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Perceptions and experiences of the role and process of coaching in the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy : a case of four teachers, their coaches and supervisors.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background

Teacher quality has been a subject of intense concern for education systems across the world, given the declining learner achievements. Although not the only explanation for such decline, the need to improve the quality of teaching or instruction has become a priority issue in education for a while. Education departments are under pressure to improve the quality of teacher performance and enhance learners' results. Both international and African literature indicates that there is a growing sense of urgency for improving teacher quality and performance through various teacher professional development programmes that are appropriate to teachers' contexts and needs.

Research has also been conducted to illustrate and analyse how some teacher professional development programmes and strategies are worse than others. The literature (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Fullan and Hargreaves, 2002; Maistry, 2008) cites various reasons for the poor impact of teacher development (TD) on the performance of teachers and their learners: poorly coordinated teacher development programmes not matching teachers' needs and classroom realities, absence of systems in place to ensure that teacher development initiatives are sustainable, districts or NGOs not providing continuous, let alone appropriate and relevant teacher support. Maistry (2008) adds that teachers don't easily translate the knowledge learnt in these programmes into actual classroom practices.

Teacher development in South Africa is a serious priority because of the legacy of apartheid and its discriminatory practices towards the development black teachers. Their education department was only concerned in controlling them, and it became worse with the mass protests of the late 1970s and 1980s. The introduction of demanding curriculum reforms in 1998, such as the new Outcomes-Based Education OBE curriculum, made the need for redress and teacher development that much more of an imperative. Since 1994, various TD initiatives were developed by education departments and other service providers but continued to be either inappropriate to teachers' needs and context, or unsustainable. Large scale TD initiatives were driven by the departments' needs rather than the teachers' immediate needs. These teacher training programmes aimed to ensure that teachers implemented the new curriculum and consisted of short orientation workshops which were non-school focused and relied on mass training, relying on a

cascade model, without much follow up in schools by the districts (De Clercq and Shalem, 2014). According the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (2005), TD remained disorganized, uncoordinated and left to a multiplicity of providers whose interventions were poorly designed. The latter consisted of "ad hoc and driven by immediate needs, and, overall, remain haphazard, not clearly focused, and directionless" (DoE, 2005, p.16). Their impact on teacher knowledge and practices or on learners' results, was poor. Many South African scholars argued that the majority of teachers needed assistance with content and pedagogical content knowledge before they could implement the OBE curriculum (Adler, 2002; Maistry, 2008; Fleisch, 2008: Welch, 2012; De Clercq and Phiri, 2012). Taylor and Vinjevold (1999) and thirteen years later, the NEEDU report (NEEDU, 2013) confirm that the majority of teachers continued to lack the appropriate subject content knowledge for the grades they teach.

There have been formal courses and workshops focused mainly on subject content knowledge as well as pedagogical content knowledge but the majority of these courses became under pressure to focus on the curriculum knowledge and could only address some content and pedagogical content knowledge without any follow-up in schools (De Clercq and Shalem, 2014).

Maistry (2008) agrees that most teacher development programmes were designed to implement the curriculum reform policy changes, overshadowing the priority of improving teacher knowledge and their teaching practice by starting from where teachers were at, to where they were supposed to. This is not to say that there was no effective TD interventions which meet their declared outcomes, whether off-site workshops or on-site programmes, such as peer mentoring and professional learning communities but these were small scale interventions over a period of time targeting a small number of teachers with similar needs (Christie, Harley and Penny, 2004; Sayed, 2004; Maistry, 2008; Ono and Ferreira, 2010)

Given the poor impact of most large scale TD interventions on teacher and learner performance, the national and some provincial departments (Western Cape and Gauteng) decided to change their TD focus. Under pressure from various assessment studies that revealed South African learners' extremely poor results, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) developed in 2010 an Action Plan to 2014 which set up higher national percentage targets (60%) for learners' results. This made some provincial departments

(and in particular the Western Cape and Gauteng education departments) turned towards different kinds of system-wide teacher support interventions, targeting the teaching practices of underperforming schools (De Clercq and Shalem. 2014). Learning from large-scale literacy and numeracy campaigns in other countries and the growing literature on the potential of focusing more directly on teachers' practices rather than teachers' knowledge (Hiebert and Morris, 2002), a shift occurred from a focus on the development of teachers' knowledge to a direct focus on improving teachers' instructional practices.

