district leadership to develop and strengthen primary school principals' instructional leadership capacity. The issues discussed define schools as ineffective, dysfunctional, failing, incompetent, and/or underperforming schools. Both schools have leadership, but the leaders do not provide leadership in teaching and learning. The main leaders, the principals, focus on non-instructional activities and ignore their main task of ensuring that effective teaching and learning takes place by supervising and evaluating instruction. Teachers and the entire school community do not know what their schools stand to achieve because of the absence of an implementable mission known by all stakeholders. Chapter 1 noted three assumptions with the second reading that the new policy framework has changed the focus of principal's work as instructional leader (Motilal, 2007; Christie, 2010). When principals interpret policy, instruction is somehow removed from their minds. Policy provides for schools to develop their school visions and missions; when principals formulate these they do not tie them to instructional practice. Schools simply copy the provincial visions and missions which are vague and not context-specific to their environment. The missions thus developed do not

relate to what the schools want to achieve instructionally, hence the schools lack a sense of direction. So, policy unfortunately makes people do things they do not understand.

If these schools are to transform from ineffective, dysfunctional and underperforming, then they need serious turnaround strategies to improve their quality of teaching and enhance learner performance. They must find out what will work for their context because depending on one-size-fits-all workshops will not influence school effectiveness. Chapter 6 suggests ways to address these leadership issues and recommends the next steps to take in the light of the challenges as outlined above.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I am going to provide a summary of how the research questions asked in the first chapter were responded to. This chapter presents hereunder the summary, highlights the limitations of the study and suggests some recommendations for future action and for further research to improve principals' institutional instructional leadership practices. I conclude by highlighting my personal self-reflections about my research journey.

6.2 Summary

In this section of the research I will summarise the chapters by highlighting the key issues that formed the central points of each chapter. The study has attempted to respond to the research questions in chapters 4 and 5. The main research question asked was "how does the school principal contribute to the effective teaching and learning as a core duty of the school"? In order to respond to the question further sub-questions were asked, namely: What strategies does the school principal set up to effect teaching and learning as a core business of the school? What are the barriers in leading teaching and learning at the school? How do teachers, HoDs, and deputy principals perceive the role of their principals regarding instructional leadership?

This study has responded to the research questions asked in chapter 1. Some of the findings are validations of literature, for example the 'absence' of a mission leads to lack of instructional direction. This manifests as weak instructional leadership which is a contributing factor to school underachievement. However, there was a new emerging theme which opposes conventional thinking that says "experience is a mother of all wisdom". This research found the opposite; that "experience is not the mother of all wisdom" after all, in the case of what this research has found without generalising. The older teachers at one of the schools were the most negative amongst the staff. They were against teacher development and did not use their experience to assist the principal to nurture novice teachers.

Chapter 1 reminded us about the state of affairs in education in South Africa. It further stated that about 80% of schools in South Africa are dysfunctional and that most of these schools

are in the townships. It was necessary, therefore, to probe the institutional instructional leadership practices of school principals with particular focus on underperforming township primary schools because instructional leadership in primary schools is under-researched; focus was on secondary schools until recently when researchers found that the problem of underperformance does not begin in secondary schools but in primary schools. An argument was also raised in chapter 1 that school principals in general are shifting their instructional responsibility to the lower levels of the management line without developing the other members of the SMT on the instructional leadership expectations.

In chapter 2, literature on the subject was reviewed; and chapter 3 outlined the research design and methodology. In chapter 4, the findings revealed that the principals did exactly that. Chapter 5 discussed 10 themes that emerged from the data collected through interviews, questionnaires and on-site observation of the principal's practice. Other issues that need attention were stated in the findings and discussed in chapter 5. Having discussed the findings grounded on the literature review, chapter 6 recommended actions to be considered as strategies for school turnaround. It recommended amongst others that the entrance requirement for principalship be at least a master's degree with specialisation in educational leadership, policy and management; that prospective principals be primary school and not secondary school specialists; prospective principals should prioritise instructional leadership as their number one function and practise all the instructional leadership functions and behaviours, which include amongst other things classroom monitoring, lesson observation, resource provisioning, mission and goal setting. The chapter also highlighted some limitations of this study, which are that this research is a small-scale study and cannot be used for purposes of forming generalisations about a country as big as South Africa. The study focused on primary schools and cannot be used to generalise about other types of schools. However, schools with similar problems and challenges can use the study to turn around their situation for the better. These are not solutions in themselves, but recommendations.

6.3 Limitations

The limitations of this study are that it is a small-scale research and it is difficult to make generalisations. The study is not representative of South Africa or the Gauteng province. However, the study can be used for purposes of comparison between schools within the same district to explore whether other underperforming schools in the district will yield the same

findings. There is also the possibility that the responses from the participants may represent subjective or socially acceptable responses rather than reflections of reality. I have attempted to gather facts rather than opinions to reduce subjective bias. I employ triangulation of responses between the participants as a strategy to limit bias.

I used the questionnaires and interviews for teachers, and interviews for SMT members (principals, deputy principals, and HoDs). The principals' instructional leadership practices at the schools were observed to balance what was expressed by the participants during the interviews and practice in reality.

A fact worth noting is that the time spent to observe the principals' instructional leadership practice in action was relatively short and during the stay at the schools to observe the principals' practice. Not much related to instructional leadership was observed. For example, principals were not heard in the assemblies honouring students for academic accomplishments or for good citizenship, recognising superior student achievement or improvement, contacting parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance, or acknowledging teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class. In addition, principals were not once heard articulating the school mission. This is contrary to the literature that proposes the school mission constantly be articulated or communicated. There is the possibility that this may have been expressed prior or after the collection of data at the schools. Also, the principals' allegiance to the unions, especially SADTU, may be the major contributing factor that bars principals from performing their instructional leadership functions effectively for fear that they are seen to be policing the teachers. "Teachers do not see themselves as fully responsible for leaners' results, and, together with their unions, they argue that learners achieve poorly because of their inadequate school resouces and socio-economic contextual factors|" (De Clercq, 2008, p. 9.). This belief, teachers move with it into principalship after promotion. These are some of the beliefs and attitudes which need to be changed in our township school teachers. Working hard is an attribute which was found by Blasé and Blasé (1999) to have a positive influence on school effectiveness, but in the context of township school teachers this is interpreted as abuse. Thus principals are not at liberty to behave in ways they think are best to raise the standards in their schools because of the pressure groups which manifest themselves in the form of unions. The latter is however anecdotal because I have observed it not necessarily read it from any source

Reports by the DoE and research conducted in similar studies reveal a link between principals' weak Instructional leadership skills and the school's overall underperformance. This small-scale study employed such information as a link to principals' weak instructional leadership but acknowledges that it does not form a strong basis for generalisations about South Africa. This supports the need for further research.

