

Instructional Leadership Practices in 21st-century Education-Centred Schools: A Case Study of Three Schools in Gauteng

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Abstract

This case study explores the Instructional Leadership practices in schools that promote 21st-century education. To do this, the study investigated what school leaders and educators understand about 21st-century education and its significance today. In addition, the study looks into how instructional leaders inform the curriculum and educator practice in their schools, to prepare learners for the 21st-century. Although there is a wealth of knowledge addressing Instructional Leadership and its value to school improvement, 21st-century education is a growing area in the educational discourse. The two areas of study are yet to converge compelling, leaving a gap in the knowledge base on the role of Instructional Leadership in 21st-century education.

Using a qualitative approach, the case study was conducted in three schools in Gauteng. The research participants included Heads of Schools and educators with interviews and questionnaires as the means used for collecting data.

The findings indicated a strong leadership presence in the case study schools, with all the Heads of Schools demonstrating sound leadership values. Some Instructional Leadership practices were evident, including a high focus on educator development as an approach for improving educator practice and achieving school goals. The study revealed that although there was some awareness of 21st-century competencies, there was only limited implementation and assessment of 21st-century education in the classroom. The case study schools demonstrated extensive use of technology as a resource for teaching and learning.

This study emphasises the need to evaluate Instructional Leadership in the context of 21st-century educational goals. It makes recommendations for the development of a curriculum that aligns with a framework for the teaching of 21st-century competencies. Lastly, the study highlights the need for educator training to play its part in preparing educators to teach for the 21st-century.

Keywords: *Independent schools; Gauteng Province; Instructional Leadership; leadership; 21st-century education; 21st-century competencies; educator practice; observation; feedback; educator development; management.*

Declaration

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School of Education

SENATE PLAGIARISM POLICY

Declaration by Students

I Sipho Mpisane (Student number: 0510660D) am a student registered for Masters in Education in the year 2018. I hereby declare the following:

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Date: 14 August 2020 _____

Dedication

This research would not have been possible without my family's selfless and continuous support. To my wife Keletso – there are no words to express my gratitude, but I will say thank you. Thank you for your patience and understanding. For your encouraging words that fuelled me on until the very end. Thank you for taking care of our precious tribe when I couldn't be there.

To my son Nqaba and my daughter Melo – I dedicate this research to you. My hope and prayer are that you would not only heed my words as I try my best to raise you well but that I would leave a worthy example for you to follow. If Tata can do it, you can do so much more.

Soli Deo gloria.

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Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DeSeCo	Definition and Selection of Competencies
GPLMS	Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy
HOD	Head of Department
ICE	International Commission on Education
ICT	Information Computer Technology
ISTE	International Society for Technology in Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
P21	Partnership for 21st-Century Skills
PD	Professional Development
SASP	South African Standards of Principalship
WEF	World Economic Forum

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and Background to the Study

Globalisation continues to have a significant impact across industries and disciplines across the world. The rapid advancements in technology and in particular, information and communication technology mean that change is taking place at a pace like never before. This, in turn, is impacting how we exist and function in modern-day society (Voogt & Roblin, 2012). Additionally, knowledge is increasingly becoming more specialised and as it continues to grow in leaps and bounds (Binkley et al., 2012). Suffice to say, the world is connected and interdependent in more significant ways than ever before. Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) point out that education is not exempt from the impact of globalisation. Schooling is increasingly being influenced by shifts in global economies and emerging ideologies on how the delivery of education needs to be altered to meet the demands of the immediate future (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). Consequently, there is a link between global markets and their impact on industries, to the demand in skills that basic education is expected to provide (Kivunja, 2014). In response to what these skills are, Trilling and Fadel (2012) argue that even though many skills were considered to be important in centuries past such as critical thinking and problem-solving, these competencies and other new ones are even more relevant today. They refer to these skills as 21st-century skills.

There are multiple definitions and frameworks for 21st-century skills and 21st-century education (Partnership for 21st-Century Skills, 2007; Trilling & Fadel, 2012). Although these definitions are mostly in agreement on what 21st-century competencies are, each has its emphasis on what it considers to be key areas (Voogt & Roblin, 2012). Whatever the definition, there seems to be a suggestion that given the developments and the impact of globalisation and the perceived trajectory of technological advancements—there are specific skills that are required for the 21st-century. This has educationalists, scholars and researchers in the field asking what this means and should mean for education as a whole. This study, therefore, explores the ideas of 21st-century education and their perceived significance and impact on teaching and learning today. More

intently, these concepts are explored within the discipline of Instructional Leadership as it is progressively being recognised as the most important function of a school's leadership (Bush, 2013). Leadership has multiple purposes and functions, within education however, this study assumes that the role of leadership is explicitly to ensure that quality education takes place within the school (Bush & Glover, 2003).

While exploring the phenomenon of 21st-century education, this study draws from instructional leaders' understanding of the concept and how this informs their role in turn. Given that principals, as instructional leaders, manage teaching and learning in the school (Christie, 2010; Hallinger, 2003), the study will focus on their practices in tracking how teaching takes place in their schools to foster 21st-century competencies. The study focuses on three schools in Gauteng. These schools were identified by their particular focus on implementing a curriculum that promotes 21st-century skills.

1.2 Problem Statement

Education provides an age-old mechanism through which the state prepares its citizens for the labour force and other forms of social and political participation (Althusser, 2006). This is arguably one of the fundamental reasons why so much of the state's budget is dedicated to education. It can be argued that some of the skills required by today's students for them to contribute meaningfully to society are constantly evolving. Most schools, however, are not keeping up with this change as they can be seen doing what they have always done over time (Schleicher, 2015). As a result, there is increasing pressure for education to be globally-focused and position the local job market to reflect international trends (Sahlberg, 2006).

Gardner (2008) maintains that there is a breakaway that happens from one century to the next, and the educational expectations of a new century warrant for new ways of thinking and learning. Has education in South Africa indeed embraced globalisation through the curriculum and instruction? This is an important question that is beginning to be unavoidable as Voogt and Roblin (2012) state that the changes in the types of careers that present society requires, pose critical questions and problems to the education system as it faces the urgent task of preparing learners for careers that may

not even exist yet. This study investigates how schools are dealing with this challenge and whether they are doing so with any success.

1.3 Purpose and Rationale of the Study

Whether driving around the city, reading newspaper articles, listening to financial reports on the radio – it is apparent that within the education sector, there has been a noticeable rise in low-cost independent schools that aim to offer private education at a reasonable price. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) reported that over 120 independent schools were built in Gauteng in the period between 2010 and 2013 (DBE, 2015). In one report, a low-cost independent school group had planned to spend a further R950 million in 2016 to build new schools – most of which were to be built in Gauteng (Steyn, 2016). Also, according to the department of basic education, there was an increase of 10% in the number of learners enrolled in ordinary independent schools in 2015 (DBE, 2016). The same report from the DBE indicates that Gauteng leads the provinces in the number of learners in independent schools– with more than double the enrolment of the province with the second largest independent school enrolment in 2014. My first motivation for this study, was over and above the notable financial gains that the new sector of independent schools stands to take advantage of, it had me curious about what these schools were offering that was different from the norm.

Some of the most noticeable features that these schools have in common are their particular focus on incorporating technology in their teaching and the promotion of 21st-century competencies, as part of their educational practice. Looking closer, these schools emphasise critical thinking and problem-solving in how they approach education.

The second motivation for me to embark on this case study comes from having an opportunity to be part of a pilot programme that seeks to bring critical thinking skills through a cognitive acceleration course in underperforming schools. This intervention programme is targeted at Grade 8 learners and uses mathematics concepts to engage learners in critical thinking and problem-solving to fast-track their cognitive development. South Africa is argued to have the worst education system – where

outcomes are concerned – when compared to other middle-income countries (Spaull, 2013). Given this, I began to then think how problem-solving and critical thinking, even as an intervention, is a perhaps too drastic paradigm shift in the environment that we are attempting to bring it. This had me seeking to uncover if schools that are better positioned for such an approach to education had been doing so with any success.

In an average South African school, learners are not being equipped with the fundamental skills and knowledge they ought to be acquiring at school (Spaull, 2013). It is typical of most ordinary public schools to simply comply with the bureaucratic prescribes handed down by the education department. One such example is government's intervention for underperforming schools introduced in 2010 through the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) where one of the strategies employed by GPLMS was for educators to follow scripted lesson plans and utilise resources that had been designed by expert educators (Fleisch & Schöer, 2014). Moreover, they were required to give out prescribed activities from specified resources – leaving very little room for them to have autonomy over their pedagogy. When one looks deeper into the kinds of material utilised in these contexts – the amount of factual and procedural content is alarming. The learners are not given much opportunity to explore their thinking and apply it critically in solving problems. Instead, they are required to rote-learn and regurgitate sets of facts. The limited opportunities that learners are given to think critically in these contexts – means they simply do not have the confidence, nor the ability to exercise critical thinking and problem-solving.

This for me paints a dim state of affairs in our public schooling system. Is it possible to do schooling successfully in a way that promotes critical thinking and problem-solving in the South African context? Some schools claim to do exactly that. Investigating how these schools are doing it and what benefits, if any, they are seeing – would be of great value to schools that simply comply to state curriculum demands yet continue to yield poor results year in and year out. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore how schools prepare learners to be innovative, problem-solvers and critical thinkers and to investigate how these values are enacted through the Instructional Leadership present in the schools.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Authors such as Keengwe, Onchwari and Wachira (2008) have called for reform in how schooling is traditionally done. They contend that schooling should pay special attention to promoting skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking. Pedro in Salas-Pilco (2013) posits that today's students need to be prepared as lifelong learners due to the immense growth and availability of information, where knowledge in any subject is constantly evolving. Policymakers, school leaders, parents and the private sector, are asking themselves one common question – what proficiencies are needed for the 21st-century, and how are learners today being prepared with the necessary skill set? To this end, a growing pool of literature emphasises the need for an output of new skills into the market to cope with the demands of this century (Borsheim, Merritt, & Reed, 2008; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). If and how these skills can be harnessed in schools today, is another question school-leaders ought to be engaging with quite intently. This is one of the primary reasons why this study draws and builds on the work done in the field of Instructional Leadership, given its particular focus on teaching and learning.

While studies in the field of 21st-century competencies have sought to define the skills necessary in society today, there is a lack of research in how instructional leaders are promoting these skills in their schools. Therefore, this study expands on the understanding of how school leaders are overseeing schools that aim to promote 21st-century learning.

This study can serve educators, school leaders and education experts by steering them towards points of reflection and action in terms of what needs to be addressed in 21st-century competencies-centred schooling. Although much work has been done in researching many of the key ideas around 21st-century education, much work is still needed to be done in researching this area in the South African context. Instructional Leaders who may find themselves at the forefront of implementing these ideas can be benefited by such a study.

1.5 Research Objectives

There are emerging schools which have sought to define and brand themselves as schools that promote 21st-century skills and competencies. Some of these schools have gone as far as to align their values and mission statements to that effect. With that said, the primary objective of this study was to explore how these values are enacted through the Instructional Leadership practices enacted by the Heads of the case study schools. Perusing through their websites, it is evident that these schools are founded on the philosophy that they are preparing their learners to be innovative, problem-solvers and critical thinkers – equipped with the necessary skills required in the 21st-century. This study considers how Heads of Schools perceive 21st-century education and its significance in the South African context. Furthermore, the study probes how the Heads of Schools enact their Instructional Leadership role in realising their goal to deliver 21st-century education. Lastly, the study probes how their Instructional Leadership role is contributing to defining and informing the curriculum and its delivery in their schools.

1.6 Key Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to help focus the study in investigating the Instructional Leadership practices of school leaders who consider their schools to be dedicated to the promotion of 21st-century education.

1. What are the Instructional Leadership practices of Heads of Schools in schools that promote 21st-century education?
2. What are the Head of Schools' understanding of 21st-century education and its significance to South Africa?
3. How are schools preparing learners for the 21st-century?

1.7 Clarification of Key Concepts

The following is an explanation of the core concepts that will be referred to throughout the study:

1.7.1 Leadership

Leadership in this study is a term mainly used in reference to educational leadership. The act of wielding influence over others to accomplish goals in an educational context is referred to as educational leadership (Connolly, James & Fertig, 2019).

1.7.2 21st-Century Competencies and Skills

21st-century skills and 21st-century competencies are terms often used interchangeably. Rychen and Salganik (2003) define ‘competencies’ as the ability to use psychological faculties, including skills and attitudes, to address complex situations. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (2008) defines ‘skills’ as the ability to problem-solve and accomplish certain tasks. Given the lack of agreement on the definitions of 21st-century skills versus 21st-century competencies, Ananiadou and Claro (2009) developed a more open-ended definition, which I subscribe to for this study. According to their definition, 21st-century skills and competencies are “...those skills and competencies young people will be required to have to be effective workers and citizens in the knowledge society of the 21st-century” (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009, p. 8).

1.8 Delimitations

To make this study manageable several factors have been considered. While acknowledging that leadership is an extensive area of study that considers multiple theories and concepts, the study mainly focuses on Instructional Leadership in the context of 21st-century education. Furthermore, the study is limited to three schools given time and monetary constraints. The research participants were purposefully sampled to only include Heads of Schools and a practicable number of educators in each school. Individual interviews were conducted with the Heads of Schools and questionnaires were distributed to educators who responded voluntarily. Given the aforementioned limitations, the research sample was limited to a manageable quantity, and although adequate for conducting a qualitative study, it was not significant enough for generalisations to be drawn directly from the study.

1.9 The Organisation of the Study

This report is arranged into five chapters. Chapter 1, the introductory chapter to this report, offers the background and provided the context of the study. The problem statement is then outlined leading to the significance of this research as well as the underpinning purpose and rational. Additionally, the research questions that guide the study are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature on the issues explored in this research. The main topics examined in this chapter include the conceptualisation of leadership, Instructional Leadership in the local and international context, the conceptualisation of 21st-century education as well as leadership in relation to 21st-century education.

Chapter 3 details the research methodology employed in this study. While various types of educational research are discussed, justification is made for the choice to use an intensive qualitative interpretive methodology, which includes a constructivist perspective. Furthermore, chapter 3 offers a description of the tools and methods used to generate data – including interviews and questionnaires.

Chapter 4 is a systematic presentation and discussion of the research findings arranged into emerging themes.

Chapter 5 summarises the study and its findings. Recommendation and implications emerging from the study are presented in this chapter.

1.10 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I present the background and context of my research and orientate the reader to the structure of my research. As the backdrop to my study, I outline how globalisation is having a significant impact on how education is being perceived today. Given the rapid advancements in technology and information systems, the question arises whether the current schooling system is meeting industry demands that are constantly being created by globalisation. To this end, advocates of 21st-century education contend that there are specific competencies required today that are different

from previous eras such as critical thinking, problem-solving and other 21st-century skills. To this end, I examined the promotion of these skills in schools through the lenses of Instructional Leadership. Instructional Leadership was a particular focus in this study given that it is the type of leadership that concerns itself directly with the teaching and learning activities in the school.

The research problem put forward in this chapter, which I propose gives such a study merit, is the increasing social, academic and economic pressure for education to be globally relevant and to prepare our current learners for unconventional jobs and careers in the 21st-century. The study perceives this as an opportunity and a challenge that falls uniquely within the scope of educational leaders. The research questions that guided this study are put forward towards the end of this opening chapter. These questions are aimed at addressing how instructional leaders embrace and promote 21st-century education in their schools. Additionally, I have motivated for this study in the form of the purpose and rationale as I also took the reader through the significance of the study. Lastly, the reader is given a structural breakdown of this report with a brief overview of each chapter. The next chapter will be a review of the literature on leadership, Instructional Leadership and 21st-century education.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a review of relevant literature to locate this study within an existing body of knowledge. Scott and Morrison (2006) describe the literature review as a critical guide through the research for both the writer and the reader. It is a close examination of the literature that underpins the study (Scott & Morrison, 2006). The discourse on leadership, particularly Instructional Leadership, is reviewed as well as literature on 21st-century teaching and learning. Additionally, in reviewing the literature, a connection is drawn between Instructional Leadership and 21st-century education to identify synergies and gaps in the existing body of literature. In examining existing concepts and models on Instructional Leadership and 21st-century education, a conceptual framework is proposed which brings together the major ideas emerging from Instructional Leadership and 21st-century education.

The selection and review of the literature undertaken in this chapter are informed by the research questions which seek to explore the Instructional Leadership practices of school leaders in schools that focus on teaching 21st-century competencies. The existing literature on Instructional Leadership is vast. For that reason, it was important to have a more focused review that served the aim of this study. To achieve this, it was crucial to use key phrases such as *Instructional Leadership in 21st-century education* to narrow down the scope of the literature review. Consequently, this revealed the gaps in the literature as very little is said about the impact and role of Instructional Leadership in promoting 21st-century education in schools

The two major themes (Instructional Leadership and 21st-century education) are initially reviewed separately in this chapter to highlight the ideas that are unique to these subject areas. The two themes are brought together through a conceptual framework that framed the study.

2.2 Conceptualising Leadership

The increasing popularity of leadership has done very little in consolidating the work done on the subject into a single agreed-upon definition. Conceptually, leadership has tended to be vague and confusing as it holds no one common definition (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999). Even with the development of new leadership theories, there has been more misperception than clarity added to the discourse as Bush and Glover (2003) argue that although some definitions of leadership are more useful than others – there is no single correct description for the concept of leadership. Bush and Glover (2003) subsequently underline three common dimensions of leadership, which are discussed shortly: leadership as an act of influence; leadership and values and leadership and vision.

2.2.1 Leadership as An Act of Influence

Christie (2010) describes influence as a fundamental act of leadership. The idea of leadership as an act of influence can be traced back to the work of Yukl (1989). Yukl argues that leadership is about influence over task objectives and strategies, influencing others' commitment and compliance in task behaviour to achieve objectives, influence over the identity of an organisation and influencing the culture of an organisation. These ideas are coherent with the assertion made by Bush that leadership is about "...influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends" (2007, p. 392).

2.2.2 Leadership and Values

Certain constructs of leadership require it to be firmly rooted in personal and professional values. Greenfield and Ribbins (1993) point out that leadership begins with the character of leaders, expressed in personal values such as self-awareness, emotional and moral values. Wasserberg (1999) contends that the foundational role of any leader is to unite people around key values. Furthermore, Day, Harris and Hadfield (2001) posit that good leaders are informed by a clear set of personal and educational values which represent their moral purpose for the school.