1.2 Problem statement

The 2010 Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (henceforth, GPLMS) is such a system-wide teacher support intervention. It was driven by the Gauteng MEC for Education and targeted the improvement of instructional practices of teachers of languages and maths in Gauteng's poorly performing primary schools. The aim of this multi-pronged intervention was to reengineer teaching practices (Fleisch, 2013) by making teachers from underperforming schools follow detailed standardized lesson plans (LPs) which guided them on 'what, when and how to teach'. In addition, the GPLMS provided schools with resource packs, quality learning materials, phonics programmes, workbooks, teacher guides and sets of graded readers developed to ensure an alignment with the scripted lesson plans.

However, on their own, these material artefacts were thought to be insufficient to make teachers change and adopt new practices. Coaching was added as a key pillar of the GPLMS intervention to support and improve teachers' learning of new instructional practices (Fleisch, 2013). Coaches or expert teachers were selected by NGOs to act as critical friends in mediating the lesson plans to teachers. A critical friend, according to Costa and Kallick (1993), are there to offer critique as a friend in a non-judgemental way by asking provocative questions central to the improvement of the teachers' instructional practices. Their role is to be encouraging and supportive, but also provide honest feedback that may be uncomfortable or difficult for teachers to hear. They have to support and challenge teachers' current practices to make teachers improve (McBeath and Jardine, 1998). The Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (henceforth, GPLMS) relies on coaching[1] as one of its key pillars.

[1] Coaches have to be distinguished from mentors as the former is job-focused and performance-oriented while a mentor focuses more on the person, their career and support for individual growth and maturity. The source of authority and

1.3 Aims of the study

This study explores the role and process of the GPLMS coaching component, through the perceptions and experiences of a few teachers, coaches and their supervisors. As coaches are there to mediate to teachers the instructional practices prescribed in the scripted lesson plans, the study will investigate the experiences, strategies and responses of a few coaches and teachers as well as their interaction with each other. It will also attempt to identify the coaching conditions that impact positively on teachers' change and their adoption of new instructional practices.

1.4 Research questions

In considering the GPLMS coaching role and process designed to make teachers change their instructional practices, the study addresses the following main research question:

- What are teachers' experiences, attitudes and responses towards the GPLMS coaching process?

The three sub-questions are:

- What are coaches' (and supervisors') experiences and strategies in mediating the lesson plans to different teachers?
- What factors influence positively the coaching process and interaction with teachers?
- How does the coaching process contribute to teacher change and the adoption of new teaching practices?

1.5 Rationale of study

This study on the GPLMS coaching model is based on the hypothesis that coaching can assist in introducing a regime of new teaching practices. A number of scholars (Poglinco, Bach, Hovde, Rosenblum, Saunders and Supovitz, 2003; Collet, 2012; Neuberger, 2012) have examined coaching as a TD strategy, and found that it holds some promise as a form of teacher support and monitoring.

The coaching intervention of the GPLMS designed to mediate LPs and facilitate teachers' change of practices and improved learner performance in underperforming primary

influence for coaches comes from their job position while mentors usually combine their own work with such relationship because of their belief in its value.

schools is a particular form of coaching designed to bring new teaching practices into the repertoires of teachers, or what Poglinco et al (2003) call technical coaching. It has not been the subject of much empirical research, except for Masterson's (2013) recent study of the experiences of three Foundation Phase teachers, their coach and trainer about the coaching process and its impact on teachers. This study intends to build from Masterson's findings.

This study is also valuable because it is interested in understanding how coaches strike a balance between teacher support and monitoring. This is not often the case because district officials who have such responsibility tend to do much more teacher monitoring than appropriate support (Piggot-Irvine, 2000). The coaches of the GPLMS intervention were explicitly hired to provide meaningful support and walk the way with teachers to improve their practices in line with the LPs. Their monitoring was developmental and was not supposed to be judgemental or used against teachers.