The literature revealed that effective instructional leadership practice is informed by research conducted in schools that have succeeded against all odds. Research shows that effective schools are those where labour unions do not interfere with the principals' practice. The empirical evidence gathered from the two schools in this research revealed that teachers still work as silos, principals are not welcomed in classrooms to observe lessons, and hence responsibility is delegated to the lower levels of management, i.e. deputy principals and HoDs. The implementers of instructional leadership (those to whom the responsibility is assigned) have no idea about MTL; principals do not take serious initiatives to develop their staff and this calls for serious departmental intervention to effect change.

The empirical data reveals that principals in the two schools acknowledged instructional leadership as an important aspect of their work (though one of the principals has a skewed understanding of the concept of instructional leadership), but did not implement it. The other principal was initially adamant she was not going to participate in the research, but she did, and when responding to the question about instructional leadership she articulated all the correct ideas about the concept but, surprisingly, did not practice a single aspect of instructional leadership

The principals from the two schools admitted that contemporary principalship is overwhelmed with bureaucratic activity that shifts their focus on instruction to non-instructional activities. In recognition of this dilemma, both principals delegated the instructional responsibility to their SMT colleagues. However, they did not talk about shared leadership. The principals did not monitor the work of their deputies and HoDs to whom they have delegated the responsibility of leading instruction as proposed by literature and backed up by numerous i nstructional leadershipresearch studies. They assumed that the deputies and HoDs knew everything about leading instruction but the responses from the interviews revealed that they did not. This research made a finding to the effect that some of the SMT members in schools are not experienced in primary school education. For example, in the case of Thuto-Lefa La Sechaba the deputy, prior to joining the school, worked in three

secondary schools. The disadvantage of recommending former secondary school teachers into primary schools is that they do not cope with the demands of the primary school child, for example the learner at a primary school is still at the lower cognitive level than the learner at the secondary school. Therefore this means teachers must use their skills to ensure that learners reach higher levels of thinking. Secondary school teachers lack those skills and complain that primary school learners have little knowledge and it is frustrating to teach them. So, secondary school teachers must stay in secondary schools and primary school teachers in primary schools.

Principals confused delegation with shared leadership. The HoDs and the deputies in both schools did not do justice to instructional; this led to teacher laxity which ultimately resulted in school underperformance.

It emerged from the literature that during the 1980s instructional leadership was based on the leaders' ability to shift from the activities that were non-instructional to activities that focused more on instruction and student performance. These leaders used what is referred to as trait leadership, which relied on the principals' innate personal traits to manage teaching and learning. It follows, therefore, that principals needed to be strong in character, be knowledgeable and skilled in order to implement instructional leadership successfully. However, contemporary instructional leadership requires principals to distribute or share leadership with other colleagues (Leithwood, 2008). According to Marks and Printy (2003) shared leadership is the appropriate style to adopt to ensure effective instruction in schools, given the fact that principals' work is inundated with various responsibilities. Louis et al. (2010: 10) made five important findings about shared leadership:

> leadership practices targeted directly at teachers' instruction (i.e. instructional leadership) have significant, although indirect, effects on student achievement; when principals and teachers share leadership, teachers' working relationships are stronger and student achievement is higher; leadership effects on student learning occur largely because leadership strengthens professional community, teachers' engagement in professional community, in turn, fosters the use of instructional practices that are associated with student achievement; the professional community effect may reflect the creation of a supportive school climate that encourages student effort above and beyond that provided in individual classrooms and the variable of principal-teacher trust is less significant than instructional leadership; still, it is part of a shared leadership culture that is associated with high-achieving schools.

The principals in the two schools studied in the research recognised that they could not manage on their own and instead of adopting a shared, transformational and instructional

leadership mix; they went the route of delegating leadership, which is totally different from shared leadership. A distinction between the two concepts was outlined in chapter 2. Transformational leadership ensures that teachers are continually developed to implement instruction effectively. This was not the case with the two schools being studied. It is evident from the empirical data that there are numerous gaps concerning primary school principals' IL practice that need the attention of the GDE, districts, circuits and schools as well as all other relevant stakeholders to turn around principals' IL practices for improved learner performance.

6.4 Recommendations

A lot still needs to be uncovered as far as instructional leadership in primary schools is concerned. Teachers, HoDs, deputy principals and principals in the two primary schools do not carry out their instructional leadership roles as expected, which results in their schools underperforming. The challenges highlighted in the literature review in chapter 2 reveal that principals are inundated with activities which result in them losing touch with the classroom realities and in the process they find themselves in a total state of confusion and fatigue.

After careful analysis of the findings I concluded on the following recommendations which in my opinion are all doable if we are serious about school turnaround for improved learner performance:

6.4.1 Consider qualifications for practicing as a principal

To alleviate the plight of the principals, the entrance requirements for a teaching post in South Africa should at least be an honours degree with specialisation in educational leadership and management. At the level of honours degree principals and prospective principals will learn how to do research at university level. This will equip them to lead their teachers in action research whereby they will be collecting data about their own practice and making internal whole school improvements without having to be pressurised by districts. The knowledge gained will also be useful in helping them make informed decisions about the direction their schools will take. These are the lessons we learn from the Finnish education system where the entrance requirement for a teaching post is a master's degree and for the principal post a second master's degree is a prerequisite.

Finland has one of the best education systems in the world; there are no monitoring and support programmes by the district, school teachers do it by themselves under the guidance of

their learned principals who, according to Finnish educational standards, must have a second master's degree with specialisation in management and leadership. Principals in Finland are experts of the context of their own schools and the improvements they bring as they engage in action research are context-specific. In South Africa however, the developmental workshops and monitoring and support programmes by districts are a one-size-fits-all kind of a process which does not address the specific needs of each school.

6.4.2 Review policy on union participation for principal recruitment

Another strategy that can be employed to deal with the issue of instructional leadership not being implemented is to create a policy that would obviate unions from deploying their members in key educational leadership posts like the principal, deputy principal and HoDs.