2.2.3 Leadership and Vision.

Bush and Glover (2003) refer to four generalisations about leadership that are linked directly to vision. Firstly, leaders must have a vision for their organization. Secondly, that vision must be communicated in a way that secures commitment amongst the members of the organization. Thirdly, communication of vision requires communication of meaning to ensure that the vision is clearly understood by all. Lastly, vision should be entrenched in the organisation if it is to be successful. A clear and successfully transferred vision can be summed up as follows:

Today, 'vision' is a familiar concept in corporate leadership. But when you look carefully you find that most 'visions' are one person's (or one group's) vision imposed on an organisation. Such visions, at best, command compliance – not commitment. A shared vision is a vision that many people are truly committed to because it reflects their own personal vision. (Senge, 1990, p. 206)

A leader without vision is one that leads blindly and without direction. A vision can, therefore, be described as an articulation of the direction a leader aspires to steer the organisation towards. Blanchard (2010) emphasises that vision is imperative to leadership because without it there is no common understanding of the desired goal. In the absence of a clearly articulated vision – the organisation runs the risk of pulling into different directions and running itself to the ground. Vision is about foresight. To be a visionary leader one needs to constantly be thinking about and envisioning the future. Pech (2013) describes vision as having an element of seeing beyond the now. Equally important to having a vision, is articulating that vision to your followers. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2005) stress the need for communicating the vision effectively to the staff in a way that brings them together as a team.

From a more critical perspective, Alvesson and Spicer (2012) argue that there is a place and the need for a challenging view of leadership in a dispensation where leadership is celebrated and hardly scrutinised. This involves revealing potentially harmful effects that are embedded in the theory and practice of leadership (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). The authors recognise the importance of leadership in how it can influence the values and the thinking of the members in the organisation towards desired outcomes and can supply the necessary authority to secure the success of the organisation. However, the authors caution against exercising blind faith in leaders and exalting leadership above

all else without being critical. Alvesson and Spicer (2012) then propose an interrogation of leadership that questions the power relations involved and how these power dynamics can - or ought to – be functional and or limited. The authors here, argue that being critical about leadership is not only to point out negative aspects, rather to equally extrapolate that which is positive and valuable in leadership theories.

2.3 The Leadership and Management Contrast

Educational leadership and educational management are the two concepts that remain central to understanding the school and its functions as an organisation. These two concepts continue, however, to evoke differing perceptions. Often, as noted by Christie (2010), the two concepts are used interchangeably and are rarely referred to separately in educational studies. More interestingly are how these two concepts are understood and applied within schools by those who are in positions to do so. It is useful, therefore, to establish distinctions and connections between leadership and management within educational discourse when forming an analysis of how the two functions play out in schools.

Leadership was conceptualised earlier in this section and encompasses two main elements – vision and influence. A leader sets the vision and influences those within the organisation towards that vision. To this point, Bush (2007) points out that leadership is strongly associated with change. The vision influences and often determines all functions and activities within the organisation. This is how leadership exerts influence over other's actions towards required goals (Bush, 2007).

In defining school management, Connolly et al. (2019) state that management involves being responsible for the functioning of the educational institution. Consistent with this view, is the idea that management ensures the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation (Bush, 2007; Davidoff & Lazarus, 2000). In essence, management focuses on the structures and processes that are necessary for the organisation to meet its goals (Christie, 2010). Management can, therefore, be described as an operational function, whereas leadership is more visionary. A leader casts the vision and inspires the

organisation towards that vision while a manager is responsible for the outworking of that vision.

It seems fairly straightforward to distinguish between the two roles of management and leadership. Is it equally possible, however, to separate the functions of the two roles within the school context, or is there an overlap where leaders assume management functions and managers assume leadership functions? In exploring that question, it is worth noting that, although distinct, both management and leadership are equally critical to the success of the school (Bush, 2007). Christie (2010) challenges any attempt to have separate and distinctive functions of management and leadership. The two for Christie should always work symbiotically in an ideal school environment. In an ideal school, there should be exceptional leadership at all levels, met with equally competent management, and the school head should integrate these functions in their role and have the skill-set for both (Christie, 2010). This idea endorsed by a school of thought argues that it is virtually impossible for the leadership role to successfully rest solely on the shoulders of one individual – traditionally the Head of the school. Both leadership and management must focus on a team of people who collectively take responsibility for leading and managing according to Spillane (2009). This brings to the fore the idea of distributed leadership where the work of the leaders is divided amongst other members of the organisation (Harris, 2007).

Although leadership and management in education can be theorised, the implementation thereof is highly nuanced. This is given the situational nature of the daily leadership and management functions in any given school, argues Christie (2010). Moreover, the effectiveness of leadership and management of a school depends on the environment and context in which the functions are carried out (Connolly et al., 2019). The theories and concepts of leadership and management must, therefore, always be weighed up against the contextual influences that impact and inform the role of management and leadership on the ground. This is where a case can be made for distributed leadership which, according to Spillane (2005), occurs as a result of the interactions between leaders, followers and their context. The outcome is that the leadership function is

divided between multiple leaders who then share certain leadership tasks amongst themselves (Spillane, 2005).

2.4 Educational Leadership Theories

Bush (2011) asserts that most theories of educational leadership and management possess three characteristics. They lean towards being normative in that they reflect beliefs about the nature of education and the behaviour of individuals within them. Secondly, they are often supported by the observation in educational institutions such as schools. Finally, they tend to be partial in that they only emphasise certain aspects of the institution at the expense of other elements that make up the organisation.

In consolidating and analysing the vast literature and empirical studies done on successful school leadership, Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) describe what they refer to as strong claims made about successful school leadership. In successful schools, there is an emphasis on the influence that leadership has on pupil learning. Leithwood et al. (2008) contend that they are yet to find evidence of a school successfully improving its achievement results in the absence of sound leadership. Moreover, most successful leaders enact the same fundamental leadership practices of building a vision and setting direction; understanding and developing people; redesigning the organisation and managing the teaching and learning programme (Leithwood et al., 2008). More crucially, leaders apply the abovementioned leadership practices in ways that are responsive to their context. The authors point out that evidence of this is usually found in the policies formulated by successful schools - which tend to be highly contextual.

2.4.1 Transformational Leadership

The earliest conceptualisation of Transformational Leadership is credited to Burns according to Christie and Lingard (2001). Transformational Leadership is based on the idea that leaders and followers unite towards a common cause (Bush & Glover, 2003). It calls on people who are self-motivated to take on tasks that they are naturally drawn towards (Connolly et al., 2019). Balyer (2012) contend that Transformational Leadership seeks to serve, inspire and empower others into greater heights within the

organisation. This often requires transformational leaders to be visionaries that inspire trust from their followers. They motivate those they lead and challenge them to place the needs and goals of the organisation above their own (Marks & Printy, 2003). Transformation in the organisation is not accomplished as a result of control from a leader rather; it is from the rallied involvement of all in the organisation (Hallinger, 2003).

In the South African democratic dispensation, transformation features highly in economic, educational and political discourse. However, even given its vast use in post-apartheid policy, there is little to show for its impact on education (Bush & Glover, 2016). The reasons may be attributed to claims made by Christie and Lingard (2001) that although transformational leadership is founded on values such as justice, freedom and equality– these values can be interpreted differently by different people. The weakness of transformational leadership, therefore, is that it is open to being interpreted fundamentally differently by different groups.

2.4.2 Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership emerged in the 1980s as a result of studies on effective schools revealing the impact that leadership which focused on curriculum and instruction had on students' results (Hallinger, 2003). Furthermore, studies constantly found that the distinguished leadership of skilled principals contributed to school effectiveness and improvements in outcomes (Hallinger, 2003). As a result, Instructional Leadership is the earliest leadership concept linking leadership and learning (Bush, 2013).

2.4.2.1 *The Conceptualisation of Instructional Leadership*

Researchers consistently found that the leadership of the school principal was a critical element in explaining improvement and successful school change (Hallinger, 2003). This led to multiple conceptualisations of Instructional Leadership. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) assert that Instructional Leadership focuses mainly on the role of the principal in so far as the development, supervision and coordination and implementation of the curriculum are concerned. The end-goal that drives principals in their capacity as instructional leaders is the improvement of academic results (Hallinger, 2003). More

specifically, Murphy (1988) described Instructional Leadership tasks as those relating directly to teaching and learning. Given that traditionally, Instructional Leadership has focused mainly on the role of the school principal as the instructional leader, as illustrated by Marks and Printy (2003). Instructional Leadership must, therefore, be outlined according to the practical observable functions of the school principal (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987).

2.4.2.2 *Defining the School Mission and Vision*

Given its focus on achieving goals, leadership is associated with vision and values (Christie, 2010). To this end, instructional leaders hold the vision of the school and outline clear educational goals towards that vision (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Vision can be described as a set of beliefs, dreams and direction that are held by an organisation (Sergiovanni, 1990). School leaders articulate the vision for the school to get those that are involved in every capacity, dedicated to the drive towards the realisation of the school goals. Hallinger and Heck (2011a) contend that vision and goals are the most effective platforms that leaders can use to make a difference in education.

Davidoff and Lazarus (2000) posit that the mission of the school articulates how the school sees itself contributing meaningfully to society. Under the guidance of the principal, the school develops well-defined goals that are to be communicated to all stakeholders including learners, parents and the community at large. The school's mission enables the school to have a shared purpose and aligns the school's activities towards a common resolution.

2.4.2.3 *Managing the Instructional Programme*

Instructional leaders take responsibility for managing the instructional programme of the school. The principal focuses on developing and implementing the curriculum (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). To do this, principals in successful schools assume a supervisory role as one of their leadership functions (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). They frequent classrooms to ensure that educators are meeting the expected school goals according to the mission and vision of the school. Hallinger and Murphy (1987) contend

that the principal should not only monitor teaching, but they should place special attention to curriculum implementation due to the impact this ultimately has on learners' results.

2.4.2.4 *Creating a Learning Environment*

The principal is responsible for creating a favourable learning environment. This includes ensuring that educators' attitudes and classroom practices are consistent with the mission of the school. Hallinger (2011b) states that a school with a positive climate is one that can be deemed an academic hub with a school culture that values ongoing development and sets high standards for learners and staff. Part of setting high standards is a focus on all activities related to classroom practice. Observation is needed to effectively monitor and evaluate what happens in the classroom. This includes creating systems for observation and identifying educators' behaviours and replicating and repeating best practices (Bush, 2013).

There is a connection between the development of educators and their classroom practices with student outcomes. Professional development is a key element in ensuring that educators are armed with the necessary skills to teach; which is often a varied and complex task (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017). One of the dimensions of Instructional Leadership is promoting and participating in the development of educators (Robinson, 2010). This essentially equates to schools having programmes for educator professional development. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), professional development is the professional learning that educators are taken through, that improves their knowledge and practice and ultimately results in the improvement of learner outcomes. Effective professional development involves collaboration amongst educators, modelling of effective practice, coaching and support, reflection and feedback and it happens over an extended period (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Instructional Leadership is not without its criticisms. Hallinger (2007) notes that some scholars hold the view that Instructional Leadership places too much authority and knowledge squarely on the school principal. To this point, Marks and Printy (2003) point out that the principal is traditionally seen as the Instructional Leader on account of

their expertise. However, some scholars have argued that the responsibility that comes with the role of an instructional leader is simply too great for one individual (Hallinger, 2007). The expectation for one person to supervise; hold educators and learners to high standards; monitor instructional practices and outcomes – well enough to ensure high performance and improvements in outcomes, would require a tremendous amount from one person.

There is very little doubt about how important the leadership role of the school principal is, however, it can be argued that to ensure the success and optimal function of the school – a more collaborative approach will benefit the school and drive it more efficiently towards its vision. Hallinger and Heck (1998) maintain that Instructional Leadership has more impact when it is understood to be broad rather than specific. A broad understanding of Instructional Leadership gives way for others, not just the principal, to play a leadership role (Southworth, 2002). This is a challenge to the more traditional model of Instructional Leadership which is argued to be outdated as it assumes that educators are passive followers who are wholly dependent on the principal, whereas educators are in many cases, competent professionals (Marks & Printy, 2003). To this point - the role of the school management and educators, under the principal's leadership, can ensure that quality education takes place within the school as Bush and Glover (2003) point out. Furthermore, in every school, there are contextual factors that determine the enactment of Instructional Leadership (Lee, Hallinger & Walker, 2012). Leadership strategies should result from close consideration of the context, for successful implementation of leadership strategies can only result from leadership that is correctly adapted to suit the context (Hallinger, 2011b).

Given the vast descriptions that attempt to define the concept of Instructional Leadership, Southworth (2002) highlights three major perceptions of the concept. The first main stance is that the role of an instructional leader is to focus on the behaviour of educators to the end that it impacts the performance of the learners. This view also takes into account the role that school culture plays, as it has a direct impact on the behaviour of educators (Southworth, 2002). The second major view of Instructional Leadership points to the role of the principal as having an impact on student outcomes,

be it directly or indirectly (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). The third and last view is that Instructional Leadership can be considered a combination of supervision and educator and curriculum development. Most important, according to this view, is that promoting the professional development of educators is the most influential function of an instructional leader (Southworth, 2002).

2.4.3 Instructional Leadership in South Africa

The idea of Instructional Leadership in its original sense is not as widely used or understood in the South African school leadership context, however, it is an area that continues to grow (Bush, 2013; Christie, 2010). Bush (2013) notes that Instructional Leadership is increasingly being recognised as the most important function in South African school leadership circles.

The critical function of Instructional Leadership in South Africa can be seen as shifting the school's tasks to those that intentionally promote teaching and learning to improve learners' results (Bush, 2013). In highlighting the South African Standards of Principalship (SASP), Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) note that the principal as an instructional leader is expected to guide and support the Heads of Departments in accomplishing their duties. In a study conducted to explore Instructional Leadership in South African secondary schools, however, Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2009) found that Instructional Leadership functions such as supervising the educators and managing teaching and learning, were not a priority in how many of the school principals spent their time and focus. The explanation could be that in South Africa, there is a heavy reliance on Heads of Departments (HODs) to fulfil Instructional Leadership functions (Smith, Mestry & Bambie, 2013).

Bush (2013) argues that Instructional Leadership has been reborn in the 21st-century as and more understood in the South African context, as Managing Teaching and Learning. Where Instructional Leadership is criticised for emphasising teaching over learning and the notion of Leadership for Learning is criticised for emphasising learning over teaching, Managing Teaching and Learning is an idea that holds an advantage over both as it gives equal emphasis to both teaching and learning (Bush, 2013). This is

done through activities that are overseen by the principal and prioritise teaching and learning—including monitoring, evaluation, observations and modelling (Bush, 2013).

Monitoring involves the analysis of students' performance as indicated by various forms of learner assessments. Additionally, monitoring includes direct interaction with educators through class visits and offering feedback. The overarching purpose is to ensure that teaching and learning are taking place at an acceptable level (Bush, 2013). Evaluation, on the other hand, involves performance reviews across subjects, designing strategies to improve learner-performance, and ensuring that the educators with the best knowhow are assisting struggling educators (Bush, 2013). Observations are used as an educator development tool. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) endorse classroom observations as an effective educator development strategy. It can be noted, however, that in South African schools, as attested to by Bush (2013), the evidence of the use of classroom observations as a way of developing educators is very limited. This can be traced back to the unionisation of educators in South Africa. In standing against apartheid structures, educators began to reject accountability measures such as inspections (Christie, 2010). Since then, the prevailing culture in most South African schools is to maintain a closed-door policy where access to educator's classrooms is concerned.

2.5 21st-Century Education

Knowledge is growing and job skills are becoming even more specialised. What distinguishes the 21st-century from any other are the leaps in technological advancements (Maphosa & Mashau, 2014). The basic skills that students needed to acquire previously once leaving school now need to be modernised to meet current and future demands (Binkley et al., 2012). Voogt and Roblin (2012) posit that as the knowledge base grows, so are the calls for education systems to transform their curricula to be in line with new skills requirements. Consequently, there are calls for schools to adapt their methods to prepare learners to possess 21st-century skills such as higher-order thinking, problem-solving, collaboration and communication (Binkley et al., 2012).

Most descriptions of 21st-century skills and competencies agree on what these are on a fundamental level, with each having its emphasis and expression. Kivunja (2014) sums them up into four main categories. The first category speaks of core subjects and skills that every learner should master such as numeracy and literacy. The second category is the sphere of learning and innovation wherein we find skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving. In the third is the sphere of life skills where leadership, collaboration and teamwork are located. Lastly, is the digital literacy skills sphere, which includes computer-technology skills. Kivunja (2014) goes on to emphasise that 21st-century learning is not merely a focus on applying technology but more importantly about higher levels of critical thinking and problem-solving while making use of technology.

2.6 Frameworks for 21st-Century skills

The last decade has seen collaborative efforts from governments, businesses and international organisation to develop multiple frameworks for 21st-century skills and competencies. According to Salas-Pilco (2013), a UNESCO report prepared by the International Commission on Education (ICE) for the 21st-century was one of the initial frameworks proposed that considered the types of skills required for the 21st-century. Four pillars were outlined in this report: learning to do; learning to know; learning to live together and learning to be (Salas-Pilco, 2013). Subsequent frameworks began emerging as the interest grew on the subject. This began to expand the knowledge base as the call around the need for a new wave of skills in the 21st-century grew even louder. One of the more prominent establishments that emerged in response, was the Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo) programme which was founded in 1997 by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) according to Salas-Pilco (2013). The main purpose of DeSeCo was to lead international agreement on a set of critical 21st-century competencies. DeSeCo was the focal point of the New Millennium Learners project, which was established to develop a conceptual framework for identifying key competencies for the 21st-century and to conduct globally comparative evaluations of these competencies (Voogt & Roblin, 2012). The framework for 21st-century competencies, which then came to be developed through the

efforts of the DeSeCo project, had three categories: using tools interactively; interacting with heterogeneous groups and acting autonomously (Salas-Pilco, 2013).

Developed in 1998 and later revised in 2007, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) established its framework to emphasise information and communications technology in the 21st-century skill set requirement (Dede, 2010). It included performance indicators that prescribed the necessary required tools to function in the 21st-century. These are creativity and innovation; communication and collaboration; research and information fluency; critical thinking, problem-solving and decision making; digital citizenship; technology operations and concepts (Dede, 2010; Salas-Pilco, 2013). According to Mishra and Kereluik (2011), ISTE holds that if learners are to be successful in the future, technological literacy is critical to ensure that they become productive citizens in a highly digitised global society.