This research was conducted in 2013 and was timeous as it was the last year that the GPLMS had so many coaches working with teachers in 990+ underperforming primary schools.

The researcher is aware of the limitations of a case study of four teachers and their coaches in two GPLMS schools. The study findings cannot be generalized to understand the diversity of the GPLMS coaching process and the conditions needed to have an impact on different kinds of teachers. However, it provides useful insights into possible trends in the way in which instructional coaching can influence teachers' change and practices in underperforming primary schools. The findings can also point to areas of further research into the GPLMS or other similar large-scale interventions which are increasingly been introduced in the country to improve teachers' practice and learners' performance.

1.6 Outline of chapters

This study is organised into 6 chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study by giving a background for the study, the purpose and a general overview of the study.

Chapter 2 reviews literature pertinent to this research study. Literature on various forms of teacher professional development- their strengths and weaknesses, teacher development initiatives implemented in South Africa and coaching as a strategy for teacher support and monitoring is reviewed. The literature review also concludes with the conceptual framework used to guide the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Chapter 3 details the methodological basis of this study as a case study and outlines the different instruments that were used to collect data. It also outlines the research journey and briefly discusses how data were organised and analysed.

Chapter 4 reports and presents the data that were collected.

Chapter 5 analyses and interprets the research findings where the conceptual framework and literature reviewed in Chapter 2 guides the discussion.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by revisiting the research findings around the questions and how they were analysed by reference to literature as well as provide recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter reviews the literature on three themes that are relevant to - and will inform - this study. Firstly, the review looks at the meaning and forms of teacher development and their strengths and weaknesses. Secondly, it looks at the literature on coaching and different types of coaching as a teacher development strategy. It also aims to identify what the literature says about the conditions required for coaching to be effective in different education systems. Thirdly, it discusses a model of teacher change and professional growth which informs the conceptual framework and guides the discussion and interpretation of the research findings. The final section of the literature focuses on the research on the various teacher development initiatives in the South African education system.

2.1 Teacher development

Teacher development is largely perceived as a means through which school performance is improved and educational systems are changed. There seems to be a lack of conceptual clarity as many authors are sceptical about specifically defining the concept teacher development. Evans (2002, p. 3), for example, notes that "definitions of teacher development are entirely absent from the literature: even those who are generally considered to be leading writers in the field (for example Darling-Hammond, 1994; Day, 1999; Fullan and Hargreaves, 2002) do not define precisely what they mean by the term". There are, however, some authors who characterise teacher development and what it involves. Keiny (1994) argues that teacher development is a process of professional growth where teachers scrutinize their practice to create their theories of teaching.

Bell and Gilbert (1994) propose a multidimensional conceptualisation to teacher development because it involves teachers' personal, professional and social structures being simultaneously developed. This observation suggests that teacher development expand teachers' knowledge and skills, contributes to their growth in the profession and enhances their effectiveness with students' learning. Evans (2002) concurs that teacher development is a process whereby teachers' professionalism may be considered to be enhanced. This occurs in two ways: first, 'attitudinal development' which involves the modification of teachers' attitude towards their work; and second, 'functional

development' where the professional performance is improved. Similarly, Guskey (2002) observes that professional development programmes vary in content and in format but most share the common purpose of improving professional practices, beliefs and understanding of teachers towards better students' learning. Teacher development is therefore widely accepted as a process that involves the modification of teacher behaviour, beliefs, attitudes and assumptions about ways of teaching. The newly learnt and adopted behaviour, beliefs, attitudes and assumptions are expected to develop teachers into better practitioners with better instructional practices and better learners' results.

There is a general concern to improve the quality of teaching and learning and teacher development is perceived as the most appropriate strategy that holds much promise for such school improvements. Guskey (2002) maintains that high quality teacher professional development is a fundamental component in virtually every modern attempt to improve education. Teacher development initiatives are adopted for the purpose of school improvement and in doing so they target the improvement of teaching and learning. Barber and Mourshed (2007) suggest that the single most significant means of improving the performance of national education systems is through excellent teaching. In order for excellent or improved teaching practices to be effected, teacher development programmes should focus effectively on how to improve teachers' instructional practices.