6.4.3 Development of teachers as researchers of their own practice

It may be argued by critics of foreign literature that South Africa needs local literature informed by empirical studies conducted in South Africa by South Africans about instructional leadership because they are familiar with the local schools' contexts. Foreign literature does not consider the specifics of our context. For example, in many townships where the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) is the dominant teachers' union, school principals are employed on the basis of cadre deployment (DoBE, 2016) and not on merit, skills or knowledge about the role of principalship. This research proposes that anyone aspiring to become a principal, should ensure that first and foremost they are instructional leaders and that they are skilled and knowledgeable in ensuring there is effective curriculum delivery in the school to ensure excellent learner results.

The GDE must speed up the provision of library services and library books to the underperforming schools in support of their strategies as contained in the Five Year 10 Pillar Education Programme (GDE, 2014).

6.4.4 Introduce performance contracts for principals

In line with the National Development Plan 2030, the GDE must introduce performance contracts for principals and deputy principals to ensure that principal practice is evident in learner outcomes. The GDE must also ensure that principal posts are monitored. There are schools that prefer to promote school leadership from within their schools but there is no evidence of succession planning and leadership preparation. When retiring school principals leave the system, those that succeed them have no direction. This is a problem not only in

South Africa but in the entire African continent. This research recommends that prospective principals be trained in school leadership, instructional leadership and curriculum management in particular. I propose therefore that future appointments into principalship not only consider experience in the classroom, but also qualifications and skills in management. The latter point is important because management skills and qualifications are a prerequisite for continuity after the departure of the serving principal. Schools become dysfunctional when principals, who do not possess management and leadership skills, knowledge and experience to lead, are appointed, i.e. prospective principals must have some management experience. In addition, principals need to have computer literacy that will help them in the process of researching the role of educators "scholar, researcher and life-long learner" as contemplated in Government Gazette 20844 (2000). Many current principals in township primary schools are not computer literate.

In order to be successful principals in underperforming schools need to facilitate reviews and reflections on their instructional practices at the end of every term. As they analyse their instructional behaviours they discard or delete those unwanted practices and replace them with the activities that will make their schools more effective. As discussed in the literature review in chapter 2, effective school principals emphasise instruction as the most important goal (Brookover & Lezotte, 1977 in Smith & Andrews, 1989).

6.4.5 Develop a strong visible principal presence

It is important that principals leave their comfort zones (their offices) and demonstrate a strong visible presence in their schools. Although the findings show that the principals of the schools for this research maintained a visible presence, it was not strong enough. Smith and Andrews (1989) argue that "the extent to which the principal creates a visible presence in the school to both the staff and students is the most important factor for the principal to be seen as a strong instructional leader by teachers". Strong visible presence is better described by Smith and Andrews (1989: 45) as follows:

> On a day-to-day operations level, there are two levels on which principals present a strong visible presence. First, they are seen out and around in classrooms, in the lunchroom, in hallways during passing time, with buses before and after school and in assemblies. They make positive announcements over the public address system in the morning before instruction begins and praise the staff and students for good work. At the elementary school level, these principals do not feel their day is successful *unless they are in every classroom every day*.

The extract above makes it clear what a strong visible presence symbolises. If school principals can implement the behaviours as suggested by Smith and Andrews in the extract above, underperforming schools can turn around their underperformance and be better institutions that offer quality education because teachers know that their principals do not visit their classrooms as a once-off event but observe their teaching on a daily basis. Teachers know that they may not teach learners without a properly planned lesson because the principal will need the lesson plan and s/he will analyse it against the topic in the ATP. I therefore recommend that this idea of a strong visible presence as suggested above be applied by principals without fear or favour. As discussed in the earlier chapters, the work of the principal is overwhelming and it is imperative that h/she distributes leadership to other members of the management team to realise the idea of shared instructional leadership. Also, if the principal leaves the institution or is absent from work, the school should be able to continue to function effectively. Districts must make it a directive that the principal's instructional leadership task is non-negotiable. If the principal wishes to assign this responsibility to the other members of the SMT, s/he must be involved in the process. For example, the principal can request reports from colleagues containing information about how the process of lesson observation unfolded and further satisfy him/herself that indeed the results of the lesson observation were fair and correct by reobserving the lessons followed by the necessary feedback.

6.4.6 Contextualise professional development of school leaders

The discussions of the 16th Conference of Commonwealth (CCEM) Education Ministers of 2006 (Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2009: 3) recommended the following: "Since school principals are key to facilitating and overseeing that quality teaching and learning takes place in schools, the professional development of school leaders through a contextually relevant school principalship qualification should be an approach adopted more widely among member states". Some specific training needs have been uncovered (Pashiardis & Brauckmann 2009); for example, the professional development needs of new and experienced principals are not identical. With regard to the content of leadership development, the most desired element brought up in most pieces of research concerns the practice of instructional leadership. According to Hale and Moorman (2003: 19), policy and institutional leaders must remember that the business of schools is teaching and learning, that all education policies must support student achievement and that all preparation programmes must develop school leaders who can provide instructional leadership. This resonates with Agunloye (2011) in

chapter 2 that poor leadership manifests when a leader displays lack of knowledge of schools' context and inability to critically identify and analyse the germane needs of the school, the students and the community. In agreement with Agunloye, Louis et al. (2010) in their study of elementary school principals' practice also found that successful leaders have mastered both the basics and the productive responses to the unique demands of the contexts in which they find themselves. I propose, therefore, that a context-specific developmental programme aimed at addressing primary school principals' needs be put in place for both experienced and inexperienced principals.

6.4.7 Change the attitude of prospective and current principals about principalship

A majority of current principals were once teachers who had a particular perception of a principal, not as perceived by effective schools research. Therefore they behave the way they do because they are not informed about their role as instructional leaders and they cannot deal with the pressures that come from both the department and from the teachers on the ground (unions).

6.4.8 Strengthen district support across all underperforming schools

District officials should not have an interest in school management posts because by virtue of leaving the schools for district positions indicates that working in schools with children is not for them. Districts are supposed to provide support to principals; they must identify gaps in principals' leadership expertise through ongoing monitoring and discussion with principals about school performance and improvement plans, and through informal advising and coaching interventions (Louis et al., 2010). The advice they give must be qualitative, strong and proven by research to be good, and not the kind of advice given to one of the principals of this study by a district official that schools must not set high standards for their learners. Louis et al. (2010: 21) further maintain "district leaders in lower-performing settings also had a greater tendency to attribute the poor performance of struggling schools to external factors (state policies, school community characteristics) than to their principals' leadership behaviours and these district leaders were also less likely to provide strategic help or professional development for principals in struggling schools". This research has uncovered the fact that not only do state policies contribute to poor performance, but also to the principals' leadership behaviours. In their study, Louis et al. (2010) also found that the use of outside experts to help with principal development was relatively rare as is the case with the principals of the two schools studied in this research. It is therefore proposed that principal

development, such as that organised by Bush (2007), be arranged on a continuous basis because principals are appointed every year. The development programme should focus on the following specific areas: methods of clinical supervision, school-improvement planning, classroom walkthroughs, and use of student performance data.