Partnership for 21st-Century Skills (P21) is an American organisation that was formed in 2002 with to position 21st-Century education as the focus of K-12 education in the United States (Partnership for 21st-Century Skills, 2007). P21 pulled the assistance of public and private partnerships in its formation. Imbedded in its core beliefs is that education requires participation from three main groups of stakeholders – the private sector, the public sector and the education community (Voogt & Roblin, 2012). Their framework for 21st-century skills consists of four core areas: learning and innovation skills; information, media, and innovation skills; life and career skills and lastly, core subjects. According to the National Education Association (2012), it became evident shortly after its inception that P21's framework for 21st-century skills was long and complex. Its revision soon gave way to what is now known as the Four C's - critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity (National Education Association, 2012).

Unlike other frameworks, P21 does not only prescribe skills required for the 21st-century but it also goes further to describe support structures for the successful establishment of these skills such as assessment, curriculum professional development (Salas-Pilco, 2013). This is an important aspect of their framework given that according

to Voogt and Roblin (2012), a major obstacle that most frameworks face is how to assess these incredibly complex competencies they so eloquently describe. P21 provides one of only a handful of frameworks that make provisions for assessing the skills and competencies they advocate for. This is an inclusion seen as critical by Binkley et al. (2012), as they stress the importance of curriculum assessment and standards in establishing educational goals and holding all stakeholders accountable to results. They further argue that assessments provide meaningful empirical evidence that helps to inform decision-making. Pepper (2011) maintains, however, that the assessment of competencies for the 21st-century presents multiple challenges. Firstly, assessment instruments need to be developed that accurately assess competencies while considering all contextual issues. Secondly, these assessments need to collect varied information about learners and be able not only to produce results that measure outcomes – but they should also be able to assess processes and logical reasoning that learners apply to come to these outcomes. P21, however, emphasises a formative approach to assessment where information continuously documented over time. They see this as an effective way of analysing student's learning to create capacity for feedback that can benefit learners and educators (Salas-Pilco, 2013).

Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel are co-authors who happen to have co-chaired P21's assessment and professional development committees that developed P21's 21st-century framework. The co-authors propose three categories of 21st-century skills namely: learning and innovation skills; digital literacy skills; career and life skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2012). These skills are described by the authors as fundamental for success in the 21st-century. Given their involvement in P21, one can see the obvious similarities between the two frameworks with P21 having only one more layer to their framework in comparison which is the inclusion of key subjects. They contend that "Achieving education's goals in our times is shaped by the increasingly powerful technologies we have for communicating, collaborating, and learning" (Trilling & Fadel, 2012, p. 16).

Binkley et al. (2012, p. 34) make the following summary of most frameworks for 21st-century skills – they claim that in one way or another, these frameworks address the

need to prepare learners for new and future industries and technologies. They teach students to learn new ways to socialise and communicate while being creative and imaginative. These frameworks are designed to encourage students to learn and keep learning how to function in a global village.

2.7 Conceptualisations of 21st-Century Frameworks

As the frameworks for 21st-century competencies have developed over the years, they have notably built on each other's ideas as we do not see much divergence from each concept. With that said, each framework possesses one or more key features distinguishing it from the rest. It is worth noting that one key facet that all these frameworks have in common is that they challenge the norms of education that are inherited from previous centuries as they emphasise a reconceptualization of education as a whole. This is because the shifting global economic landscape has a far-reaching impact on multiple industries, including education. Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) make the assertion that the driving force between globalisation and education is the connection that the state has to the world economy. According to Al'Abri (2011), nation-states have come to the realisation that they need to design and implement educational policies that make them economically competitive with other nations. The conceptualisation of 21st-century frameworks is in many ways the direct response to globalisation and what some organisations perceive as critical skills for moving into the future.

When compared to most current norms in education systems, 21st-century frameworks describe a significant leap from what is currently been practised. Nevertheless, although most of these frameworks offer comprehensive ideas of what ought to be done in the classroom, they mostly fall short on how 21st-century competencies can be achieved on a systematic, policy scale. As Salas-Pilco (2013) argues, 21st-century competencies present an enormous task for any education system

2.8 The Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Implications for Education

The term Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) was first introduced by the chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Klaus Schwab during their 2016 annual Davos meeting (Prisecaru, 2016). In describing the 4IR, Schwab goes on to say, “We stand on the brink of a technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work, and relate to one another” (Peters, 2017, p. 2). In explaining what 4IR is, Shahroom and Hussin (2018) state that it means the advancement of knowledge where the spheres of physics, digital technology and biology are intricately intertwined. Furthermore, it is largely driven by the speed at which technology is growing and shaping multiple industries. Schwab argues that given the rapid developments in technology, we will continue to see advancement in automation, the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, biotechnology and nanotechnology (Peters, 2017). In light of all these continuing developments, two questions emerge: what are the implications for society and what is the impact on education?

Each industrial revolution has had an impact on how people live and the 4IR is no exception. 4IR technologies are said to be heading towards a tipping point that will have a significant impact on human life (Penprase, 2018). One of the most widely noted effects 4IR is set to trigger, is the broad disruption to the job market (Prisecaru, 2016). Given the increase of computation and automation, a significant portion of jobs as we know them today are becoming obsolete. As much as 47 percent of jobs in the United States are said to be at risk (Peters, 2017). Further to this point, Butler-Adam (2018) argues that by the time today’s learners enter the world of work, many of today’s jobs will be non-existent. Instead, they will be replaced by jobs that are yet to be defined (Shahroom & Hussin, 2018). This shifting landscape in the workforce will undeniably impact the course of education – influencing not only what is taught, but how education is delivered in an era of technology and high connectivity.

There is a symbiotic relationship between education and the job market. One of the fundamental functions of education is serving the needs of industry as it shapes the workforce. Industries find themselves in a position where they have to be agile and arm themselves with new knowledge to compete in an environment that is constantly changing (Shahroom & Hussin, 2018). Furthermore, in light of the 4IR, Peters (2017)

challenges policymakers and educationalists to begin to probe the role of education in this new era. Shahroom and Hussin (2018) emphasise that in the 4IR, education ought to be enabling the learner to imagine, create and innovate. They should be encouraged to connect and exchange ideas globally and locally. This should be achieved through curriculum delivery and technology, all the while being mindful of the risks that may come with it (Shahroom & Hussin, 2018). Butler-Adam (2018) makes a similar assertion by calling on educators to rise to the challenge of preparing learners to be problem solvers who are adaptable and can articulate themselves. Additionally, Butler-Adam (2018) highlights that educators need to prepare learners to work and manage new technologies.

2.9 The Use of Technology for Teaching and Learning

Given that we live in a highly digitised global society, technology has somewhat become a norm in some contexts. Mallik (2004) notes that at the pace that technology is advancing, what was once only imagined yesterday is fast becoming the reality today. As the access to computers and other various technologies has increased, there has been an increased demand to prepare educators to use technology in the classroom (Russell, Bebell, O'Dwyer & O'Connor, 2003). As the custodians of education, educators can be trained to ensure that education keeps up with global changes and remains relevant (Maphosa & Mashau, 2014).

It is argued that technology can be used to improve teaching and strengthen learning (Dede, 2000). A White Paper was drafted in 2003 on E-education to position South Africa to be in-line with global trends in the use of Information Computer Technology (ICT) for teaching, learning and administration (Kriek & Stols, 2010). However, Cuban (2001) argues that computers have been oversold and underused as a form of changing teaching and learning.

Technology may be available in schools; however, this does not mean it is always integrated successfully into the classroom. According to Vannatta and Nancy (2004), the successful use of technology in teaching practice comes down to educators' perceptions and beliefs. These beliefs play an important role in educators' decision to

use technology and how often to use it (Russell et al., 2003). Therefore, promoting the use of technology in the classroom means influencing educators' beliefs about technology (Russell et al., 2003). Moreover, educators' training and professional development play a role in their use of technology (Smerdon et al., 2000).

2.10 Challenging Views on 21st-Century Education

The rising call for 21st-century competencies, as previously discussed, is on the premise that the previous centuries' education cannot adequately prepare learners for the skills and knowledge required in the next. However, critics of 21st-century teaching dispute the significance of these skills and argue that they are a pointless move away from the critical core subjects that should be taught at school (Silva, 2009). One of the common themes among advocates for teaching 21st-century competencies is the argument that today's learners are increasingly being exposed to technology, so much so that it is becoming a common way of life. This argument lays the foundation of why education needs to be responsive to this new norm and take it into account in how it is implemented. Some critical voices have, however, disputed this notion arguing that it is baseless and makes generalisations that are not founded on any sound empirical or theoretical research (Jenson, Taylor & Fisher, 2010).

2.11 The Gap in Conceptualising Instructional Leadership Practices in 21st-Century Education

Bush (2013) asserts that the importance of Instructional Leadership is due to its focus on the school's central activities – teaching and learning. The instructional leader, by aligning the structure of the school with the mission, impacts the quality of the school's performance (Hallinger, 2003). There is a wealth of literature dedicated over the years to the study of Instructional Leadership, and researchers mostly agree of its value to school effectiveness (Hallinger, 2009). On the other hand, advocates of 21st-century competencies continue to call for school reform that incorporates new skills and knowledge for a new epoch. The two areas of study are yet to converge compellingly into a discourse that explores the conceptualisation of the role of the instructional leader in an era that is increasingly embracing the emergence of 21st-century education. It

may well be, as Kereluik, Mishra, Fahnoe, and Terry (2013) argue that the structure and organisation of schooling have changed very little over the years. Nonetheless, there are increasing calls for education to reconsider its purpose so it can begin to align itself to service skills and competencies that are perceived to be critical for today and in the future. Given this argument, much dedication into research that probes the role Instructional Leadership has to play in the context of 21st-century teaching and learning is yet to be explored.

2.12 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

A theory can be defined as “...a set of interrelated constructs [concepts], definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 12). In other words, a theory weaves together related explanations of concepts and variables (Neuman, 2011). Multiple concepts on leadership, Instructional Leadership and 21st-century education have been discussed in this chapter to provide, as Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2009) describe, a lens through which the study can be approached.

Maxwell (2012) describes a conceptual framework as a written or visual explanation of the main ideas to be studied and the perceived connections between them. It is put together by consolidating existing ideas into a newly formulated structure (Maxwell, 2012). By consolidating the concepts developed from Instructional Leadership and drawing on frameworks on 21st-century competencies, I have developed a conceptual framework which blends the main tenets of the two areas to provide an outline through which this study was conducted. A visual representation of the framework is illustrated below.

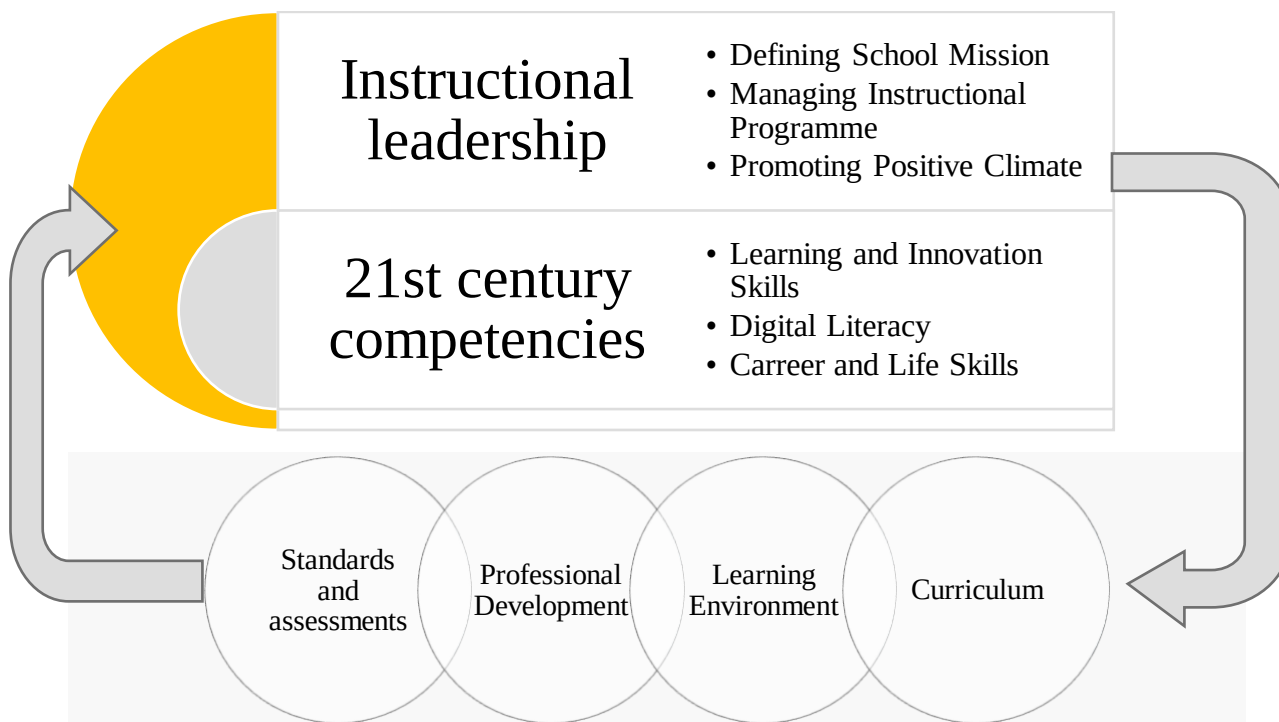


Figure 1: *Instructional Leadership and 21st-century skills Conceptual Framework*

The above framework is divided into three main segments. The first tier describes the core activities of an instructional leader as depicted by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) in their *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale* (PIMRS). The scale sets out the following functions of an instructional leader – defining the mission, managing the instructional programme and promoting a positive climate. The next tier lists the core 21st-century competencies drawn from various 21st-century frameworks. It includes learning and innovation skills, digital literacy and career and life skills. The last tier can be described as the mechanisms through which the first two can be achieved, monitored and improved which is through standards of assessments, professional development, learning environment and curriculum and assessment as proposed by Partnership for 21st-Century Skills (2007).

Given the number of frameworks and concepts that depict 21st-century education, the above framework offers the categories that most 21st-century competencies fall under

rather than listing the specific competencies. This meant that any competencies found in the research schools could be analysed by which category they were allocated under and whether they fell outside the categories proposed in the framework or not. Miles, Huberman, Huberman and Huberman (1994) describe a conceptual framework as the assumed links between concepts, variables and factors. The conceptual framework is used to determine the relationship between Instructional Leadership practices and 21st-century education by examining some of the factors that link the two concepts including standards and assessments; professional development; learning environment and curriculum.

What this conceptual framework illustrates is the successful implementation of 21st-century competencies through effective Instructional Leadership practices. It describes the critical functional elements that this requires, namely: standards of assessments, professional development, learning environment and the curriculum. The assumption is that in ensuring their Instructional Leadership functions as described by the PIMRS, school leaders who promote 21st-century education will also be guided an emphasis on 21st-century competencies as depicted in the conceptual framework.

From a research point of view, the conceptual framework has allowed me to do a few things. It has firstly allowed me to frame and focus the research questions relevant to this study. The research questions address three main points: Instructional leadership practices in 21st-century centred schools, school leaders' understanding of 21st-century education in the South African context and how schools are preparing learners for the 21st-century. Secondly, the framework guided me through the process of formulating arguments and assumptions to answer the research questions. Lastly, it has allowed me to remain within the focus of my study and not deviate from the outlined research objectives.

2.13 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature on Instructional Leadership and 21st-century education. The aim was to identify Instructional Leadership practices, and in defining 21st-century education, establish how these practices could be relevant in

schools that promote 21st-century competencies. At the beginning of this chapter, leadership is conceptualised by drawing on its multiple definitions and notions. The main idea that emerges from the concept of leadership is that leadership involves influence and vision. In essence, leadership is seen as influencing followers towards a well-thought-out and defined vision.

The chapter takes a particular focus on Instructional Leadership over other leadership theories. Instructional Leadership is seen as leadership that concerns itself mainly with the quality of teaching and learning to improve outcomes. It involved practical observable functions, implemented mainly by the principal, that serve a clearly outlined vision for the school. These activities include defining the school's mission, managing the curriculum and promoting a positive climate. Moreover, Instructional Leadership is discussed in the South African context where it is growingly seen as the most important function of school leaders. In this chapter, I note the often-misunderstood distinction between leadership and management particularly in the context of schools. Even though in education, leadership is understood to be about setting a vision for the school and influencing others towards that goal, and management is perceived to be a functional role that ensures that the processes and structures are in place to attain these goals, these two often overlap on account of the context of the school. For this reason, school leaders will find themselves fulfilling management functions that are outside of their leadership mandate simply because the context of the school demands them to do so.

The second half of this chapter is a discussion on multiple frameworks on 21st-century education. In their way, all the frameworks for 21st-century education emphasise creative thinking, problem-solving, communication and new ways of socialising and working. It was noted in this chapter however, that the implementation of 21st education poses multiple challenges, including the assessment of 21st-century competencies. There is increasing use of technology for teaching and learning which is prompted by the 4IR. Given that the 4IR is set to be a major disruptor in the job market, educationalists are challenged to begin to think how education today will prepare the future workforce for a highly digitised and technological job market.

To draw a link between the two major themes of this study, I discuss the role of Instructional Leadership in 21st-century education and make the case that much is yet to be explored in this area of study. Finally, I merge the main ideas from the two themes to develop a conceptual framework through which this study is informed. The following chapter details the research design and methodology for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section outlines and justifies the research design and methodology undertaken for this study. I begin with a discussion on the research paradigm before presenting a case for selecting a qualitative-interpretive research approach. Additionally, I describe the methods utilised in the collection of data, including descriptions of the selected data collection tools. Issues of trustworthiness and ethics of the study are also discussed. Furthermore, the limitations of this research are presented.