The literature on various forms of teacher development "has served to disseminate information on and ideas for improving teachers' and, by extension, schools' performance" (Evans, 2002, p.1). As a result, a number of teacher development initiatives have been launched with the hope that greater levels of teacher expertise could be developed and ultimately impact on learner outcomes. Teacher development programmes are therefore interventions through training meant to improve the practice of teaching.

Vast literature points to the ineffectiveness of most teacher development programmes (Kennedy, 1998; Cohen and Hill, 1998, 2000). Most are unsuccessful, according to Evans (2002), because they fail to take important factors into consideration such as: varying age of teachers, stage of career, life experiences, gender, and the contexts in which teaching and learning occurs. Teacher development programmes are generally not properly co-ordinated as "schools are poorly designed for integrating learning and teaching on the job" (Fullan, 2001, p. 266). Guskey (1986) makes two key observations that teacher

development programmes are inconsiderate of: (i) what motivates teachers to engage in professional development, and (ii) the process by which change in teachers occurs. He further asserts that teachers go through teacher development with the hope that they will gain "specific, concrete and practical ideas that directly relate to the day-to-day operation of their classroom" (Guskey, 2002, p. 3). Largely, programmes that fail to address these needs are highly unlikely to succeed.

2.2 Forms of teacher development programmes

Teacher development in many education systems, SA included, is premised on the idea that learner outcomes are poor due to the fact that teachers lack certain knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching and learning. In order for this knowledge and skills to be developed and inculcated into their repertoire, teachers need to undergo some form of teacher development. It is important to note that different teacher development programmes are designed for different teacher knowledge and competencies. Ono and Ferreira (2010) observe that in-service staff development is conducted for different purposes and in different forms. Teacher development programmes can be conducted out of the school context, i.e. off-site or non-school-based; and within the school or classroom context, i.e. on-site or school-based. These two forms of teacher development programmes are discussed in detail below.

2.2.1 Off-site teacher development

Off-site teacher development is non-school-based and is carried outside the school context where teachers gather and have workshops, seminars or courses on certain aspects of the profession that require development. Often, off-site professional development officials from the department or other experts facilitate these workshops, seminars or courses. Such teacher development has strengths and weaknesses. De Clercq and Phiri (2013) annotate that the workshops are usually in the form of short orientation workshops that give information for orientation and advocacy purposes. This information or advocacy usually pertains to the implementation of reform or policy changes thus professional development workshops, seminars or courses become the vehicle through which the district disseminates such information. Schools can also develop their own internal professional development where they look for a venue outside the school where they are developed by a master teacher or an external expert on, for example, how to conform to an assessment policy (Kennedy, 2005).

Off-site teacher development, according to Maistry (2008), is the 'training model' where experts and specialist train and develop teachers on certain specific aspects of their work, for example on learning theories or the launching of new curriculum policies. This often takes the form of cascade whereby trained teachers from a workshop or seminar transmit knowledge and information to other teachers who did not attend the development program (Kennedy, 2005; Ono and Ferreira, 2010). Leu (2004) argues that this cascade model is quite effective in disseminating information to many teachers in a short time and is quite cost-effective and ideal for developing countries where budget constraints are rampant. Ono and Ferreira (2010) concur with this model as expenses are limited since the trained teachers go on to train others. It is noteworthy that there are high chances of watering down and possibly misinterpreting information through the various levels of the cascade.

Off-site teacher development in cluster collaborations, partnerships and across-school networks also provide important and potentially powerful opportunities for teacher development. Lieberman (1995) argues that organisational arrangements that exist outside the school offer teachers opportunities to develop intellectual communities of shared understanding of their work along with emotional support as they share their different work experiences. Professional learning communities are a good example where teachers or schools cluster and collectively examine and reflect upon their practice. De Clercq and Phiri (2013) point out that, in South African cluster systems, districts bring together teachers of neighbouring schools to reflect on aspects of their work. These collaborative efforts bring groups of teachers together to work on particular subject areas and acquire new pedagogical techniques. They therefore provide access to new ideas and a supportive community in which to begin translating these ideas into meaningful action in schools and classrooms (Lieberman, 1995). This approach allows for the active learning of new teaching strategies and this, according to Archibald (2011), is one characteristic of high quality professional development.