6.4.9 Principal recruitment to be administered by knowledgeable panels on educational issues

SGB governance functions include amongst others teacher recruitment. However, research has shown that many SGBs in the townships have low levels of education and do not understand all issues in education including principal recruitment, which is a highly contested position. The SGBs do not have the capacity to handle the process of recruitment from shortlisting to interviews and making final recommendations. Given the status quo and the recently published news (City Press, January, 2016) where SADTU was implicated in the sale of posts, I propose the DoE appoint independent panels to be responsible for the process of recruitment of principals in primary schools. The condition which must form part of this process should include a clause that deals with district officials who have an interest in the principals' posts. The officials who qualify to apply for the position of principals must be candidates whose non-teaching experience does not exceed three years. If they have been out of the classroom for more than three years, they should not qualify. Former district officials do not make good principals; they are good in office work, so in schools they will stay in their offices and not supervise and evaluate curriculum, they will also not observe lessons because they do not possess strong curriculum knowledge and are less confident in curriculum matters than teachers because they have been out of the school realities for long. So, they would not wish to expose themselves to be lacking in knowledge before their subordinates. Currently districts, when handling interviews, recommend their colleagues who do not understand what is going on in the schools except to interpret policies. In schools teachers do not work much with policies but with teaching the subjects. Knowledge of policies is useful to a certain extent for a teacher, but it does not matter more than knowledge of the subject matter. Therefore principals must be recruited from the schools not from the districts.

6.4.10 Eliminate all instructional time wasters

In the discussions above and from my own observations as a teacher, I have noted that there are common instructional timewasters in schools, particularly township schools. These

timewasters include training for athletics, choral practices, and teachers attending union mass meetings during school hours. This research makes some suggestions as to how to deal with these issues.

Training for athletics: Training learners for participation in athletics competitions and other sports competitions should form an integral part of the whole school planning. At the end of each school year, the school sports committee should submit their programme of action which reflects all the dates and activities for the coming year. Training should be incorporated in the school timetable and the school should set aside one of the week days as their sports, arts and culture day.

Union meetings: Union meetings normally take place during school hours, usually around 12:00 midday. Unions apply to districts in advance for a day on which a meeting will be held and the district approves. On the day of the meeting, teachers (comrades) leave their schools at 11:00 under the pretext that they are going to attend the meeting, but many do not do so and use this instructional time for their own personal affairs. If the notice convening the meeting is not communicated in advance, SMTs remain at school until 14:00, not teaching, but to maintain order because many classes are without teachers. The SMT cannot just release learners without communicating with their parents. This, I believe, is a violation of the rights of children to education. I recommend therefore that legislation that grants teachers the right to engage in union activities be amended so that no teacher should be allowed to leave the school premises to attend union activities as unions have no control to ensure that teachers use the time for the meeting for that purpose. At times the members at the meeting hall do not form a quorum but if one can take rounds to check teachers in schools during that time, one will be shocked to discover that they are not at their work stations. Once they do not form a quorum, unions will reapply for another day for the same meeting, yet another day will be wasted, but the second time around at least the meeting will continue irrespective of whether the quorum is formed or not. Unions must be fair and review the way they do things and think about the purpose of teaching as a career and consider shifting their meetings after school hours so that teachers can focus on instructional activities. The DoE must engage unions to deal with this issue.

However, any innovation that the DoE wants to embark on should go through a process of consultation with the unions to avoid possible nation-wide industrial action. Certainly, this is a rare event in other countries. For example, the ANA systematic assessment (whose purpose

is to provide the DoE with information about education in the country so that necessary interventions and support can be planned and implemented) planned for the September 2015 examination sitting was boycotted by unions. South African unions' power to interfere with education processes creates problems insofar as teaching and learning is concerned. New strategies should be devised to prevent teacher unions from interfering with some educational processes by the DoE because this hinders national education progress in the country. Also, the DoE must design plans that will satisfy all since they know the unions have veto powers over any process that may be introduced.

6.4.11 Encourage the formation of and participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and research activities amongst teachers

There is ample research on schools that have succeeded against all odds (Christie, 2010; Leithwood, 2008). From this research school principals must learn about turnaround strategies that they can apply in their schools. The DoE must facilitate network programmes where high performing schools form partnerships with low performing schools with the aim of sharing ideas on how to improve underperformance. The world acclaimed reggae artist Bob Marley (1980) in one of his songs wrote that "in the abundance of water, a fool is thirsty", he also said that we must not lean against our own misunderstandings. So if your next door neighbour has buckets full of water but you have none and you are thirsty, the noblest thing to do is to ask for water from the one that has and if you do not understand something and somebody within reach possess comprehension why lean on your misunderstandings? It does not make sense. Underperforming schools know their contexts; they know what is troubling them and they know what solutions are needed. If the problem is with the principal, they know that, if it is with the teachers' lack of content knowledge, lack of ICT resources they also know that. The principals must be proactive and explore every available avenue to deal with underperformance. In relation to pillar 7 of the 10 strategic pillars, the GDE must deliver on the promise that "there will be twinning and acquisitions of schools so that all learners irrespective of their background can share resources and experiences" (GDE, 2014).

6.4.12 Innovative ways of teacher development must be developed and implemented

Districts monitoring and support programmes in their current form and structure do not yield any positive results. When they go to schools they do the same things done by HoDs in their departments, they meet the HoD concerned and request learners' books and start checking

whether there is sufficient work coverage. I am critical of their work as curriculum support agents. The problem is not the amount of work in the learners' books, but how the content is delivered. This therefore suggests that the district subject facilitators must teach the principals what to look for when they practise curriculum monitoring and supervision. The same must happen with the deputy principals and the HoDs. The principal must monitor how teachers teach (pedagogics) so that their intervention can be meaningful as they model good teaching to their teachers. They must observe lessons in classrooms. As they do so, they must teach the deputy principals and HoDs how to supervise and monitor curriculum for continuity during the time when they are not present at the school, rather than throwing them into the deep end. This sounds more like shared instructional leadership than delegated IL. When someone is delegated to a meeting s/he is representing somebody who is not necessarily at that meeting. It means the delegate is on his/her own. 'Delegated' and 'shared' leadership are therefore not synonymous. The principals of the two schools must move from a position of delegating to a position of sharing leadership with their colleagues. In the same breath, shared IL does not necessarily mean that principals abdicate their power as principals, it means working collaboratively to realise the school goals and to develop IL skills in others and create leadership density in the school as an organisation.