3.2 Research Paradigm

People naturally have preconceived ideas about the world they live in, which consequently impacts on their decision-making (Neuwenhuis, 2007). This can be referred to as one's paradigm – a set of assumptions or principles about fundamental aspects of one's reality, which forms a particular view of the world (Neuwenhuis, 2007). Ultimately, a paradigm forms a basic belief system that defines the nature of the world for the holder of the paradigm, and how they view themselves in the world (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

De Vos, Delport, Fouché and Strydom (2011) argue that it is critical for all scientific research be conducted within a specified paradigm. Not only does a research paradigm describe a particular worldview that a researcher chooses to subscribe to, but it also informs how the researcher aims to conduct their research. To this point, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state that the research paradigm will determine the choice of the methods used to produce and collect data, including ways to interpret the findings.

Positivism and interpretivism are two differing, yet fundamentally critical approaches in research. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that the positivist approach uses multiple theories to interpret research findings while considering limitations and contextual factors. Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004) further explain that the

positivistic paradigm maintains a singular truth that has been studied and is yet to be refuted. Positivism is therefore founded on purely scientific inquiry. It is described by Guba and Lincoln (1994) as being reductionist and deterministic as it upholds the view that through scientific methods, knowledge of the way things truly are, can be realised and used to explain phenomenon outside the confines of time, space and context. Moreover, positivism is experimental and goes about to verify hypotheses - primarily through quantitative research methods (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Scott and Morrison (2006) offer a supporting view when they posit that there is an association between quantitative research and the positivist approach in the use of scientific methods for educational research purposes.

Quite differently from positivism, interpretivism uses systematic techniques to generate knowledge while maintaining that multiple realities are socially constructed as opposed to there being a singular view of the world (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Interpretivism holds the view that people, as social actors, are constantly negotiating meaning about their world and themselves in the world (Scott & Morrison, 2006). Therefore, for interpretivists, meaning is derived from drawing knowledge about the world by considering the social interactions of the research participants and their understanding and interpretation of their world. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) maintain that the only way to understand social phenomena is by interacting with those directly engaged in it. For these reasons, interpretivism is generally used in qualitative research.

This study purposed to draw from participants' view and understanding of their role as instructional leaders within their particular context. It sought to gain an understanding of what instructional leaders perceive to be their role in schools that focus on 21st-century teaching and learning. The purpose was not to impose a particular truth, neither was it to prove or disprove a hypothesis. Rather, it was to study a social phenomenon to derive meaning from the ground up. This could be done by relying chiefly on the experience and viewpoints of the participants (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Based on these grounds, this study subscribes to a qualitative-interpretive research approach.

3.3 Research Design

Cohen et al. (2007) posit that a case study offers a wealth of data that describes the thoughts and feelings of participants' real-life experiences in a particular setting. This is consistent with the interpretivist's approach described earlier – which I have undertaken as my research paradigm. Case studies involve selecting cases with the aim of understanding a phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Therefore, conducting a case study presented me with the means to gain insight into the Instructional Leadership practices within the selected schools. It allowed for an in-depth account of the instructional practices as they relate to the promotion of 21st-century competencies in the researched schools. In summation, a case study gives the opportunity "...to explore significant features of the case, to create plausible interpretations of what is found; to test for the trustworthiness of these interpretations; to construct a worthwhile argument or story" (Bassey, 2007, p. 143).

Creswell and Poth (2016) describe a case as a bounded system meaning that the objectives and the boundaries of the study are made clear. The cases in this study are the Head of Schools in their capacity as Instructional Leaders. The study explores what their instructional leadership practices are in their context of 21st-century education.

3.4 Research Methodology

The approach taken in studying a phenomenon, that takes into account all the possible issues to be considered within that research, is regarded by Dawson (2009), as the research methodology. To reach the objectives that have been established for this research, a qualitative research approach was held. Unlike quantitative research, which takes the approach that theories determine the problem being studied, qualitative research focuses on building theories and concepts from the ground up (Scott & Morrison, 2006). Issues in education cannot be examined adequately in the absence of the views and meanings brought forward by participants regarding their own experiences, argues Scott (2002). The qualitative approach to research, therefore, is interested in the first-hand real-life accounts of research participants. Where quantitative researchers believe that their findings can be generalised and applied

beyond one particular study, qualitative researchers concern themselves with rich descriptions of the contextual features and factor these into their research, to understand the phenomenon being studied in a particular place and time (Collis & Hussey, 2013). While a quantitative researcher understands meaning and truth to be scientific and therefore objective, qualitative researchers see themselves as part of the research – they impact and are impacted by the research participants (Scott & Morrison, 2006).

This research employed an intensive qualitative interpretive methodology which includes a constructivist perspective as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2010). I agree with the view expressed by Scott and Morrison (2006), that research involving human participants, is not a journey to uncover pre-existing facts but a process where participants are at liberty to construct their meaning of the world in which they exist. Therefore, a qualitative research approach, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), allows the researcher to use participants' descriptions and views about their world. This is essential as this research sought to understand the perspectives, feelings and thoughts of the research participants about their role as instructional leaders in 21st century skills centred schools. A qualitative research approach allowed me to utilise a variety of research methods through a case study, to generate useful and rich data.

3.5 Sampling

Sampling in research refers to how the researcher selects the research population for their study (Maree, 2011). It involves how the selection of subgroups of people from a larger population takes place and how this selection will consequently impact the findings and validity thereof (Scott & Morrison, 2006). Purposive sampling was used for this study. Palys (2008) asserts that purposive sampling is useful for qualitative research. According to Cohen et al. (2007), it involves the researcher selecting participants for the study that best fit the required characteristics for the research. Purposive sampling for this study entailed the selection of Head of Schools in schools that aligned with the focus of the study. These schools are located in Gauteng within travelling distance to ensure convenience and to limit costs. More importantly, the schools were identified and selected for being advocates of 21st-century education.

Given the clear focus of the study which is to explore the Instructional Leadership practices within the selected schools, the research participants targeted were Head of Schools and educators. It is worth noting, that in qualitative sampling, although the studied cases may be few – they may still yield insights into the phenomenon under research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Three schools were selected where Heads of Schools and educators formed a suitable research sample for as a small-scale case study. The study deviated from purposive sampling where the teacher participants were concerned. Teacher participants responded to an open invitation and participated on a voluntary basis.

3.6 Data Generation Methods

Cohen et al. (2007) describe research methods as techniques that are used to produce data in a study. I made use of the following methods of collecting data: semi-structured interviews for the Heads of Schools and questionnaires for the educator participants. The use of interviews in qualitative research is to provide the researcher with a deep understanding of the research participants' experiences that can be drawn from a small sample of participants (Scott & Morrison, 2006). Also, according to Maree (2011), semi-structured interviews are advantageous as they allow for quick responses from research participants. A semi-structured interview template was designed in line with the research questions to generate the necessary data. The interview questions included open-ended questions to generate a variety of responses from the Heads of Schools. With the consent of participants, the interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed.

The main purpose of employing educator questionnaires was to compare data produced from the interviews with the Heads of Schools to gain further insight from the cases and establish any patterns that may arise. On their own, questionnaires are criticised for failing to generate meaningful insight and in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, however, they can be used to determine connections between variables (Scott & Morrison, 2006). The questionnaires in this study consisted of closed and open-ended questions covering a variety of topics in Instructional Leadership and 21st-century

education, relating directly to educators' experiences and perceptions within their contexts.

3.7 Piloting

Piloting in a study can be advantageous for a number of reasons. It can allow the researcher to test the dependability of the research instruments and adjust them accordingly before the commencement of the research. Scott and Morrison (2006) contend that piloting research instruments is important to form satisfactory pre-set questions. For a questionnaire, piloting serves to increase the reliability, validity and practicability (Cohen et al., 2007).

Several schools with the required profile for this study were approached with the intention of having one of them as a pilot school to refine the research tools. Only three schools responded positively to the invitation which are the schools that ultimately formed part of this study. Given that the study was intended to include a sample group of three schools, it meant that there would be no other school available for piloting.

3.8 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The semi-structured interviews with the principals were voice recorded using digital voice recorders. Using digital recording equipment helped in retaining as much data as possible without relying on memory, where there is the risk some information getting lost. The recordings were then transcribed to allow for further analysis. Given that this is a qualitative study, the data generated was text-rich as opposed to statistical and numerically dense data that is usually found in quantitative research. According to Cohen et al. (2007), the methods used for data analysis must be useful for the type of data collected. To this end, the following methods were used in analysing the data: coding, identifying patterns and connections and creating personal constructs (Cohen et al., 2007).

Coding was used to translate the responses into specific categories for analysis as emphasised by (Cohen et al., 2007). Categories were created from the interview

transcripts and questionnaire responses. The categories were analysed to establish patterns as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2006). From this point, themes were created from recurring ideas and patterns. The data was codified using names and phrases that best describe a segment and gives meaning to it as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2010). Codes were assigned to phrases and segments to determine themes and recurring patterns using data analysis software as illustrated in Appendix I. This process was based on synthesis and was necessary for me gain an in-depth understanding of the data and the phenomenon under study.

3.9 Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is critical in qualitative research given that the nature of qualitative research leaves it open to bias due to the level of involvement from the researcher. Although validity and reliability are terms commonly used in quantitative research, some aspects can be extended into quantitative research to ensure that the research findings are trustworthy. Guba and Lincoln (1994) refer to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as ways of determining the validity of research findings. To ensure credibility, the research participants were given a copy of their transcripts in the case of the interviews, and a copy of their responses to the questionnaires for them to validate that their responses were recorded accurately. No objections were received in this regard – building a case for the credibility of the data.

In this study, the same themes and questions addressed in the interviews were addressed in the questionnaires. Furthermore, to ensures trustworthiness, I endeavoured to identify any arising issues that may have had to be discounted as they impeded on the research process – none were found. Finally, the principle of confirmability was adhered to in the interpretation of the data. According to Guba and Lincoln in Scott and Morrison (2006) confirmability probes whether the analysis and findings of the research are grounded on the data. The analysis, interpretation and finding in this study where firmly rooted and guided by the data generated through the study.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research consider the difference between what is right and wrong and what is good and bad (Cohen et al., 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Basit (2013) contend that any research should adhere to ethical standards. For Cohen et al. (2007) these include informed consent; ensuring human dignity; confidentiality; transparency and the right to voluntary participation and withdrawal.

Given that this research involved the lives of participants, they could be impacted by it in various forms. Ethical consideration is therefore paramount to any research and the wellbeing of the research participants must always take precedence (Cohen et al., 2007). As part of the effort to conduct an ethical study, clearance for research involving human participants was applied for from the Wits School of Education Research Ethics Committee and later granted. This process was important in making sure that this committee interrogates ethical issues before the study could commence. Only once clearance by the committee had been granted, was I permitted to begin the fieldwork for this research.

Permission letters requesting to conduct this study were sent to the relevant schools and chairpersons of the school board, seeking consent to conduct research in the selected schools. It was made clear in the permission letters that there was no intention to harm, ridicule or discredit any of the schools, participants or any other entities that were to form part of this research. Moreover, full anonymity, by using pseudonyms and altering any descriptions that may giveaway the identity of the schools or research participants is maintained throughout the report.

All participants were issued with consent forms that stipulated the nature of the research and how data generated from their participation is intended to be used. From the beginning, they were granted the opportunity to agree or decline taking part in the study. Additionally, permission was obtained from all interviewed participants to audio-tape the interviews. To this end, as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), I was careful to adhere to the following principles of ethical conduct in research:

informed consent; anonymity; confidentiality as well as the right to withdraw from the study at any point during the course of the research.

3.11 Limitations of the Study

There are various limitations that I had to consider and work within. I was granted 12 months to conduct the study and produce a written report. This meant that I had to work within stringent time constraints and ensure that all aspects of the study are concluded within that time frame. In addition, I had to factor in the cost implications of this study, as there was no additional funding for it. This meant that pre-planning and communication were paramount to ensure that no additional expenses would be incurred by travelling to the selected schools.

3.12 Chapter Overview

This chapter deals with the research methodology undertaken for this study. I began with a discussion about research paradigms before describing two paradigms considered in scientific research– positivism and interpretivism. This then led to my justification for locating this particular study within the interpretivist research paradigm. A distinction was then made between qualitative and quantitative research methodology and reasons were then provided for selecting a quantitative research methodology. This chapter further explains the reasons for and benefits of using semi-structured interviews and questionnaires as a means of collecting data in qualitative research. Under the discussion on sampling, I explain how and why the selected schools and participants were chosen for this study. I briefly explain the processes undertaken to interpret the data. Finally, an essential discussion dealing with the importance of trustworthiness and ethics in research is undertaken. These considerations have formed the guiding principles throughout this research. The following chapter is a presentation and discussion of the research findings from the participating schools.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to present a detailed account of the research participants' responses in this case study. It is also to offer an analysis of the findings emerging from the study. Structurally, this chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first section, data resulting from interviews with three Heads of Schools is presented along with data generated from the educator questionnaires. The second section is a thematic analysis and interpretation of the data that formed the main findings of the study.

Three research schools were part of this case study with a total of 15 respondents – 3 of which are Heads of the schools and the rest being educators from the respective case study schools. The schools and research participants are referred to using pseudonyms throughout this report, to adhere to the ethical prescripts of anonymity.

What follows, is a brief profile of the research schools and participants as well a description of the tools and methods used to collect all the data for this case study.

4.1.1 Research Schools

The case study schools were selected based on several factors. Firstly, the schools indicated, in one way or another, that they promoted 21st-century education. This was an important factor as the study was looking specifically at the Instructional Leadership practices in such schools. Given that these were independent schools, they needed to not belong to the same group or brand of schools in order to have diverse representation. Although the schools were some distance apart from each other, they were within close enough proximity for me to coordinate the data collection process with some success. The following is a description of the 3 case study schools that I will be referred to using the pseudonyms – Protea Primary School, Vista Primary School and North Primary School respectively.

4.1.1.1 *School A Profile – Protea Primary School*

Protea Primary School is located in an urban area north of Gauteng. A fairly new school, it hosts just under 300 learners and aims to grow that number to become a fully-fledged primary school that accommodates learners across Grade 000 to Grade 7. The school is founded on the principle of providing education for the 21st-century learner. Built-in as part of their educational model, is an emphasis on the use of technology for teaching and learning. Although it is an independent school, it is part of a growing sector of low-cost independent schools as far as their fees and educational offering is concerned.

4.1.1.2 *School B Profile – Vista Primary School*

Located in the South part of Johannesburg, Vista Primary School is part of a more established group of low-fee independent schools. This school currently accommodates learners from Grade R through to Grade 9. It is one of few new independent schools built in the township where it is located, and it boasts well-built facilities as well as learning and recreational spaces. As part of its approach to education, the school states that it embraces 21st-century learning and the use of technology in their teaching and learning.

4.1.1.3 *School C Profile – North Primary*

In a more affluent part of the city, sits North Primary School. This school is part of a growing conglomerate of independent schools in Gauteng. Part of the school's philosophy and approach to 21st-century education is to go beyond just the use of technology – they want their learners to be empowered to build different technologies for them to be prepared for modern careers.

4.1.2 *Heads of School's Profiles*

To answer the main research question that probes the Instructional Leadership practices in schools centred on 21st-century education, purposive sampling was important. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) and Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2002), a researcher ought to make a judgment call on whether the selected research

participant can provide the best information required for the study in question. For this reason, I opted to interview Heads of Schools, as in my view they stood in the best position to provide the necessary wealth of knowledge and experience needed to address the research questions. The table below is a summative representation of participating Heads of Schools along with their pseudonyms and those of their respective schools.

School (Pseudonym)	Head of School (Pseudonym)	Years of Educational Experience	Years in Current Role
Protea Primary School	Mrs Alice	7	3
Vista Primary School	Mrs Thomas	18	1
North Primary School	Mrs Cele	18	4

Table 1: *Heads of School's Profile*

4.1.3 Educator Profiles

Electronic questionnaires were distributed to educators with the help of the Heads of Schools. Educators completed the questionnaires on a voluntary basis. A total of 8 responses were recorded and the profiles of the educator respondents are summarised in the table below.

Educator (Pseudonym)	Teaching Subject	Years of Educational Experience
Protea Educator	Math& Life Skills	4-10
Protea Educator	English	1-3
Protea Educator	IsiZulu and History	4-10
Protea Educator	ECD: All subjects	1-3
Protea Educator	Gr4 NS, Geography, Life Sciences, Maths	4-10
Protea Educator	Early childhood development	1-3
Vista Educator	Foundation Subjects	1-3
Vista Educator	Maths, Social Sciences	1-3

Table 2: *Educator Profile*

The combination of subjects taught by the educators is diverse and their teaching experience in education ranges from 1 to 10 years. Unfortunately, no responses were received from the educators in the third case-study school – North Primary. Multiple efforts were made to receive the questionnaires from the educators, however, given that I was reliant on the Head of School to liaise with the educators on my behalf, those efforts proved fruitless. I decided to still include the school as part of this study by incorporating the Head of School's interview, even though it meant that the perspective of the educators from that school would not be represented. It was my position that the voice of the Head of School would still contribute to addressing the main purpose of this study - to understand the instructional practices in the case-study schools.

The following section is an account of the data generated in this case study through semi-structured interviews with Heads of Schools and responses from educator questionnaires.

4.2 Data Presentation

The following is a presentation of the data retrieved from interviews with Heads of Schools and questionnaires from educators in those schools.

4.2.1 Leadership Philosophy

The opening question to the interview sought to gain some insights into the Heads of Schools' understanding of what leadership is and their philosophy on the subject. This line of questioning was based on the assumption that there are numerous takes on what leadership is, and many leaders may have strong views on leadership which may inform their particular style of leading. To the question *What is your view and philosophy on leadership*; the Heads of Schools' responses were varied yet quite intriguing. Mrs Alice highlighted that for her, leadership is much about empowering others.

I've had to literally lead through others and that's been my strategy. I realised that I had to identify people within the team that are brilliant, that I can trust, and I've had to delegate.

The educators at this school attest to her approach to leadership being to delegate, as one educator put it:

...she delegates a lot of her responsibilities to competent individuals. – Protea Primary Educator.

Mrs Alice further emphasised that empowerment in the education space is particularly important citing the negative perception held by many (including educators themselves) that as a profession, teaching is inferior, and it is seldom even seen as a meaningful profession:

There is a negative bias that almost seeks to say educators can't think for themselves. And so, for me, I want educators to know that they are respected. They are professionals. I often feel that every time I meet with my staff, I have to remind them of how they need to treat themselves as the professionals they are.