Off-site teacher development has, however, been noted in some literature as ineffective (Maistry, 2008; Christie, Harley and Penny, 2004). One major weakness is that it provides teachers with new facts and skills rather than fostering teachers' active and continuous learning. Workshops, for example, have the tendency of imparting information concerning the implementation of a reform; or necessitating policy changes but this often overshadow the key underlying purpose of the activity which is to improve teaching practices (Maistry,

2008). Most off-site teacher development programmes have a short duration as they are run for a few days or a few weeks. Li and Chan (2007) describe these short duration programs as "one-shot, short-burst, quick-fix one-day event" (p. 343), suggesting that they try to equip teachers with skills within the very shortest of time. These brief sessions are also characterised of a lack of follow up at the school level. There is an implied assumption that teachers who attend the workshop will 'cascade' the information in their various schools. De Clercq and Phiri (2013) also challenge such short-term workshops for being poorly contextualised and the cascade approach for being ineffective. Brief off-site teacher development does not foster sustained development of either teacher subject knowledge or pedagogical knowledge. Li and Chan (2007), however, argue that such programmes are appropriate for information dissemination though they fall short of genuine development which requires in-depth and continuous engagement with teachers.

Another significant drawback of off-site teacher development programs is that they are initiated by the department and become overly bureaucratic. There is generally a high degree of central control as the content of the program, how it is facilitated and all decisions are imposed on teachers and schools by the district 'experts'. Maistry (2008) observes that, in the training model of teacher development, the program agenda of the workshop or seminar is determined by 'expert district officials' who, in this case, are the dominant stakeholders as they are the embodiment of the state. In this model of teacher development, teachers are largely marginalised as the 'experts' assume the role of the custodians of knowledge and teachers assume the role of the recipients of knowledge or that of 'clients' who need to be fixed (Sayed, 2004). Such bureaucracy stifles and suffocates the agency of teachers who become negative and resistant to any ideas suggested in these programmes.

Off-site teacher development programmes tend to be poorly co-ordinated and designed. They are generic in that they treat all teachers the same, inconsiderate of their different levels and phases of career development which require different programmes. De Feiter, Vonk and van den Akker (1996) argue that a 'one-size-fits-all' teacher professional development is ineffective. Rather, they suggest professional development activities have to match with the stages of teachers' development. The learning process of an apprentice teacher and that of a more experienced teacher is quite different.

Being non-school-based, off-site teacher development programmes fail to locate their content in practical contexts. Maistry (2008) explains that there is no immediate manifestation of the 'products' of a teacher development programme or the transference of workshop or seminar knowledge into practical classroom practices. Akyeampong (2002) argues that African classrooms and school environments should be perceived as rich sources for the generation of more effective tactics and approaches for teaching. He further asserts that new ideas and practices should be tried out on the spot, i.e. the classroom context, which allows them to be "critiqued in the light of local culture, norms and conditions" (Akyeampong, 2002, p. 6). Guskey (2002) concurs that teachers need to experience the practical application of the learning in real classroom or school contexts and that 'sit and get' programmes provide little opportunity for such application (Tate, 2004). De-contextualised learning settings have to be complemented by school-based programmes, a notion which has gained acceptance in schools and in some teacher development literature.

2.2.2 On-site teacher development

Unlike off-site teacher development which is far removed from the classroom/school context of teaching and learning, on-site teacher development is school-based and context-embedded. According to De Clercq (2008), this kind of in-service teacher training activity can bring together colleagues working in similar contexts to share and reflect on their own practice. It can take the form of on-site workshops, coaching or mentoring where master teachers, outside experts, consultants or change agents mentor young teachers and model good practice (Kennedy, 2005).