6.4.13 Co-ordinate the components of Curriculum for teacher development

Another factor worth noting is the lack of coordination of the three key components of the curriculum for district developmental workshops, namely: "lack of alignment between curriculum development, teacher development and selection and supply of learning materials" (Cross et al., 2002: 181).

Chapman and Harris (2004: 223) suggest that schools "need to become learning communities, engaged in continuous improvement efforts and enquiring into both within and out-of-school developments". I cannot agree more with this statement because it is in line with the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DoE, 2011) which proposes that schools form PLCs wherein teachers are able to come together as networks and share good practice taking into consideration their contextual factors for improvement, rather than waiting for districts to train them on the basis of a one-size-fits all approach which is meaningless to their contexts. As ILs, principals must ensure their schools have policies in place that support staff professional development.

6.4.14 Time to specialise in primary school learning

Another concern worth noting is the issue of teachers formerly employed at secondary schools who apply for principals' posts at primary schools. The nature of work and demands in primary schools are different from those in secondary schools. For example, in secondary school learners have reached a certain level of development, and according to Piaget's theory, they have acquired some ability to work with abstractions. However, educators in primary schools still need many concrete aids to teach, as younger children learn better by seeing. Therefore a teacher, HoD, or deputy principal with a high school background is not suitable for primary school work because they will ignore the factors that make primary schools unique entities from secondary schools. For example, a lot of money must be spent on teaching resources in a primary school for reasons stated above, the principal with the high school background may see that as unnecessary because they think learners are the same when they are not. The focus of teaching and learning is also not the same. In the Foundation Phase learners still learn how to write and read. Teachers in the primary schools, especially in the Foundation Phase, must have good chalkboard skills. In the high school learners already possess mastery of these skills and their teachers do not worry so much about writing.

A majority of secondary school teachers do not have chalkboard skills and this is a disadvantage for a primary school as writing is a basic skill that must be taught to primary school children. The secondary school recruit may not give attention to this important aspect of the child's academic development. It may take the principal promoted from a high school a long time before s/he understands how the primary school operates because s/he did not specialise in primary school education. A lot of investment has to be made in their development so they fit within the primary school set-up. If a person chooses to specialise in secondary school teaching s/he must be focused and work as secondary school teachers. Also, teacher attitudes and beliefs of primary school teachers are different from those of secondary school teachers. It is therefore obvious that a principal whose background is secondary school will be lost in the primary school in terms of the mentality of the personnel they lead. The jargon used in the secondary and primary schools is also slightly different. Teachers in these schools refer to the same things differently. Therefore employing a teacher from a high school into a primary school is fatal for instruction and is herewith discouraged outright.

The Ekurhuleni South District curriculum coordinator for the Intermediate Phase always advises schools against recommending candidates who are teachers at secondary schools into

management positions at primary schools. Another disadvantage about secondary school teachers leading primary schools is that most of them do not believe in planning lessons, they also are opponents of class visits and file moderations. In primary schools teachers have curriculum and assessment files, they prepare lessons, and submit these for moderation. However, the attitude that the secondary school teachers have towards primary schools is that primary school teachers have low levels of knowledge by virtue of being primary school teachers, but that is not true. This is what makes them think they are superior to primary school teachers. This leads to broken relations between principals and teachers because principals undermine primary school teachers. Primary school principals' posts must be filled by candidates who specialised in primary school teaching and have experience in management and leadership with qualifications relevant to the teaching post.

6.4.15 Replace elderly teachers with young ones

The data analysis and discussions in chapter 5 revealed how elderly teachers' behaviours at Thuto-Lefa la Sechaba Primary School impact negatively on teacher development. The recommendations to that effect herewith proposed are that those elderly teachers whose enthusiasm to teach has faded must be obliged to retire and those who can still run must be kept in the system. It sounds somewhat inhumane to suggest that people be removed from their jobs, but if they are unproductive to save the integrity of learning institutions like schools that ought to be the case.

6.4.16 Strategise means for increased parental involvement in the school matters of their children

In a study conducted by Kamper (2008: 10) about effective leadership in some South African high-poverty schools, it was found that "regarding the parents, all parents emphasised the crucial role of parent involvement in their schools' success". Principals devised measures to attract the parents to the schools by handing out learner reports only to the parents, guardians or caregivers. In underperforming schools, many parents do not take part in the school matters of their children, they do not come to school to enquire about the progress of their children, and nor do they come to school to receive their children's progress reports; only a few parents take an interest in their children's school work. This research recommends that this practice be implemented in the two underperforming schools; so that not a single learner be given a report. This will help facilitate a process of teacher-parent talks whereby the teacher will explain to the parent the outcomes of learner performance and suggest ways of

helping the parent to assist the child to improve. If parents do not come to school their children should not be given reports and this must be considered a breach of the school's constitution and parents may be sanctioned on the ground that they are careless about their children's educational needs. Principals' practice should incorporate this measure if they are to succeed as instructional leaders. Also, principals must encourage parents with low levels of education to register at Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) centres so they can assist their children with school work and not blame their low education as a reason for not assisting their children. It is therefore incumbent upon the principals' leadership practice to ensure the facilitation of a programme of parent educational development for the sole purpose of ensuring that parents are able to read, write and count in order to help their children.

6.4.17 Conclusion

To conclude this report, I believe that it is worth noting that prior the democratic dispensation in South Africa, it was in the townships that the majority of the formerly educationally marginalized citizens of this country took to the streets to protest against amongst other things "inferior" education known as Bantu education (Tabata, 1979). This became part of their daily lives. It is however distressing to learn that after two decades of liberation from the oppressive educational policies, school leaders seem to have forgotten the mandates of the liberation struggle which includes quality education provision for all. The findings reveal that the principals do not focus on their core leadership function, instructional leadership. Principals, as accounting officers are expected to be the custodians of the futures of the learners through education in the schools they lead.

I maintain that the recommendations I proposed are implementable if districts and other stakeholders in the education hierachy can begin to reduce the barriers that prevent principals from enacting their instructional leadership responsibilities. Time is right now for educationalists to prioritize addressing the issues around principals' instructional leadership practices particularly in the township primary school sector because not much is known in that sphere.