Mrs Thomas, on the other hand, had a particularly interesting response to the question of what her leadership philosophy is. For her, there are two ways in which you lead – instinctively as well as by adapting and responding to the needs of your school. She tries to strike a balance between two seemingly contrasting approaches to leadership. She believes in being democratic while at the same time she believes that a leader should exercise a certain level of autocracy:

I like to balance democratic leadership with autocratic leadership. I like to get people's input and I don't just sit in my tower and make a decision. I like to get people's input and then we decide on something together. And sometimes I will say, I know you want that, but you can't have it for this reason.

Given that the two approaches to leadership – democracy and autocracy – sit on polar opposite ends of the leadership spectrum, it may be difficult to reconcile how they could function coherently. In justifying her approach, she makes this analogy:

It's good to consider other people's opinions when you make a decision. But when the building is on fire, do you want me to ask everybody what we should be doing, or do you want me to get them out of the building? There is a balance and different situations require different kinds of leadership.

The Head of North Primary, Mrs Cele emphasised servant-hood as her approach to leadership. She spoke passionately about using her position to serve others as opposed to being served by others.

I wanted to be a school leader so I can influence, support and help. I'm a servant leader. I believe in being the one packing away tables because everyone else is either not interested or not as invested. Being that first in and last out. To me leadership is not about control. It's about influence and support. Leadership is about the people. It's not about me.

The main idea that can be taken from the statement above is that the Head of School strives to be a leader that influences others, not only in what she says but in what she does as well. Her passion for serving others sees her doing things that some leaders may deem to be below their position. She places those that she leads and serves at the centre and removes the focus from herself.

4.2.2 The Role of Heads of Schools

In the interviews, the School Heads were asked to describe their role and how it translates into their daily activities. What this revealed was a disconnect between what was expected of them by their superiors, and what was practically required of them to ensure the sound running of the school. Vista Primary's Head of School, Mrs Thomas, had this to say:

What I do on a daily basis bares no correlation right now to what my actual responsibilities are. So, I shouldn't actually be involved in the curriculum at all. My Heads of Departments are the ones responsible, but I end up being part of making sure that the curriculum is up to standard. I'm also spending a lot more time looking at spreadsheets and doing accountancy.

In her description, Mrs Thomas sits between two obligations. She juggles between the business aspect of the school as well as some of the practical educational aspects such as curriculum. In essence, she carries financial accountability in the running of the school while on the other side she gets involved in the planning of what needs to be taught in the classroom.

Mrs Alice recounts a similar experience as she frustratingly describes how she is pulled away from her passion of being as close as she can to what happens in the classroom, to being drawn more into the commercial needs of the school. In explaining the source of this frustration, Mrs Alice describes the constant pressure she experiences from stakeholders to prioritise the business element of the school. When I asked her how she manages this pressure, her response was:

We're not there yet. My superior's view is still that I'm a businessperson, but in my view I'm not. I'm an educationalist actually. I took the role because I'm invested in education and not so much business. I'm constantly having to again tell people I'm not getting to why I actually took this job. I'm finding myself doing things unrelated to my core competencies.

The interviews were beginning to reveal the constant tension experienced by the Heads of Schools between what they understood to be their responsibilities as school leaders and what they practically doing on a day to day basis.

One Head of School identified herself as an Instructional Leader and expressed that her understanding of her role is for it to be centred on what an Instructional Leader is expected to do. Mrs Thomas voiced:

A Head of School is an instructional leader. I mean, literature tells us that. That's why you're there; you're not there to worry so much about business or income. You are there to drive towards a particular goal as it pertains to learning and teaching.

Even with her understanding of Instructional Leadership, she explained how she is constantly negotiating this role with those above her:

...so there's a clash in philosophy and understanding and it's a tough discussion because without causing friction one constantly has to reiterate what the function of the head of school is.

Mrs Cele at North Primary's experience was different in that she was explicitly seen as an Instructional Leader by her superiors and was expected to function as such. However, the business operational requirements of the school, at times demanded her to split her focus. In recounting her role in the school, she said the following:

I can tell you what it's [role] meant to be and what it is. So, my school has a very high expectation of me as an Instructional Leader and I'm held to account for that. It's not allowed to be something that just slips away because you're busy doing other things. So that is my first role, but as my school has grown, it's shifted, and I do whatever needs to be done.

I asked some of the Heads of Schools what they would focus their time more on, given the capacity and the opportunity to. There was a desire from them, seemingly, to focus their attention and expertise more on the educational elements of their school. In their words:

Although my role isn't actually academic - academics are the core business. If I want the business to succeed, I have to be involved in educating and developing the educators to their full potential otherwise it'll fail. – Mrs Cele.

On a basic day-to-day level I would do a lot of more classroom visits because that would inform what needs to be done. So what are we doing right, what are we not doing well? – Mrs Alice.

There is a great sense from the above statements, that to move the teaching and learning towards where it is envisioned to be, the Heads of Schools want to have a greater impact on the activities that relate directly to teaching and learning in their schools.

4.2.3 Professional Development

The interviews and educator questionnaires revealed that all the case-study schools have professional development (PD) processes that they subscribe to. These processes differ from school to school and are informed by several factors – some are based on the individual needs of educators, while others on the needs or the desired direction of the school.

Mrs Alice's approach for PD was initially to outsource to a company that specialised in educator professional development. She describes how it became evident that there was a misalignment between what her educators needed, in the context of the school, and the standardised blanket approach provided by the outsourced company. Most of her educators came into the school with a post-graduate qualification and what was being covered by this company were concepts that most of her staff were already familiar and comfortable with. After realising that the PD was not useful for the majority of her staff, she took a change in approach.

And then in year two we said okay let's do a sort of personal development plan for educators and then aggregate that information and see what's emerging from most people. And then develop programmes or outsource for those, according to the

themes that emerged. So that's what we then did. And that's a lot more useful.

This new approach allowed the Head of School to be more informed about the individual needs of educators in order to cater specifically to those needs. This could be done in-house or by using an external service provider. Over and above this, Mrs Alice describes a weekly PD programme that the school runs, where they deal specifically with topics and skills that every educator can benefit from - regardless of their expertise or experience.

Mrs Alice's educators attested to having a variety of PD opportunities that they had participated in since joining the staff at Protea Primary. These included workshops and training programmes dealing with curriculum planning, first aid training, classroom management and discipline – among others. Confirming Mrs Alice's approach to PD, some educators stated:

Management identifies areas as well as staff gets the opportunity to identify areas in which they would like to grow.

Staff meetings help us determine where we still need professional development.

As needs of certain skills and competencies arises, continuous professional development is given to bridge the gap.

From the educators' responses as well as Mrs Alice's remarks, it is evident that at Protea Primary there is a multi-pronged approach to PD. There are areas catered for, that are specific to individual educators' needs, whilst there are efforts to continuously address areas that are pertinent to all educators. A similar approach to PD appears to be applied at North Primary School. Likewise, in this school, there is an emphasis on creating a personal development plan. The notable difference is that each educator is required to follow this plan with the support of a coach. In Mrs Cele's words:

How we run PD is that every educator has an individual coach who will ensure that an educator is on a personal development path and working on their areas of need. Then we will have PD that fits everyone depending on what we need as a school.

Mrs Cele explained that to decide on the PD that applies to all her educators, the management and the staff sit together at the beginning of each term and decide on areas that need to be addressed.

The question arises whether all these efforts always translate into an improvement in educator's practice. Mrs Thomas highlights that in her school, this is not always the case.

So, we have meetings every Wednesday afternoon and that's where I get to talk about curriculum and how is it going in the lessons and different ways of doing things. I don't find that it always translates to a difference in action.

Mrs Thomas pointed out that what she found to be the most effective in improving educators' practice was the monitoring of learner's books and classroom visits.

Ultimately the one that makes the most difference is actually the book scrutiny reports and the class visit reports. Going in and actually observing the lessons. I've done a class visit on every educator. I've done at least one book scrutiny report on every educator. Neither of those is my job but I've done it.

To cement her thoughts further, Mrs Thomas stressed that:

...you can have all the training till the cows come home, but if you don't actually go and have a look at how it translates into action, it's a waste of time.

Not all Heads of Schools are able to implement classroom visits. For this reason, Mrs Alice expects her educators to conduct peer classroom observations and write up peer reviews after each visit. She explains how it works:

So, the peer reviews- you go into a peer's class and you have a list of things you need to review, from the layout, the content, to the learners, the respect, the delivery. You have to physically write and say this was my observation and then you have to actually share this with the educator.

Each educator would have more than one person reviewing them, explained Mrs Alice. The reason for this was to pick up any patterns that arose – both good and bad. If more than one peer highlighted an area of good practice, that educator could be used to coach others who are struggling in that area. If there is a pattern of bad practice, the HOD could then step in and devise a plan to help the individual educator to improve.

I asked the Heads of Schools how their educators responded to constantly being observed. The general response was that educators were open to it and mostly appreciated the benefits that it comes with. For Mrs Cele, this was the norm at her school.

We are very fortunate because this is the already existing culture at this school. When educators come here, they come here knowing this is how it is. And so, the educators are very open and very responsive.

Mrs Thomas tries to make classroom observation a positive experience for her staff. For her, it's about making educators feel that they are supported as opposed to being under constant supervision. To this she said the following:

I've always fostered an environment where the educators are open to it [observation], just depends on how you're treated here. If you are negative (and sometimes you feel like being negative) if

you're negative, then they're not going to want to have you back. You've got to find something positive to say about everybody. So that way the educator feels that I'm supporting her not monitoring. So it depends on how you do it.

The educators at Protea Primary had a largely positive perception and experience of classroom observation. Some of their comments expressed how helpful these observations are, and how they help practically in areas such as classroom management. Some of the opinions offered by educators from the school on the matter were:

Classroom visits help you to see where you can improve your teaching or where you can adopt new and innovative teaching styles. If there aren't any classroom visits, then you can't improve and develop as an educator/ professional.

We do peer classroom visits, the feedback is very helpful, and it is very detailed, so we know exactly what to improve.

Classroom visit influences my teaching practice positively, as the feedback makes me strive to do better and get suggestions on how to improve.

The educators highlighted the importance and impact of feedback in the process of classroom observation, indicating that there is a positive perception on the whole as was highlighted by the School Heads.

4.2.4 Defining 21st-Century Education

Given the aim of the study, it was imperative that I unearth as much as I can regarding the Heads of Schools' understanding of 21st-century education and how, as instructional leaders, they guide its application in their schools. The schools were selected for their focus on 21st-century teaching, and so, it came as no surprise when all the Heads of Schools demonstrated strong perceptions of what 21st-century competencies are. However, and this I least expected, all the Heads of Schools had their own interpretation and internalisation of 21st-century education, which they had

contextualised to align with what they considered to be important for their specific environment. Mrs Alice had the following to say when I asked her to describe 21st-century competencies:

If I had to define them [21st-century competencies], they obviously mention the critical thinking, communication skills and so on, but how I understand and grasp them – for me it's things that go beyond academic excellence. It's how a child will be able to adapt to any environment.

In explaining further what she meant by that statement, Mrs Alice emphasised that although learners today can study to be anything they want to be, there is no guarantee that whatever profession they would have studied for, will exist by the time they start working. This is why for her it is important to teach learners to adapt and have the mind-set to acclimatise to any environment so that they are not restricted by what they study at school. She went on to define 21st-century skills as *competencies that can help an individual in any space that they find themselves in*. Along the same line of thought, Mrs Thomas put it in these words:

I want my learners to be stimulated. I want them to learn how to cope in every social milieu. My kids, when they're graduate, must feel comfortable in Sandton as they do in Soweto. But they also have to be true to who they are. I want them to be able to cope with a 21st-century environment.

A similar theme emerges from both statements – adapting to different environments. The focus of 21st-century education for the Heads of Schools seems to be education that goes beyond a set of skills into a way of thinking. Mrs Cele framed it more intently by saying:

It is an education that's not restricted to the content. It's not focusing on what you can say you know but what you can do. So, it's focusing on children being confident enough to collaborate, to

explore, to offer opinions, to disagree. Its children having space for failure and to try again. Its children being able to advocate for themselves.

Mrs Cele went further to explain that children ought to be taught how to fit into the world and so they have to be empowered with life-skills that will prepare them to do so. For her, these skills were collaboration, enquiry, inquisitiveness and problem-solving. She further highlighted that these are skills that will apply regardless of what any career will look like in the future.

Educators were asked to indicate the 21st-century competencies that they were most familiar with. The majority mentioned critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration – commonly known as the Four-Cs. They were then asked which of these skills they promote and incorporate into their teaching. Critical thinking and collaboration were the skills that most educators attested to promoting in their classrooms. Below are some of the educators' responses to the question, *how are these skills promoted in your teaching methodology*:

On laptops and with practical equipment.

They do the research on topics and are always offered opportunities to work together for the common end goal.

Researching and engaging with the text.

Collaboration the learners have to work together to achieve something and to create a project. Parents need to be involved with their kids.

Cross-cultural skills – we do a lot of reading and research about different cultures and we learn how to respect one another and how to stand up to culture bullies.

I make use of the bloom taxonomy style of asking questions during circle time to engage the learners.

Similarly, I asked the Heads of Schools how 21st-century skills were being translated into the classroom. For Mrs Alice, there was an expectation that her educators incorporate and exemplify these skills in what and how they teach.

...and every learning area has to infuse these things [21st-century skills] into how you deliver learning. And so how you teach must be such that your children are propelled to think critically about whatever it is you're teaching.

I asked Mrs Alice to elaborate on how this is achieved practically in the classroom. She explained that they looked at these skills in each learning area and came up with a rubric for each subject as a way of assessing each competency. She was quick to concede however, that this system had not yet been implemented fully, citing the pressure that educators are often under to fulfil their other responsibilities. She added that it was, therefore, one of their aims to start prioritising this system of assessing 21-st centuries skills in the school.

This concession was indeed corroborated by the educators at the school with most of them indicating that they did not assess any 21-century skills as part of their teaching programme. Moreover, all the educators at Protea Primary claimed that they did not receive any training on how to teach and or incorporate 21-st century competencies in their lessons. Further to this point, the educators at Protea Primary were asked to describe what guidelines they received to integrate 21st-century education in their lessons. Most indicated that they mainly had to rely on their knowledge and research.

The educator's responses on the lack of guidelines on how to incorporate 21st-century teaching and learning in the classroom, as well as Mrs Alice's remarks on the current progress of creating systems to assess the same, could be an indication that very little of what is intended, is actually taking place in the classroom.

Mrs Thomas had a more optimistic response to the same question of how her vision for 21st-century teaching was being translated in the classrooms. For her, the main focus of all the competencies had to lead towards critical thinking. She justifies this by saying, if learners can be thought to engage their world critically, they are likely to be able to achieve far and beyond what they are taught in class.

The big focus is to try and encourage that critical thinking from scratch and they [educators] do that every single day. There's a poster against the board where questions are placed, and the educator asks the questions to the class. She's got them [learners] in small groups, they come to the carpet while the others are doing other things and they have to sit and analyse the questions together and talk - every single day.

Relaying the practical outcomes of what she was referring to, Mrs Thomas described how learners in her foundation phase had seen a project done by learners in a higher grade and approached their educator to ask if they could come up with a similar project of their own. The educator merely gave them permission and guidance while the learners came up with their own ideas and eventually completed the project on their own. For Mrs Thomas, this was of significance.

And that's interesting because that tells me that it's working. That they're learning to think differently about what they're doing and they're learning to come up with ideas and not just follow.

When her educators were asked how they incorporate 21st-century skills in their teaching, some indicated that they give learners challenging problems out of any work given during lessons to encourage thinking. Other educators expressed how they engage in conversation with the learners during lessons as another way of encouraging thinking.

4.2.5 The Use of Technology in 21st-Century Education

The study revealed that the use of technology is perceived by the respondents to be a major part of educating for the 21st-century. Even though it was with varying success, the use of technology as a learning and teaching tool was found to be prominent in all the case study schools. More specifically, the study explored how the schools are using technology, the challenges associated with using technology in the classroom and how they are mitigating those challenges. To the question of how technology was being used for teaching and learning in her school, Mrs Cele had the following to say:

Children have access to Chromebooks from Gr R every day. It's built into their lessons. And then, as they get older, they start using more platforms. So, when they're a little bit younger it's a bit more controlled and as they grow older, we start using different applications online and things like that. And then they do coding on Friday, which then becomes circuitry robotics.

Mrs Cele highlighted four mediums that are used at North Primary to incorporate technology as part of their pedagogy – the use of Chromebooks (a compact version of a laptop); online applications; coding and robotics. Given this variety in the technology that the learners are exposed to at this school, it is evident that it plays a central role as one of the ways learners are being prepared for the 21st-century. Mrs Cele went further to emphasise that their intention is not just to get the learners skilled at using all these technologies, it is about getting them to learn how to apply them as solutions for everyday problems. For this reason, they get the learners to work on projects where they can make use of these technological tools in solving problems.

I asked Mrs Cele, given the amount of technology that is used in her school, how comfortable are her educators in making it a part of their teaching.

So that is an interesting question because some of them struggle and some of them are wanting to just google everything. And some of them, not so much. So, even when placing educators, I've had to consider who's going to be comfortable using the

technology, especially in the pre-primary, right, because you ideally want your pre-primary educators to be part of the bigger vision.

In employing her educators, Mrs Cele considers their technological savviness. She explained that in the lower grades particularly, it is important to have educators that are comfortable with the use of technology and can train learners at that level – which is much more difficult than training learners who are slightly older.

At Vista Primary, technology appears to be used primarily for teaching and not so much for learning. This was the response from Mrs Thomas on the use of technology in her classrooms:

So there is digital equipment in every class, but a lot of them [educators] underutilise it. You provide them with a YouTube clip, you provide them with the slideshow presentation, and they don't use it.

The expectation at Vista Primary is for educators to use the equipment they are provided with to teach their lessons. This was proving to be problematic. Mrs Thomas pointed out that part of the challenge was shifting educators' mindsets on the use of technology. She asserted that her educators are reluctant to teach using technology even though it was made readily available to them. Mrs Thomas' claim was contradicted by the educator respondents from her school they claimed that they did not make use of technology in their classes due to a lack of resources. One of her educators commented that they do not use technology in their class because the learners have a computer educator. Given the contrary responses, it was difficult to come to any reasonable conclusion on the use of technology at this school.

At Protea Primary, there is a high focus on the use of technology according to Mrs Alice.

So we're very big on technology. We're also big on the constructive use of technology and not just for using technology for technology's sake. How we do it is that we've looked at programmes that we can use for specific learning areas because currently how we use technology is that it's almost like a practice tool. We use it really to emphasize certain things.

Technology at Protea Primary seems to be used primarily as a diagnostic tool and a learning enrichment tool to extended learning opportunities for concepts that are being taught in class. Mrs Alice went on to explain that the technology they use in the class, gives the educator real-time feedback on what level each learner is at on a particular concept that is being taught in class. This data then helps inform the educator on the kind of support or teaching approach they will need to employ to address problem areas, or what extended opportunities they can offer learners for them to learn further.

When asked if she has any educators that find the use of technology challenging, similar to Mrs Cele at North Primary, Mrs Alice pointed out that they assess upfront whether the educators they employ are capable of using technology. She commented, however, that there have been educators who struggled and the approach with those educators has been to up-skill them through the school's PD avenues.

All the educator respondents from Protea Primary supported Mrs Alice's statements by indicating that they do indeed use technology as a tool in their classes. This is what some of them had to say:

We make use of computers on a daily basis in our classrooms.

We make use of rotational groups, of which one station requires learners to use computers and software to complete activities.

I taught my learners how to type, what is a URL how to use the internet how to search for what. How to use Google, Google Maps, Edpuzzle, Prodigy, Kindle, Turtle Diaries.

Some of the educators did raise concerns, however, over the excessive use of technology, with one expressing that given this point, there should be an educator assigned to focus on teaching computer technology. While another educator expressed that the classrooms could be improved by getting more appropriate technological learning tools. These remarks could be indicative, to Mrs Alice's earlier point, of the fact that not all educators are fully comfortable with using the existing technology in their classes.

4.2.6 The Significance of 21st-Century Education

The respondents were asked to give their view on the significance of 21st-century education and how important is it in the South African context. There was no disagreement among the respondents that 21st-century education, in whichever way they understood it, is significant and should be shaping the way education is being approached today.

Mrs Alice stated that 21st-century education was without a doubt significant to education today. Her view was premised on her understanding that today's jobs and careers will look considerably different in the near future.

With automation coming, it's going to wipe out a lot of jobs but it's going to create new ones. Those new jobs are also going to be tech-based jobs. So we cannot afford to leave people behind. As an education sector, we definitely can't just watch and say we're going to stick to our CAPS and draw instead of coding for example, you know. My only concern is if it is really going to be for certain people or for everybody.

The future job market for Mrs Alice, calls for a new approach to education. If education continues on the old path, there is an imminent risk of not preparing learners adequately for their future. The educator respondents at Protea Primary were all in agreement on the importance of 21st-century education. Most of their sentiments were around the need to prepare learners for jobs that may not exist yet. Learners require skills that will

set them up to be successful in a changing world according to one of the educators. Another educator had the following to say:

The world is changing, and new jobs and positions are created and most fade away. If you teach the way learners were taught 100 years ago, your learners will be taught for a job that may not even exist in a few years, leaving those learners unemployed school graduates.

In her earlier response, Mrs Alice raised concern over the possibility that certain sectors of the population may be excluded from this new approach to education. Adding on, she proceeded to comment:

I think what we tend to do is that we continue to foster the divide because we continue to serve those that can afford to be served and leave behind the bulk of the population that probably needs what we are doing but because we've paid for it they are going to be left behind. It just recreates a cycle of poverty.

She brings up the issue of access to the conversation about the future of education, highlighting the possibility that it may only be for those who can afford. The concern for Mrs Alice is how this may lead to the perpetuation of poverty and continue to increase the inequality gaps that are prevalent in South Africa. She went on to stress that the education sector has to find ways to include everyone with deliberate efforts made not to leave anyone behind, as this has been prominent in South Africa's history.

Mrs Thomas also noted the importance of 21st-century education within the South African context.

We have to teach 21st-century skills- especially as South Africans, or we will get left behind. We have to, we owe it to our country. We owe it to these children. More importantly than I.T though,

we have to teach them how to think. We have to teach them to think differently.

The importance of teaching learners how to think was once again highlighted as Mrs Thomas, with a great sense of urgency, stressed that there is a great need to move education forward and not let South African children be on the back foot. One of her educators added that it is about equipping learners for an ever-changing world.

In response to the significance of 21st-century education, Mrs Cele commented:

Education is not fine the way it is. I've seen that it doesn't matter if students come from top highly regarded independent schools or top ex model-C schools or previously disadvantaged schools – there are some common things that are wrong. Which shows that there are some fundamental problems with the way education is. One of the main challenges we have is with students not questioning anything and just accepting everything and not being able to have an opinion.

The problems in education today are widespread for Mrs Cele. Regardless of the type of school learners come from, for her the education system as a whole is failing to produce critical thinkers. One of the contributing factors for Mrs Cele is the gaps that exist in educator training. Educators are now expected to teach in ways that they themselves were not taught, nor trained to teach, she added. To begin to address this need, Mrs Cele highlighted the need for a greater focus on educator training, particularly in the foundation phase, so that it aligns with the vision of what education ought to be in order to service the future skills-needs of today's learners.

4.3 Data Analysis and Discussion

The following is an analysis of the themes that have emerged from the data presented in the first section of this chapter. The purpose of the analysis is to make sense of the data gathered from the interviews and questionnaires to answer the research questions. Cohen et al. (2007) describe the process of data analysis as the arranging and explaining

of data to make sense of it by, noting patterns, themes, and symmetries in arising from the participants' descriptions of the circumstances under study. The literature reviewed in chapter two was critical in guiding my analysis of the research data as in not only provided the lens necessary for interpreting the data, but it also provided the theoretical framework to make sense of it. Identifying the themes required a process of constantly reviewing the data while referring back to the main research questions. From that process, I was then able to categorise the data and ultimately extrapolate themes as patterns and regularities became apparent.

4.3.1 Leadership Driven by a Strong Leadership Philosophy

The Heads of Schools all had their own philosophy on leadership. It was this philosophy that seemed to ultimately inform their style and approach to leadership. Mrs Alice's leadership style involved drawing-in capable individuals whom she felt she could trust, to perform tasks that she would delegate to them. Over and above that, she strongly believes in empowering her educators by constantly looking for opportunities where she can afford them greater responsibilities. Spillane (2005) explains that the interaction between the leader, followers and the context, can lead to Distributed Leadership if the leader is less concerned with position and power and focused more on mobilising others towards organisational goals. By empowering and allocating leadership tasks to other educators, as informed by the needs of her school and the capabilities of her staff, Mrs Alice demonstrates the traits of Distributed Leadership. This type of leadership rejects the hierarchical approach to leadership, and instead, promotes collective decision making and collaborations to solve challenges within the school (Gumus, Bellibas, Esen & Gumus, 2018).

Quite aware, in my opinion, of the intricacies involved in leading an organisation as complex as a school, Mrs Thomas attempts to strike a delicate balance between leading with a firm autocratic hand, with being liberal and democratic in certain situations. To do this, she actively assesses each situation and decides whether to take a high-handed stance or if it is best to incorporate others' views in her decision making. Mrs Cele on the other hand openly identified herself as a servant leader, emphasising that for her, leadership is about supporting and helping others. Greenleaf in Van Dierendonck

(2011) posits that a servant leader is a servant first and is their unwavering desire to serve that inspires them to lead.

In attempting to understand how the Head of Schools perceive leadership and how they enact it, one gets the sense that they maintain a level of personal values that guide how they approach their leadership role. Bush and Glover (2003) make the point that values are an integral part of leadership. The values that are held by school leaders shape how they lead their school towards desired outcomes. For Greenfield and Ribbins (1993), leadership is an expression of personal values. All the interviewed leaders demonstrated strong personal perceptions of what leadership means and how the values they hold influence the way they lead.

4.3.2 Managing to Lead

It soon became apparent in the interviews, that the Heads of Schools were experiencing a level of tension between having to lead and having to manage their school. For Connolly et al. (2019) the difference between the two is that carrying out delegated responsibilities within the school equates to management, while leadership is primarily a function of influencing others towards specified goals. The Heads of Schools had to constantly negotiate and navigate between these two roles. While on the one hand, they held strong views of what leadership means and how it ought to be carried out in their context, they found themselves frequently drawn away from leading into serving the operational and managerial needs of their schools. It is not unusual for school leaders to find themselves in this position where they are leading and managing simultaneously. Certainly not in the South African context, as while most school principals are deemed to be leaders, they find themselves inundated with managerial functions such as administrative duties (Christie, 2010).

Considering the Instructional Leadership model as depicted by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), it can neatly be divided into two segments – leadership and management. The first segment that speaks to setting a vision and goals is a leadership function. For in an organisation, the setting of the vision is a responsibility bestowed on the leaders (Bush & Glover, 2003). Vision goes with influence which is also a leadership function.

According to Yukl (1989), leadership is influencing others' actions towards desired goals. The second segment (managing the instructional programme and promoting the school climate) arguably refers mainly to managerial activities. Managerial activities being those that ensure processes and structures needed to achieve the educational goals (Christie, 2010). Management is an integral part of Instructional Leadership. Instructional leaders take responsibility for managing the instructional programme which includes a) managing the curriculum, b) supervising and evaluating instruction and c) monitoring learners' performance (Hallinger, 2011a; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Furthermore, the function of leadership is informed by the environment in which it is exercised (Christie, 2010; Connolly et al., 2019). Therefore, many of the Heads of Schools' activities, even though in their understanding fell outside of the scope of their primary responsibilities, were informed by the contextual demands of their school and more importantly, mostly fell within the prescribes of Instructional Leadership.

What was encouraging to hear, was the Heads of Schools' persistent desire to be involved in activities that are directly related to teaching and learning. Mrs Thomas expressed the importance of spending more time observing how the training of her educators translated in the classroom. Mrs Cele wanted to be more involved in developing educators, while Mrs Alice expressed wanting to conduct more class visits so she could know what needed to be improved. These are all activities consistent with that of Instructional Leaders. According to Hallinger and Murphy (1987), Instructional Leaders pay attention to curriculum implementation by frequenting classrooms to promote the development of their educators. Whether this will impact the school positively or not remains to be seen as Horng and Loeb (2010) argue, that schools that show improved results are likely to do so from having Heads of Schools that are competent organisational managers over those directly involved in classroom observations and educator training. It seems that there is a delicate balance to be struck, where Heads of Schools need to successfully oversee the organisational needs of the school, while in some way having direct influence over what happens in the classroom.

4.3.4 Educator Development

The continuous professional development of educators was a common thread across all the case study schools. Professional development was found by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), to be an important strategy in ensuring that educators can support the learning of their students in a skilful way. There was a variety of professional development approaches employed by each school that were based either on the individual needs of educators, or the school as a whole. Professional development programmes in the schools were a combination of outsourced workshops and internal training sessions - all dealing with a wide range of topics.

Given the varied approach to professional development across the case study schools, it was particularly interesting to see that they all focused on class observations as a way to develop educators and improve their classroom practice. Mrs Thomas did caution however, that training does not always result in improvement of practice. It is therefore important, according to her, to be physically present in the classroom to determine whether the training is making any difference. Her conviction is in line with Bush (2013) who argues that class visitations are the only way to effectively monitor and evaluate classroom practice. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) agree in their assertion that classroom observation is one of the few strategies necessary for effective professional development.

The fact that Mrs Thomas was able to do classroom visits herself made her an anomaly among the other interviewed Heads of Schools. Mrs Alice and Mrs Cele had to make use of peer-educator observations and observation by assigned educator-coaches, respectively. Bush (2013) advocates for peer-educator observation as a way for encouraging educators to reflect on their teaching practice. Coaching is also considered by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) as an effective means of improving educator practice, as it involves support and sharing of knowledge and expertise to help educators with their shortcomings.

A central component of class observation is the feedback that educators receive from it. This is essentially the vehicle meant to transform their practice for the better. To

improve teaching and learning, there needs to be intentionality in providing structured and meaningful feedback (Bush, 2013). Feedback ought to provoke reflection and reflection should drive change in educator practice towards the ideal end-goal (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Surprisingly, the educators in this case study who indicated that they were observed regularly, seemed to be positive about the experience. Moreover, they were receptive to the feedback that they often received and even went as far as acknowledging its benefits. The reason for this positive reception of classroom observation could be that in the case study schools, it is used mainly for educator-development as opposed to appraisals and other assessments of that nature. In South Africa, it is not uncommon for observation to be used as a performance management tool to root-out incompetent educators (Bush, 2013). In such cases, observation is used to judge educator-performance and not intended for their professional development.

4.3.5 Instructional Leadership Practices in the Research Schools

The conceptual model presented in chapter 2 (*Instructional Leadership and 21st-century skills Conceptual Framework*) was formulated to combine the functions of an instructional leader, as depicted by Hallinger above, with 21st-century education as described by P21. The model goes further to describe activities that are proposed to be critical in successfully implementing Instructional Leadership functions while promoting 21st-century education in a school. It is through this conceptual model that I offer my analysis of the outcomes of the study.

Sergiovanni (1990) interestingly describes vision as the dreams and beliefs that are held by an organisation. One gets the sense that the values and beliefs demonstrated by the Heads of Schools are what impact the on the vision they hold for their school. More importantly, these values are what drive how the leaders execute their leadership tasks. To this end, Mrs Alice values empowerment. In working towards her vision for the school, she endeavours to draw other educators in and empower them to execute certain tasks. She constantly takes opportunities to give her educators responsibilities with the purpose of seeing them continuously grow. Mrs Cele emphasised how much she values serving others. Her approach to leadership was to influence others by serving and not to lead through control. Mrs Thomas' style of leadership is arguably underpinned by a

great sense of responsibility and accountability. Although she aims to factor-in the opinions of the educators she leads, she is adamant about taking the ultimate responsibility for the vision, even if it means not always considering other views in her decision-making

The Heads of Schools described a tension between what they considered to be their role as leaders, and the managerial tasks they often found themselves having to do outside their obligations. Mrs Thomas insisted that she was not meant to be involved in curriculum matters, yet she consistently found herself as part of curriculum planning. As unintentional as this is, it coincidentally falls squarely within the role of an instructional leader. Hallinger and Murphy (1987) describe as one of the roles of the principal, the development, evaluation and implementation of the curriculum. Similarly, Mrs Alice revealed her frustration with having to deal with operational matters such as the school building projects and school finances – activities that many describe as falling within the scope of management (Bush, 2007; Connolly et al., 2019; Davidoff & Lazarus, 2000).

4.3.6. The Significance of 21st-Century Education for South Africa

Some of those critical of 21st-century education argue that it is a perilous move away from the attention on core subjects that should remain the focus in schools (Silva, 2009). The counter-argument from supporters of 21st-century education is that times are changing so schools should be preparing learners to be equipped with the skills that are required for current and future job requirements (Binkley et al., 2012). Within the discourse of 21st-century education, this seems to be the common measure for the significance of 21st-century competencies. It is certainly echoed through the sentiments of the research participants as there was a resounding sense of job security that they felt necessitated the focus on 21st-century skills in education. In addition, for some participants, the move towards 21st-century education was justified and, in some ways, motivated by the historical divides in South Africa – which have had an unquestionable adverse impact on education for the marginalised. Furthermore, it was noted by one of the Heads of Schools that advances in technology mean an increase in automation where some tasks that are currently being performed by humans will be taken over by

machines. Education should, therefore, be preparing the future workforce for necessary and relevant economic roles that will make them meaningful contributors to the global economy (Maphosa & Mashau, 2014).

4.3.7 What is 21st-Century Education?

The educators and Heads of Schools appeared confident in their awareness of what 21st-century competencies are. Most of them referred to the Four C's – critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication. The Four C's are attributed to P21's framework for 21st-century competencies (National Education Association, 2012). Of particular interest, however, was what the Heads of Schools considered to be the purpose of 21st-century education. Unlike the educators, the Heads of Schools demonstrated less concern with the Four C's. They had a greater overarching vision of the kind of learner they imagined for the 21st-century. This vision was their motivation for 21st-century education in their school. They foresaw learners who are successfully prepared for the 21st-century, as not being bound by subject knowledge or the context they come from but could use their knowledge and skills to adapt to any environment in the world. This is a theme that came across quite vividly for the Heads of Schools. Being able to adapt to a rapidly changing world can only be a valuable outcome in anyone's education. It is a skill that goes beyond content-knowledge into a life-skill. Trilling and Fadel (2012) advocate for life skills such as flexibility, self-leadership, social interaction and adaptability, and argue that they are essential to success in the 21st-century.

Given the advances in information technology and globalisation, education seems to be heading in a direction where it is more than about core subjects such as Maths, Science and Languages. An education that arms learners with 21st-century skills prepares them to continually improve in an ever-changing world so they can be global citizens that can compete in a global workforce (National Education Association, 2012). In agreement, Maphosa and Mashau (2014) posit, that teaching to develop global citizens is critical in the 21st-century as we now speak of the world as one global village. One could argue, that the point at which all the 21st-century skills converge – is the point when a learner is prepared for success in the 21st-century. This is the argument put forward by the

National Education Association in their efforts to promote the Four C's into mainstream education. They contend that skills such as communication are essential in today's workforce. This is because work teams have become more globalised and cross-cultural – making communication that much more complex. The complexity is because communication entails explaining to, negotiating and interacting with a diverse group of people from across the world (National Education Association, 2012). Similarly, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking are equally essential, as learners are being prepared for a workforce that is increasingly more globalised than ever before.

4.3.8 21st-Century Education in Practice – How Learners are Being Prepared for The Future

Even though the data revealed that the research participants have a fair knowledge of 21st-century education, there seems to be a lag between what is understood, what is intended and what is being implemented in the classroom. Most educators demonstrated their knowledge of 21st-century skills by highlighting the Four C's, however, most of them indicated that of the four, their focus was mainly critical thinking and collaboration. To promote critical thinking, for instance, they would incorporate questioning and problem-solving into their lessons. To encourage collaboration, the educators made mention of designing group-work activities. None of the educators' responses demonstrated well-thought-out activities and pedagogy to promote the even the limited 21st-century skills they had opted to include in their lessons. The question also arises as to why there is a narrowed focus on which 21st-century skills to promote. This could be because there is still an increased focus on core subjects and yet not enough thought and resources dedicated to designing the appropriate plan for 21st-century education.