Throughout my research journey working with the participants I discovered that some teachers are willing and dedicated to work but their toil was fruitless due to mediocre performance by principals to provide quality educational leadership. In some instances educators complained about lack of resources. Resources are an important integral part of instruction in a primary school because at that level learners have developed the capability

think abstractly, they learn better through the use of concrete aids. It does not necessarily mean that every resource must be purchased. Principals need to teach and encourage their staff to design some of the teaching resources. One of the seven roles of educators is to be "the designer of learning programmes and materials" (Government gazette no. 20844, 2000). These facts presented herewith serve as reasons for my conclusion that prior appointment as a principal, the prospective school head must go through a thorough process of leadership preparation which takes into account the qualification with specialization in Educational leadership and management and the introduction of performance contracts for principals be made part of the educational policy in South Africa.

REFERENCES

Agunloye, O. (2011). Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools: A Diagnostic Framework and Conceptual Model. American International Journal of Contemporary Research, Vol. 1, No. 3. Augusta State University. Augusta, Georgia, USA

Blasé, J. & Blasé, J. (1999). Effective instructional leadership. Teachers' perspectives on how principals promote teaching and learning in schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(2): 130-141. University of Georgia

Brookover, W.B. & Lezotte, L. (1982). Creating effective schools. Holmes Beach, Learning Publications FL:

Bush, T. (2007). *Educational leadership and management: theory, policy, and practice.* South African Journal of Education, Vol.27 (No.3). pp. 391-406. ISSN 0256-0100

Bush, T. & Glover, D. (2009). Managing teaching and learning: a concept paper. Johannesburg: Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance

Bush, T. & Heystek, J. (2006). School leadership and management in South Africa: Principals' perceptions. International Studies in Educational Administration, 34:63-76.

Bush, T., & Oduro, G. (2006). New Principals in Africa: Preparation, Induction and Practice. Journal of Educational Administration, 44, 359-375. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09578230610676587

Bush, T. et al. (2010). *New Directions in Educational Leadership: From Management to Leadership*. Sage

Chapman, C. & Harris, A. (2004). Improving schools in difficult and challenging contexts: strategies for improvement. *Educational Research*, 46(3): 219-228, Routledge

Christie, P. (2001). Improving school quality in South Africa: a study of schools that have Succeeded against the odds. *Journal of* 26: 40–65.

Christie, P. (2010). Landscapes of leadership in South African schools: mapping the changes. *Educational Management Administration and 38(6) 694–711. Sage.*

Cross, M., Mungadi, R. & Rouhani, S. (2002) From Policy to Practice: curriculum reform in South African education [1]. Journal of Comparative Education, Vol. 38, No. 2, pp. 177-187

Davidoff, S. & Lazarus, S. (1997). *The learning school: an organizational*. Kenwyn: Juta *Development approach*

De Clercq, F. (2008). Teacher quality, appraisal and development: The flaws in the IQMS. Perspectives in Education, Vol 26(1)

Department of Basic Education. (2016). Final Report of the Ministerial Task Team Appointed by Minister Angie Motshekga to Investigate Allegations Into the Selling of Posts of Educators by Members of Teachers Unions and Departmental Officials in Provincial Education Departments

DoE, (2000). Government Gazette No. 20844. Norms & Standards for Educators, Vol. 415, Pretoria

DoE (2008). Managing teaching and learning. A module of the Advanced Certificate: Education (School Management and Leadership)

Fleisch, B. *and* Christie P. *(2004)* Structural change, leadership and school Effectiveness/improvement: perspectives from South Africa. *Discourse* 25*(*1*):* 95-111.

Fullan, M. (2006). Quality Leadership ⇔ Quality Learning. Proof Beyond Reasonable Doubt. *Paper prepared for the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN)*. Líonra+, Glounthaune, Co. Cork

GDE. (2007). Circular 38/2007: Framework for a District-Wide Continuous School Improvement Strategy

GDE. (2014). The Five Year 10 Pillar Education Programme, presentation for the MEC's consultative meetings

GDE (2014). GDE Plan for the next five years, 100 Day Programme, EMT

Hale, E L, & Hunter N. Moorman. *(*2003*).* "Preparing School Principals: A National Perspective on Policy and Program Innovations.

Hallinger, P. (1987). *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS)*, Golf PointWay

Hallinger, P. (2005). Instructional leadership and the school principal: a passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in Schools,* 4: 1-20, Routledge

Hallinger, P. & Murphy, J.F. (1987). *Assessing and Developing Principal Instructional Leadership*. Association for Supervisison and Curriculum Development

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1998). Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness: 1980–1995. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 9*(2), 157-191.

Hallinger, P., Chung, W. & Wen, C. (2012). Gateways to Leading Learning, Assessing the Measurement Properties of the PIMRS: A Meta-Analysis of Reliability Studies, Number 4

Hoadley, U. (2008). Pedagogy and social class: a model for the analysis of pedagogic variation. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 29, 1*, pp. 63-78.

Hoadley, U. et al. (2009). Managing to learn: instructional leadership in South African secondary schools. *Teacher Education in South Africa Series*. Johannesburg: HSRC Press

Horng, E. & Loeb, S. (2010). New thinking about instructional leadership, Kappanmagazine.org

Jenkins, B. (2009). What it takes to be an instructional leader, www.naesp.org

Kamper, G. (2008). A profile of effective leadership in some South African high-poverty schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 28: 1-18

Kirk, D.J. & Jones, T.L. (2004). Effective Schools: Assessment Report. Pearson Education, Inc.

Kitavi, M.W.; van der Westhuizen, P.C. (1997). Problems facing beginning principals in developing countries: a study of beginning principals in Kenya*:* *International Journal of Educational Development,* Vol. 17, No.3, pp. 251-263(13

Kruger, A.G. (2003). Instructional leadership: the impact on the culture of teaching and learning in two effective secondary schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 23(3): 206-211, EASA

Leithwood, K. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. School Leadership and Management, 28(1), 26-35

Leithwood et al. (2010). *Leading School Turnaround: How Successful Leaders Transform Low-Performing Schools*. Sage

Lezotte, L. (1991). *Correlates of effective schools: The first and the second generation*. Okemos, MI: Effective Schools Products, Ltd.

Louis, K.S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K.L. & Anderson, S.E. (2010). Learning from leadership: investigating the links to improved student learning. Final report of Research Findings to the Wallace Foundation

Marks, H.M. & Printy, S.M. (2003). Principal leadership and school performance: an integration of transformational and instructional leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(3): 370-397

Mayrowetz, D. (2008). Making sense of distributed leadership: Exploring the multiple usages of the concept in the field. Educational Administration Quarterly, 44(3), 424-435.