The testing and measuring of 21st-century skills appeared to either be limited or virtually non-existent – even with the limited number of competencies the schools had selected to focus on. This is a challenge highlighted by Voogt and Roblin (2012) in their assertion that the assessment of 21st-century competencies is problematic given the complexities involved. One school indicated that they made use of rubrics to assess critical thinking skills in some subjects. It was not clear exactly how, but the school

seemed to be designing these rubrics themselves, either through individual educators or through departments. The design of assessment instruments for assessing 21st-century skills is arguably an extremely complicated one. Pepper (2011) warns of the multiple challenges to this task, including finding accurate ways of assessing - while taking into account multiple contextual factors.

4.3.9 A High Focus on Technology

Advocates of 21st-century education often place technology at the centre, arguing that it is an essential element to 21st-century readiness. ISTE is one such organisation which holds the view that technological literacy is critical as we now live in a highly digitised global society (Mishra & Kereluik, 2011). All the case study schools indicated that they made use of technology for teaching and learning in one way or another. It was evident from the data that the case study schools were exposing their learners to technology from as early as Grade R. The schools did not seem to be teaching technological skills as a core subject nor did they consider it a 21st-century skill in the same way as they did the Four C's. Rather, they considered technology as a tool for teaching and learning. This is consistent with an argument made by Kivunja (2014) that the focus of 21st-century education is not technology itself – it is about skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving while making use of technology.

The study discovered that not all educators felt comfortable using specified technology in their classes. This attitude may be impacting how much technology they use in their classes and how often they use it (Russell et al., 2003). To remedy the low usage of technology, some educators believe that additional training and human resources were necessary. For some Heads of Schools, to avoid the challenge of educators not using technology adequately in the classroom, they preselected them partly based on their technological savviness. Both highlighted approaches are limited as Vannatta and Nancy (2004) argues that increasing their use of technology in the classroom means getting educators to change their attitudes and beliefs towards it.

4.10 Chapter Summary

In the first section of this chapter, I presented a description of the case study schools and the research participants. This is followed by a systematic representation of the data generated from the interviews with three Heads of Schools and questionnaires from educator participants. Pseudonyms are established early on and used throughout this chapter when referring to the case study schools and the research participants. In the second part of this chapter, I take the reader through themes that have emerged through the analysis process of the data. The literature explored in earlier chapters has created the theoretical and conceptual lens through which the data was analysed, and the themes presented.

The Heads of Schools all expressed their views on leadership as they articulated their approach to leadership in their schools. The three main factors that impacted and drove the leadership practices of the Heads of Schools were the context in which they lead, their personal values and convictions; and expectations as set out by their superiors. While they found themselves involved in a variety of tasks, some of which they felt fell within their mandate and others outside, the Heads of Schools expressed the desire to have more direct influence over teaching and learning-related matters. This is an effort endorsed by Hallinger and Murphy (1987) who see an instructional leader as one who takes responsibility for curriculum and instructional matters in the school.

As part of building the school environment, instructional leaders set high standards for their educators (Hallinger, 2011a). Part of the standards set for educators in the research schools was the expectation for them to be informed about 21st-century education and to use technology in the classroom. High standards in the research schools are what lead the leadership to ensure that there was continuous PD taking place for the educators. Although each school had their unique approach to PD, the study found that it was informed mainly by the personal needs of the educators and the educational goals of the school. Moreover, the practice of classroom visits and feedback was discovered to be a common approach to the development of educators across the case study schools. Each school had found a way to observe educator classroom practice and set up feedback processes that informed the educators of the areas that required attention. This is a

strategy highlighted to be an effective form of educator development by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017). However, there was not much said by the Head of Schools to link their leadership role, PD, classroom observation and feedback directly to the implementation of 21st-century education.

The schools demonstrated a level of awareness of 21st-century education. Critical thinking and communication were the main skills promoted by the case study schools. It was noted, however, that the schools did not seem to be following any particular curriculum plan or framework for the teaching of these skills. Even with the limited number of 21st-century skills that the schools claimed to be promoting, there was little evidence that these skills were being effectively evaluated and assessed. For reasons noted by Voogt and Roblin (2012) and Pepper (2011), the assessment of these competencies may have proven to be a highly complicated exercise for the case study schools. The Heads of Schools did, however, emphasise that 21st-century education was more than just about the teaching of the Four C's. It was about preparing learners to possess the skills to live and work anywhere in the world. This meant teaching them how to adapt to any context.

The use of technology appeared to be common practice in the case study schools. It is used both as a tool for learning and teaching. This was not surprising because technology is endorsed by many as a language of the 21st-century. The expected extensive use of technology did in-fact present challenges for some study schools. The level of competency for some educators was found to limit their expected use of technology in the classroom. To remedy this challenge, the Heads of Schools indicated being intentional about hiring educators that had a level of capability in using technology. Over and above that, professional development is used to up-skill educators in the use of technology for teaching and learning.

As mentioned throughout this study – many are pointing out that the future-jobs landscape is beginning to shift as globalisation and technology continue to impact industries and economies. The research participants reflected this notion as they highlighted the significance of 21st-century education. The sentiment across all the

participants was that the world is changing and the future that today's learners will be a part of will look significantly different from today. 21st-century education, therefore, is seen by the participants as the best way to prepare learners for participation in that future.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is a summary of the case study as presented in this paper. The reader is presented with the research findings as guided by the research questions underpinning the study. Based on the analysis of the data from the case study schools and the findings thereof, implications of such a study are noted. Finally, while acknowledging the limitation of this study, the chapter offers key recommendations.

5.2 Study Summary

There has been an increase in the popular discourse around the Fourth Industrial Revolution and 21st-century education. Some schools, in response, are beginning to align their educational offering to include preparing learners with 21st-century competencies. The objective of this study then was to go into such schools and to probe as to what extent this is being achieved. To do so, the study purposed to gain insight into what Instructional Leadership practices were present and to what end these practices are informing the curriculum to prepare learners for the 21st-century. Part of this objective was to investigate the understanding of 21st-century education and its overall significance in the South African context. For this purpose, three research questions were formulated:

1. What are the Instructional Leadership practices of Heads of Schools in schools that promote 21st-century education?
2. What are the Heads of Schools' understanding of 21st-century education and its significance to South Africa?
3. How are schools preparing learners for the 21st-century?

The first chapter outlines the purpose and rationale of the study and orientates the reader to the background, context and structure of the study. In chapter 2, a review of literature relevant to the study is presented where literature on leadership is examined to conceptualise and theorise leadership in its multiple forms within education. Moreover,

the literature on 21st-century education and the various frameworks that have since emerged in this area are explored. A conceptual framework for Instructional Leadership and 21st-century education is then presented. Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methodology employed in this case study. A case is argued for approaching this research as a qualitative study within an interpretivist paradigm. Purposive sampling, as explained in chapter 3, was used in selecting the research schools and participants. Data was then collected through interviews with Heads of Schools and questionnaires from educators. The fourth chapter is a presentation and analysis of the research data where the data is presented thematically. Further in this chapter, significant issues arising from the recorded responses from the research participants are then analysed and presented in the discussion.

5.3 Conclusions

The fundamental purpose of this study was not to investigate the research participants' knowledge of Instructional Leadership and so no questions were directly perused to this effect. Rather, it is to determine the practices, in the case study schools, that are strongly associated with Instructional Leadership. This is under the assumption, as underlined by Murphy (1988) that unlike other leadership models in the educational leadership discourse, Instructional Leadership is an approach that uniquely focuses on tasks directly concerned with teaching and learning. With the case study schools positioning themselves as schools that focus on 21st-century education, the study then sought to uncover how this was being implemented. Consequently, the case study came to the following findings to the research questions:

Q1: What are the Instructional Leadership practices of Heads of Schools in schools that promote 21st-century education?

Hallinger (2007) summarised the role of an instructional leader as follows:

- Communicates clear school goals and defines the mission
- Manages the curriculum
- Monitors and evaluates teaching and learning
- Monitors student performance

- Protects instructional time
- Provided professional development for educators
- Maintains high visibility

The conceptual model presented in chapter 2 (*Instructional Leadership and 21st-century skills Conceptual Framework*) was formulated to combine the functions of an instructional leader, as depicted by Hallinger above, with 21st-century education as described by P21. The model goes further to describe activities that are proposed to be critical in successfully implementing Instructional Leadership functions while promoting 21st-century education in a school. It is through this conceptual model that I offer my analysis of the outcomes of the study.

5.3.1 Defining the School Mission

A fundamental role of leadership is casting the mission and vision of the organisation (Blanchard, 2010). Instructional Leadership is no exception as an instructional leader, is expected to define and communicate the vision and goals for the school (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). The case study schools seem to be under the care of strong leaders in the Heads of Schools. All the Heads of Schools had interesting journeys of how they came to lead their school. However, what demonstrated their strong approach to leadership was not just the accolades they have collected over their years in education, it was their philosophy and approach to leadership as articulated in the interviews. Not only did the Heads of Schools appear to have a strong vision for their school, but they also demonstrated sound leadership principles and values to archive this vision.

Sergiovanni (1990) interestingly describes vision as the dreams and beliefs that are held by an organisation. One gets the sense that the values and beliefs demonstrated by the Heads of Schools are what impact the on the vision they hold for their school. More importantly, these values are what drive how the leaders execute their leadership tasks. To this end, Mrs Alice values empowerment. In working towards her vision for the school, she endeavours to draw other educators in and empower them to execute certain tasks. She constantly takes opportunities to give her educators responsibilities with the purpose of seeing them continuously grow. Mrs Cele emphasised how much she values

serving others. Her approach to leadership was to influence others by serving and not to lead through control. Mrs Thomas' style of leadership is arguably underpinned by a great sense of responsibility and accountability. Although she aims to factor-in the opinions of the educators she leads, she is adamant about taking the ultimate responsibility for the vision, even if it means not always considering other views in her decision-making

5.3.2 Managing the Instructional Programme

The Heads of Schools described a tension between what they considered to be their role as leaders, and the managerial tasks they often found themselves having to do outside their obligations. Mrs Thomas insisted that she was not meant to be involved in curriculum matters, yet she consistently found herself as part of curriculum planning. As unintentional as this is, it coincidentally falls squarely within the role of an instructional leader. Hallinger and Murphy (1987) describe as one of the roles of the principal, the development, evaluation and implementation of the curriculum. Similarly, Mrs Alice revealed her frustration with having to deal with operational matters such as the school building projects and school finances – activities that many describe as falling within the scope of management (Bush, 2007; Connolly et al., 2019; Davidoff & Lazarus, 2000).

Ultimately, the study found that the Heads of Schools had systems in place for managing the curriculum and supervising teaching in learning. In some instances, they were directly involved in these activities, even if somewhat reluctantly so. For some of the activities involved in managing the curriculum, the Heads of Schools would delegate the tasks to a selected few. This is an approach endorsed by Spillane (2009) who contends that the responsibility to lead and manage should be one taken on by a team and not by an individual. It was further noted in this study, that all the Heads of Schools had a desire to have closer proximity to the classroom - where they could directly influence the teaching and learning that took place.

5.3.3 Promoting Professional Development

PD was found to be an area of high focus in all the case study schools. Not only was it used to achieve the goals of the school, but it was also a way of ensuring that high standards are set and maintained for educators. This can be taken in a positive light as Blase' and Blase' (1998) contend that promoting educators' professional development is the most impactful Instructional Leadership function in schools. The study found that although the schools had different approaches in how PD was implemented, they all prioritised educator classroom practice. Effective PD by the standards set by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), means that there is collaboration amongst educators, coaching and modelling, as well as reflection and feedback – all of which should be continuously taking place. This seemed to be the case in the schools under study. Each school had systems set up to evaluate and monitor classroom practice as it pertained to the set standards of teaching and learning. These included peer-educator observation, educator-coaches and periodic classroom visits as well as learner-book evaluates from the Head of School. A notable common thread amongst these strategies was an emphasis on regular comprehensive feedback. This was a way of constantly ensuring that teaching and learning are happening at an acceptable standard (Bush, 2013).

Q2: What are the Head of Schools' understanding of 21st-century education and its significance to South Africa?

The case study schools were purposefully selected partly on the basis that they focus on 21st-century education. It was then not unexpected when the participants demonstrated knowledge of 21st-century competencies. The skills that the research participants mainly referred to are the competencies outlined in P21's framework for 21st-century education known as the Four C's (critical thinking, collaboration, communication and creativity). Of particular interest, however, was the understanding presented by the Heads of Schools on what the ultimate purpose of 21st-century education was for them. All the Heads of Schools articulated their vision of a 21st-century ready learner. This learner for them would be armed with competencies and skills that would empower them to live and work anywhere in the world. They would have the acumen to approach solving problems in innovative and creative ways. They would have the

confidence and skill to adapt to any environment while having a strong sense of who they are and where they come from. This is arguably a shift from what schooling is known to accomplish in the South African context, "... schools must be transformed in ways that will enable students to acquire the sophisticated thinking, flexible problem-solving, and collaboration and communication skills they will need to be successful in work and life" (Binkley et al., 2012, p. 18).

In light of the direction the world is perceived to be headed in, the Heads of Schools highlighted the significance of 21st-century education today. As one Head of School pointed out, the future job market is beginning to look significantly different from what it is today. Continuing in the old trajectory would only be at the risk of getting left behind from where the rest of the world is heading. There was a sense of urgency expressed by the Heads of Schools for South Africa in particular, to be abreast of the global changes in education. The reason being that a majority of the South African population was historically excluded from quality education and the opportunities that came with it. A repeat of the same would be a huge injustice. Further to this point, one of the Heads of Schools cautioned against the cycle of poverty that could potentially be recreated by an outdated education system.

Q3: How are schools preparing learners for the 21st-century?

This question is of fundamental importance as it seeks to establish the link between what is understood by the research schools, what is intended, with what has been translated into observable action where 21st-century education is concerned. By their acknowledgement, the case study schools had a limited focus in their approach to teaching 21st-century skills. Of all the skills, they mainly focused on critical thinking and collaboration. How this was being actioned, was essentially through classroom activities and questioning. The study did not go into an in-depth enquiry on exactly what this looked like, however, it revealed that the assessment of the selected 21st-century skills was lacking. With the exception of one school that had begun to develop rubrics in some subjects for assessing 21st-century competencies, none of the other schools seemed to have processes in place to assess any of these skills. Assessment in this area is pivotal as it provides a measuring stick for the implementation of 21st-

century education. In order to establish clear goals for 21st-century education and to keep schools accountable for those goals, assessment standards need to be established (Binkley et al., 2012). Assessing indicates priorities for the curriculum and informs pedagogy – whatever is assessed matters.

A high focus on the use of technology for teaching and learning was noted across all the case study schools. Butler-Adam (2018) posits that learners today should be taught how to use and manage different technologies. From an early age, learners are exposed to technology through various mediums in the case study schools – a move that can be considered not only to be progressive but also necessary in the era of the 4IR. Technology is used in the case study schools as a teaching tool where educators integrate technology into some of their lessons. In addition, technology is used to reinforce concepts where the learners work individually on laptops or tablets to go through topics that were taught in class. It was evident in the study that technology was not taught separately, rather it was a tool used for teaching and learning.

5.4 Recommendations

The case study schools proved to be quite strong organisationally, which may be attributed in part to the calibre of the Heads of Schools. This study was conducted to determine the nature and impact of Instructional Leadership practices on 21st-century education. As a result, I found that the schools are yet to determine the full scope of their objective. There are clear signs that the schools have an awareness of 21st-century competencies, however, much still needs to be done in formulating a path towards building a curriculum that successfully promotes these skills. Therefore, after conducting this study into the practices of instructional leaders in schools that promote 21st-century education – I make the following recommendations.

5.4.1 Recommendation 1: Leadership for the 21st-Century

Hallinger (2009) suggests that Instructional Leadership, which has reincarnated in the 21st-century as Leadership for Learning, must be leadership adapted to the environment and needs of a school's particular context. If by this definition the context is a 21st-century-centred school, leadership must explicitly reflect that focus. It should

encourage innovative problem-solving, creativity and collaboration outside of the classroom walls first. Once this becomes part of the culture of the school – it may carry on and filter into classroom practice.

Part of the Heads of Schools' focus ought to be setting up structures and processes specifically dedicated to the establishment of 21st-century education in their school. This may include a research department and a curriculum planning team that keeps abreast of global educational trends in this area and develops tools and materials to be used in the classroom. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation processes should go hand in hand with the curriculum to ensure that new knowledge is translated into teaching and learning according to the set standards.

5.4.2 Recommendation 2: Configuring the Curriculum

It was noted in this study that there was little evidence offered to show that the philosophy of 21st-century education held by the research schools is impacting the curriculum. It was noted by Van de Oudeweetering and Voogt (2018) that despite the importance of 21st-century competencies being advocated for in education, there is no systematic integration into the curriculum and classroom practice. Directly linked to the first recommendation, much work can go into adapting the current curriculum and its delivery to reflect 21st-century education. The curriculum needs to articulate how the identified 21st-century competencies will form part of teaching and learning in all subjects.

5.4.3 Recommendation 3: Educator Training and Development for 21st-Century Education

The task bestowed on an educator is an incredibly difficult one. It is often the source of much criticism levelled against them. It must be acknowledged, in my view, that educators are as much a link in the chain as curriculum policy-makers, politicians, school leaders, parents and all other stakeholders in education are. The material difference is that educators stand at the forefront and are tasked with the implementation of the curriculum and its educational ambitions. For this reason, educators require sufficient support of the right kind if they are to be successful in playing their part in

educating learners for the 21st-century. Teaching competencies such as critical thinking and problem-solving often goes against the grain of traditional educator-centred approach to pedagogy and is often found in current educator training programmes. As a result, a significant portion of educators continues to resort to traditional teaching practices that don't encourage collaboration, self-driven research and communication (Schleicher, 2012). There should, therefore, be a complete revision in how pre-service educators are trained. Where there are identified gaps in post-service educators, it falls on schools and school leaders, to supplement for these shortfalls through training and development of educators in the area of 21st-century teaching.

5.5 Implications of the Study

It is important to acknowledge first and foremost, the limited nature of this case study. The intention, and by extension, the scope of the study, was limited to three research schools. The implication, therefore, is that no generalisations can be established regarding instructional leaders' practices in schools focusing on 21st-century education beyond that of the case study schools. However, the study was able to reveal trends and insights that may inform further research into similar areas of study.

21st-century skills and competencies over the last decade or so have become a popular topic in educational discourse. As talks over the 4IR have gained momentum, so have the calls for education to be geared towards preparing the future workforce for new, uncharted territory in the global world of work. This task naturally falls on the shoulders of curriculum planners, educators and school leaders. This study has revealed that although much of the talk of the significance of 21st-century education is rife – the surface has barely been scratched when it comes to how it is to be successfully implemented in schools. The work and role of the instructional leader are yet to be considered with the intention of driving towards educational goals within the prescribes of 21st-century education. Although many of the core elements of Instructional Leadership may be transferable from one era to another, not considering Instructional Leadership in the context of 21st-century education, may have limits on its effectiveness in where education may be headed.

5.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I give a summative overview of the study as well as conclusions based on the research question. The study found the presence of strong leadership in the case study schools, where the Heads of Schools demonstrated Instructional Leadership practices such as defining the school mission, managing the curriculum and promoting professional development. While they were found to conform to some Instructional Leadership roles, the Heads of Schools were also found to be conflicted between leading and managing their schools

The study found that there was a strong focus on PD that was characterised by an emphasis on educator development through classroom observation and feedback. Furthermore, a fair knowledge of 21st-century education was noted in the research schools. The educators and Heads of Schools alike, attested to the significance of 21st-century education, citing the direction the world is headed as the rise of technology and the 4IR becomes more apparent. However, the study revealed a limitation and weakness in the implementation of 21st-century education with the schools failing to demonstrate adequately how they taught, evaluated and assessed 21st-century skills. Furthermore, there was a lack of evidence to suggest the incorporation of 21st-century education in the curriculum. The recommendations made in light of these finding were to establish Instructional Leadership with a particular focus on 21st-century education. Secondly, that the curriculum is looked into and configured to reflect a framework for the teaching of 21st-century competencies. Lastly, educators who are at the forefront of implementing educational goals, need to be supported through appropriate development and training both pre and post service.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate

WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2019ECE002M

PROJECT TITLE

Instructional Leadership Practices in 21st Century Skills-Centred Schools: A Case Study of Two Schools in Johannesburg

INVESTIGATOR

Mr. Sipho Mpisane

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR

WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DATE CONSIDERED

20 May 2019

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Approved unconditionally

EXPIRY DATE

Date of submission of the project report

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE

27 May 2019

CHAIRPERSON:

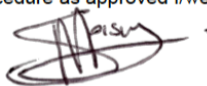

(Dr. Paul Goldschagg)

cc: Supervisor: Dr. Geeta Motilal

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.


Signature

04 / 06 / 2019
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix B: Letter to the Chairperson of the School Board

February 2019

Dear Chairperson of the School Board

My name is Sipho Mpisane. I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on: **Instructional Leadership Practices in 21st-century Skills-Centred Schools.** My research seeks to explore how instructional leaders through their role promote 21st-century competencies in their schools.

My research involves short informal interviews with the Head of School and Heads of Department (no longer than 30 minutes), in which I will ask them a series of questions that will assist me in gathering information that will be helpful to my research. Part of my research will also involve a one-page questionnaire to be completed by 5 educators interested in being part of this study.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because I think it would be the ideal school for me to conduct my research, given the nature of my research and the location and demographic of your school.

I would therefore like to extend this invitation to your school to participate in my research. Your school is not in any way obligated; however, your participation would play a significant role in assisting me to complete this study.

The research participants will not be disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this research without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

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

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

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Sipho Mpisane

Email: mpisane.sipho@gmail.com
Phone: 0787268685

Appendix C: Letter to the Head of School

February 2019

Dear Head of School

My name is Sipho Mpisane. I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on: **Instructional Leadership Practices in 21st-century Skills-Centred Schools.** My research seeks to explore how instructional leaders through their role promote 21st-century competencies in their schools.

My research involves a short informal interview (no longer than 30 minutes) in which I will ask you a series of questions that will assist me in obtaining information that will be helpful to my research. Part of my research will also involve a one-page questionnaire to be completed by 5 interested in being part of this study.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because I think it would be the ideal school for me to conduct my research, given the nature of my research and the location and demographic of your school.

I would like to extend an invitation to your school to participate in this research. Your school is not in any way obligated; however, your participation would play a significant role in assisting me to complete this study.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and identity of the school 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 between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Sipho Mpisane

Email: mpisane.sipho@gmail.com

Phone: 0787268685

Appendix D: Head of School's Consent Form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called:

Instructional Leadership Practices in 21st-century Skills-Centred Schools.

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

Permission to be audio taped one

Circle

I agree to be audio taped 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

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 audio taped, 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 for Educators

February 2019

Dear Educator

My name is Sipho Mpisane and I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on: **Instructional Leadership Practices in 21st-century Skills-Centred Schools**. My research seeks to explore how instructional leaders through their role promote 21st-century competencies in their schools.

My research involves a short questionnaire with a series of questions related to my research. The questionnaire will only take you 15 to 20 minutes to complete electronically or on hard copy.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because I think it would be the ideal school to conduct my research - given the aim of my research and the location and demographic of your school.

Would you mind if I invited you to answer a short questionnaire?

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 between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Your participation is voluntary, so 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.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Sipho Mpisane

Email: mpisane.sipho@gmail.com
Phone: 0787268685

Appendix F: Educator's Consent Form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called:

Instructional Leadership Practices in 21st-century Skills-Centred Schools.

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

Permission for questionnaire one

Circle

I agree to fill in a question and answer sheet 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 audio taped, 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 G: Interview Schedule

1. General questions - Can you give me a bit of your professional background and how you finally came to be part of (School)? - Walk me through a typical day for you at (School)
2. What are the Instructional Leadership practices of principals in schools that promote 21st-century teaching and learning?
3. How do instructional leaders promote and enable 21st-century competencies in their school? - What is your understanding of 21-century skills and competencies? ((What do you understand them to be?)) - Is there specific coverage of 21st-century skills and competencies in the school's curriculum? - If yes, what skills/competencies specifically promoted - What are some of the ways these competencies are promoted/taught in class? - What kind of learning environment have you created to support the teaching and learning of these competencies? - Does the staff receive guidelines on the teaching of 21st-Century competencies and skills? - How are these competencies evaluated? - Is there any integration of technology in the classroom? - Are the educators given any specific training and professional development on how to teach 21st-century skills and competencies?
4. What are principals' understanding of 21st-century skills and their significance in education today? - What is the motivation for having 21st-century skills and competencies as part of the school's curriculum and or pedagogy? - How significant would you say these skills are specifically to education today and in the future? - What would you say about your educators' perceptions of these skills are? Do they find them irrelevant or unimportant or do they see value in them? - Are you satisfied with how much the school is doing to promote 21st-century skills and competencies? - What do you think is challenging, if anything, in teaching these competencies within the current south African educational landscape?

Appendix H: Educator Questionnaire

Case Study: Instructional Leadership & 21st-Century Competencies

This is a completely anonymous survey that asks questions related to Instructional Leadership practices and 21st-century competencies in your school

* Required

General Questions

1. School location *

Mark only one oval.

Pretoria

Johannesburg

2. Current position at your school *

Mark only one oval.

Educator

Head of Department

Other:

3. Teaching Subjects *

4. Total number of years in education *

Check all that apply.

1-3

4-10

More than 10

Continuous professional development

5. Are you provided opportunities and programmes for continuous professional development? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

6. If yes, describe these opportunities and or programmes

7. In your experience, what mostly informs the continuous professional development programmes in your school? * *Mark only one oval.*

Individual needs of the staff

Needs of the school or departments

Both

8. **Comment ***

Instructional Supervision

9. **Does the Head of School occasionally visit and supervise you in the classroom? ***

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

10. **Does your Head of Department occasionally visit and supervise you in the classroom? ***

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

11. **Do you receive classroom visits from your peers? ***

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

12. **How often do you receive feedback on your classroom practice after classroom visits? ***

Mark only one oval.

Never

Occasionally

Often

Always

13. **How do classroom visits or the lack thereof influence your teaching practice? ***

Educational goals

14. Does the head of school regularly communicate the school's educational goals? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

15. What are some of the ways the Head of School communicates the educational goals of the school? *

16. The school encourages the use of technology in the classroom *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

17. I use Technology in my classroom for (select all the options relevant to you) *

Check all that apply.

Teaching

Learning tool

Administration

School Climate

18. The Head of School encourages me to devote more of my time to instructional (teaching) activities than to the non-instructional duties (i.e. he/she protects instructional time) * *Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

19. Comment *

20. Comment on the kind of teaching and learning environment in your school *

21. Would you say there are clear goals set for you as an educator? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No Undecided

22. Comment *

23. Would you say the school sets and expects high standards from the learners *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No Undecided

24. Comment *

25. Would you say the school sets and expects high standards from the educators *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No Undecided

26. Comment *

27. The school creates an environment that promotes 21st-century skills and competencies *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

28. Comment *

21st-century competencies

29. List all the 21st-century competencies familiar to you *

30. Is there specific coverage of 21st-century skills and competencies in the school's curriculum? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

31. Which skills and competencies are specifically promoted in your curriculum or teaching methodology? *

32. What are some of the ways you teach these skills in your class? *

33. What kind of learning environment have you created in your classroom to support the teaching and learning of these competencies? *

34. I receive guidelines on the teaching of 21st-century competencies and skills *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

35. Describe some of the guidelines, if any, that you receive on teaching 21st-century competencies *

36. 21st-century skills and competencies are assessed and evaluated as part of the teaching and learning* *Mark only one oval.*

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

37. I am offered training and professional development on how to teach 21st-century skills and competencies. * *Mark only one oval.*

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

38. Most students have learned to use technology as a tool for learning while in my class *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

39. Comment *

40. I have been able to effectively assess students' skills in using technology for learning *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

41. Comment *

42. I intentionally assess 21st-century competencies in my classroom

Mark only one oval.

Never

Sometimes

Often

Always

Significance of 21st-century competencies

43. What do you think is the motivation for having these skills as part of the school's curriculum and or pedagogy *

44. How significant are 21st-century skills to education today *

Mark only one oval.

Not Significant

Somewhat significant

Very significant

45. Comment *

46. How much should the school be doing to promote 21st-century skills and competencies *

Mark only one oval.

Less

No more

More

47. The school leadership encourages 21st-century teaching and learning *

Mark only one oval.

Strongly disagree

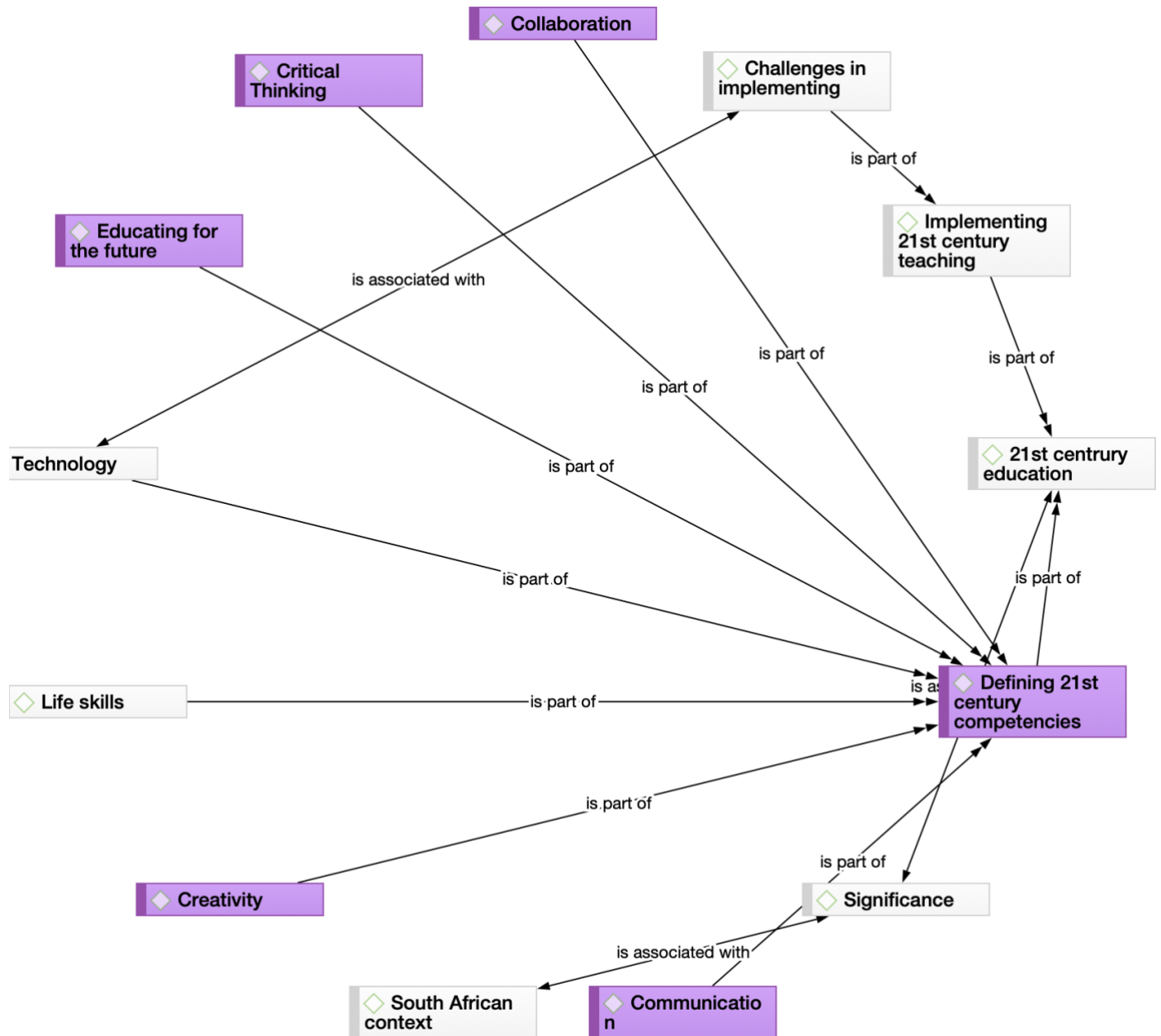
Disagree

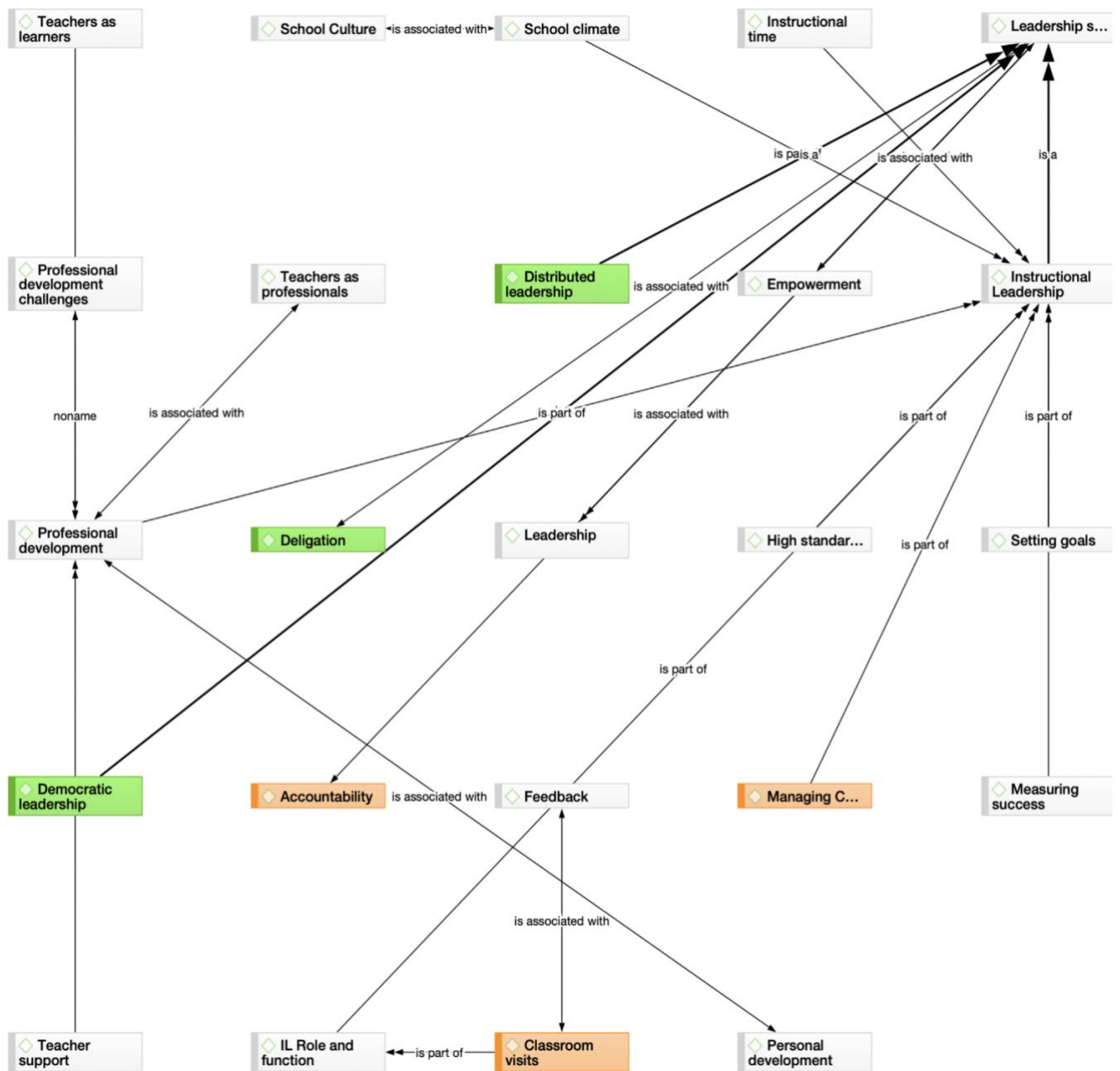
Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

Appendix I: Data Analysis Codes





Appendix J: Turnitin Report

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ORIGINALITY REPORT

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Appendix K: Editor's Report

(LANGUAGE EDITOR'S CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE)

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Aretha M. Maposa

06 February 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Study Topic /Title: Instructional Leadership Practices in 21st Century Education-Centred Schools: A Case Study of 3 Schools in Gauteng

Student's Name: Sipho Mpisane

Student number: 0510660D

I have read through this project. To the best of my knowledge, all the proposed amendments have been effected and the work is free of grammatical and spelling errors. I am of the view that the quality of language used meets generally accepted academic standards.

Yours faithfully



Aretha M. Maposa