McEwan, (2003). McEwan, E.K. (2003). *Seven Steps to Effective Instructional Leadership*. 2nd Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

McMillan, J.H. & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education, Evidence-Based Inquiry*. Seventh Edition. MA, USA: Pearson

Mestry, R. (2013). The innovative role of the principal as instructional leader: a prerequisite for high student achievement. University of Johannesburg. DOI:10.773/IPEDR.2013.V60.25

Mitchell, C. & Castle, J.B. (2005). The instructional role of elementary school principals. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 28(3): 409-433

Motilal, G. (2007). How does policy change influence or affect instructional leadership in primary schools? Paper presented at the EMASA Conference

Msila, V. (2005). The education exodus:the flight from township schools. Africa Education Review, 2(2): pp.173-188

Pashiardis, P. & Brauckmann, S. (2009). *Professional Development Needs of School Principals*. Commonwealth Education Partnerships2009/10 (pp. 120-124)., UK: Cambridge Nexus Strategic Partnerships.

Republic of South Africa. National Development Plan 2030: Our future make it work.

National Planning Commission.Department: The Presidency

Roberts, J. Roach, J. (2006*). Leadership Styles and Practices in Effective Schools.* Johannesburg: Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance

Rogan, J. & Grayson, D. (2003). Towards a theory of curriculum implementation in developing countries. International Journal of Science Education, 5 (10).

Reitzug, U. C. (2008). Diversity, Power and Influence: Multiple Perspectives on the Ethics of School Leadership. Journal of School Leadership, 18(4), 396-420.

Shalem, Y. (2003). Do we have a theory of change? Calling change models to account. Perspectives in Education, Volume 21(1)

Shatzer, R.H. et al. (2013). Comparing the effects of instructional and transformational leadership on student achievement: implications for practice. Educational Management Administration & Leadership1–15. SAGE. DOI: 10.1177/1741143213502192

Smith, W.F. & Andrews, R.L. (1989). *Instructional Leadership: How Principals Make a Difference.* Alexandria, Va: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Southworth, G. (2002). Instructional leadership in schools: reflections and empirical evidence, *School Leadership & Management: Formerly School Organisation*, 22(1): 73-91, Routledge, DOI: 10.1080/13632430220143042

Spaull, N. (2013). South Africa's education crisis: the quality of education in South Africa 1994-2011. Report Commissioned by CDE

Stoll, & K. Myers (Eds.), *No Quick Fixes: Perspectives on Schools in Difficulty.* (pp. 1-14). London: Falmer Press. Stoll, & K. Myers (Eds.), *No Quick Fixes: Perspectives on Schools in Difficulty.* (pp. 1-14). London: Falmer Press.

Tabata, I.B. (1979). Education for Barbarism. Apdusa Views.

Taole, M.J. (2013). Exploring principals' role in providing instructional leadership in rural high schools in South Africa. *Stud Tribals*, 11(1): 75-82

Taylor, N. 2002. *Accountability and support: Improving public schooling in South Africa: A systemic framework*. Paper presented at the National Consultation on School Development. Department of Education, 29 January, 2002.

Taylor, N. (2006). Equity, efficiency and the development of South African schools, paper presented at the Umalusi conference, April.

Taylor, N. (2008). What's wrong with South African schools? Presentation to the conference What's Working in School Development. JET Education Services

Teddlie, C. & Stringfield, S. (1993). Schools Make a Difference: Lessons Learned from A Ten Year Study of School Effects. New York: Teachers College Press.

Van der Berg, S. (2011). Improving Education Quality in South Africa. Report for the National Panning Commission. Department of Economics, University of Stellenbosch

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER

Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Tel: +27 11 717-3064 Fax: +27 11 717-3100 E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za Website: www.wits.ac.za

06 May 2015

Student Number: 444100

Protocol Number: 2015ECE005M

Dear Sibusiso Vilakazi

Application for Ethics Clearance: Master of Education

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate, has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

Principal Instructional Leadership practices in primary schools: A Case of two Underperforming township Primary Schools.

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that clearance was granted.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely,

M Mabeta

Wits School of Education

011 717-3416

Cc Supervisor- Dr Zakhele Mbokazi

APPENDIX B: GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:
Reference no: D2016 / 091
enquiries: Diane Buntting 011 843 6503

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	**28 May 2015**
Validity of Research Approval:	**28 May 2015 to 2 October 2015**
Name of Researcher:	**Vilakazi N.S.**
Address of Researcher:	**48 Johaleen Street; Dawnpark; Boksburg; 1459**
Telephone / Fax Number/s:	**011 039 5335; 074 147 4385; 072 385 1056**
Email address:	**sibusisovilakazi@yahoo.com**
Research Topic:	**Exploring Principal Instructional Leadership practices in Primary Schools: A case study at two underperforming township Primary Schools**
Number and type of schools:	**TWO Primary Schools**
District/s/HO	**Ekurhuleni South**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to the Principal, SGB and the relevant District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted. However participation is VOLUNTARY.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher has agreed to and may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter;

2015/05/29

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research
9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

2. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB);
3. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned;
4. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid;
5. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal and/or Director must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage;
6. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year;
7. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
8. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent and learner;
9. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources;
10. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations;
11. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management with one Hard Cover, an electronic copy and a Research Summary of the completed Research Report;
12. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned; and
13. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director and school concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

.....

Dr David Makhado

Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 2015/05/29

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research
9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX C: EKURHULENI SOUTH DISTRICT RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

GAUTENG PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: Audrey Hutton

Tel: 011 389-6220

Ref: EOS 176/2015

To: The Principal (for action)

Deputy Principal (for action)

RE: Research Approval Letter

Please be advised that the Gauteng Department of Education has given Mr. N.S. Vilakazi permission to conduct research. The research is purely on a volunteering basis and the student would be speaking to Principal in the school. The student will be visiting the schools at the start of term 3.

The research title: **Exploring Principals Institutional Instructional leadership Practices in Primary Schools**

S.R Maboa
CES: EOS
Date: 28 July 2015

M.H. Bhagaloo
District Director
Date: 28 July 2015



APPENDIX D: CONSENT LETTER

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called: **"Exploring Principals' Institutional Instructional Leadership practices in Primary Schools: A Case study of two Underperforming Primary Schools" in Ekurhuleni South District, in the Gauteng Province.**

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

Circle one

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only YES/NO

Permission to be interviewed

I would like to be interviewed for this study. YES/NO

I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to

answer all the questions asked. YES/NO

Permission for questionnaire

I agree to fill in a question and answer sheet or write a test for this study. YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

APPENDIX E: INFORMATION SHEET

DATE: 03 March 2015

My name is Nicholas SibusisoVilakazi and I am an M Ed student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on **"Exploring Principals' Institutional Instructional Leadership practices in Primary Schools: A Case study of two Underperforming Primary Schools".**

The research involves interviewing participants in which case you happen to be one. It also involves audio taping and observation of the Principal Instructional Leadership practice. You will be required to respond to set questions that are contained in the interview schedule.

The reason why I have chosen you is that you occupy the formal position of principal, so Instructional leadership is your terrain, and that you are better positioned to provide the necessary information.

I was wondering whether you would mind if you could accept my invitation to take part in the research project.

You will not be disadvantaged in any way. You will be reassured that you can withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and you will not be paid for this study.

Your name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely

SIGNATURE: ……..

Contact person: Vilakazi Nicholas Sibusiso
ADDRESS: 48 Johaleen Street, Dawn Park, Boksburg, 1459
Cell No : 072 385 1056
email : sibusisovilakazi46@yahoo.com

APPENDIX F:

LETTER REQUESTING TO CONDUCT RESEARCH TO THE PRINCIPAL AS SITE MANAGER

DATE: 03 March 2015

Dear Principal

My name is Nicholas SibusisoVilakazi and I am an M Ed student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

I am doing research on **"Exploring Principals' Instructional Leadership practices in Primary Schools: A Case study of two Underperforming Primary Schools".**

My research involves interviewing participants from your school and these include the Principal, Deputy Principal, HODs and teachers.

The reason why I have chosen your school is that it fits the criteria for my study.

I was wondering whether the school principal would mind **granting me permission** as a site manager to use school as a research site for my study.

The school will not be disadvantaged in any way. The school will be reassured that it can withdraw the permission granted at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and the school will not be paid for this study.

The school's name will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. The individual privacy of the participants will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of the research.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATURE: ……

Contact person: Vilakazi Nicholas Sibusiso

ADDRESS: 48 Johaleen Street, Dawn Park, Boksburg, 1459

TEL NUMBER: 072 385 1056

Email: sibusisovilakazi46@yahoo.com

APPENDIX G: PRINCIPAL OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

The School Principal will be observed on these behaviors:

- Does the Principal **communicate the school goals** and objectives (vision) during the staff meetings?
- Does the school Principal **encourage collaboration and co-operation among teachers** during the meetings?
- What does the Principal **say to teachers** during class visits?
- Does the Principal **do classroom walkthroughs to monitor whether teaching and learning takes place**?
- Does the Principal **visit classrooms and observe the lessons?**
- Does the Principal **model good teaching** for the teachers?
- Does the Principal **maintain high visibility** throughout the formal school day?



APPENDIX H: The PIMRS

Please provide the following information about yourself:

(A) School Name: _____

(B) Years, at the end of this school year, that you have worked with the current principal:

___1 ___ 5-9 ___more than 15

___2-4 ___10-15

(C) Years experience as a teacher at the end of this school year:

___1 ___ 5-9 ___more than 15

___2-4 ____10-15

This questionnaire is designed to provide a profile of principal leadership. It consists of 50 behavioral statements that describe principal job practices and behaviors. You are asked to consider each question in terms of your observations of the principal's leadership over the past school year.

Read each statement carefully. Then circle the number that best fits the specific job behavior or practice of this principal during the past school year. For the response to each statement:

5 represents *Almost Always*

4 represents *Frequently*

3 represents *Sometimes*

2 represents *Seldom*

1 represents *Almost Never*

In some cases, these responses may seem awkward; use your judgment in selecting the most appropriate response to such questions. Please circle only one number per question. Try to answer every question. Thank you.

To what extent does your principal . . . ?

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
I. FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS					
1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals	1	2	3	4	5
2. Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them	1	2	3	4	5
3. Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development	1	2	3	4	5
4. Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals	1	2	3	4	5
5. Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	1	2	3	4	5
II. COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS					
6. Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	1	2	3	4	5
7. Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	1	2	3	4	5
8. Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	1	2	3	4	5
9. Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)	1	2	3	4	5
10. Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)	1	2	3	4	5
III. SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION					
11. Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are					

consistent with the goals and direction of the school	1	2	3	4	5
12. Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	1	2	3	4	5

Teacher Form 2.0 3

13. Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	1	2	3	4	5
15. Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	1	2	3	4	5

IV. COORDINATE THE CURRICULUM

16. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)	1	2	3	4	5
17. Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions	1	2	3	4	5
18. Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives	1	2	3	4	5
19. Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests	1	2	3	4	5
20. Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	1	2	3	4	5

V. MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS

21. Meet individually with teachers to discuss student

progress 1 2 3 4 5

22. Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses 1 2 3 4 5

23. Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals 1 2 3 4 5

Teacher Form 2.0 4

24. Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter) 1 2 3 4 5

25. Inform students of school's academic progress 1 2 3 4 5

VI. PROTECT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

26. Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements 1 2 3 4 5

27. Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time 1 2 3 4 5

28. Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time 1 2 3 4 5

29. Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts 1 2 3 4 5

30. Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time 1 2 3 4 5

VII. MAINTAIN HIGH VISIBILITY

31. Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks 1 2 3 4 5

32. Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students 1 2 3 4 5

33. Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities 1 2 3 4 5

34. Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute

teacher arrives	1	2	3	4	5
35. Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes	1	2	3	4	5

VIII. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR TEACHERS

36. Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos	1	2	3	4	5
37. Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance	1	2	3	4	5

Teacher Form 2.0 5

38. Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	1	2	3	4	5
39. Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition	1	2	3	4	5
40. Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	1	2	3	4	5

IX. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

41. Ensure that in-service activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals	1	2	3	4	5
42. Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during in service training	1	2	3	4	5
43. Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important in-service activities	1	2	3	4	5
44. Lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	1	2	3	4	5
45. Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from in-service activities	1	2	3	4	5

X. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LEARNING

46. Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as an honour roll or mention in the principal's newsletter	1	2	3	4	5
47. Use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or for behaviour or citizenship	1	2	3	4	5
48. Recognize superior student achievement or Improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	1	2	3	4	5
49. Contact parents to communicate improved or Exemplary student performance or contributions	1	2	3	4	5
50. Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class	1	2	3	4	5