On-site teacher development has strengths and weaknesses. It is supported by the literature (Elmore, 2002; Maistry, 2008; De Clercq and Phiri, 2013) which explains that such TD affords certain kinds of teachers an opportunity to develop reflexive competences. The master teachers and/or experts give advice, do lesson demonstrations and give constructive feedback regularly. These knowledgeable peers are instrumental as they can stimulate reflection and help teachers search for theories that account for and give insight to their challenges and possible solutions (De Feiter *et al.*, 1996). The Eastern Cape Provincial Curriculum Guideline (2006) indicates that on-site school support makes use of the strategy of team teaching whereby the same lesson is taught to different classes. A district

curriculum official or a master teacher delivers the lesson and the other teachers observe with a lesson observation instrument. Following this team teaching is a post-lesson focus group discussion where issues arising about the lesson are dealt with. This allows teachers to collectively improve the lesson as they teach, reflect and revise then teach again.

On-site teacher development has the advantage of being context-embedded and relevant to teachers' day-to-day realities. Maistry (2008), drawing insights from Wenger's (1998) social theory, argues that learning is fundamentally a social phenomenon and that teacher development initiatives "should adopt a perspective that places learning in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world" (Maistry, 2008, p.122). The contextualised nature of on-site teacher development allows teachers access to information on some new knowledge and skills along with the opportunity for authentic practice and this has greater chances of ensuring sustained changes in classroom practice. It is also noteworthy that teachers are most likely to change and adopt new practices when they are convinced of the practicability and outcome of the intended change (De Feiter *et al.,* 1996; Guskey, 1986). This means that context-embedded teacher development deals with the policy-practice gap generated by the problem of poor transfer or translation of knowledge and ideas learnt from a teacher development programme into actual classroom practice.

Unlike off-site teacher development, on-site programmes are more likely to be sustainable as they can extend over long periods of time. It allows for continuous dialogue and reflection through follow-ups and constructive feedback. This, according to Archibald (2011), characterises high quality professional development. South Africa has also seen a shift in teacher development towards on-site programmes where much emphasis is being placed on the need for continuity to ensure that the impact of such programmes on teachers' practice is enduring.

The implementation of on-site teacher development in South Africa, such as teacher collaborations, peer coaching and mentoring, raises issues that may undermine their effectiveness. Maistry (2008) and De Clercq and Shalem (2014) note that, in South African education, teacher collaborations and networks in which teachers learn from each other have the major challenge of dealing with teachers' poor content knowledge, which cannot be fully dealt with in such collaboration, even if there is an expert teacher leading

these collaborative efforts. This is where formal teacher development courses on content knowledge are needed.

2.2.3 Monitoring in teacher development

Teacher development involves the monitoring of teachers' work, teachers' content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, use of instructional materials and/or assessment of learners' progress. Teacher monitoring is well-documented in literature and is referred to as teacher accountability (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Piggot-Irvine, 2000; Fleisch, 2006), teacher supervision (Carron and De Grauwe, 1997) or instructional supervision (Kapfunde, 1990; Panigrahi, 2012). What is interesting in all these accounts is that they are treated as comprehensive terms that cover supervision and support, implying that the major reason for monitoring teachers' work is for developmental purpose. Panigrahi (2012) points out that instructional supervision identifies gaps in teacher's methodological knowledge and proposes ideas of improving the identified weakness areas. Instructional supervision or teacher monitoring can be used as an evaluation and examination of teachers' instructional practices with the aim of improving learners' outcomes. It can evaluate and advise school teachers on how to improve their professional judgements about the curriculum, learners and pedagogy (Carron and De Grauwe, 1997; Ali, 1998).

However, teacher monitoring can also be used and experienced as a quality control mechanism whose main aim is often to control and evaluate the standard of teacher performance. This is why teachers become apprehensive and sensitive to classroom visits and monitoring as the control is often more manifest than the support. According to Kapfunde (1990), teachers associate instructional supervision with their performance rating. Danielson and McGreal (2000) argue that tensions in instructional supervision are worsened by the poor and inadequate training of supervisors who don't manage to provide teachers with constructive feedback and maintain good working relationsships. Carron and De Grauwe (2000) also mention that teacher supervision can become politicised in many countries, South Africa included. Because of the apartheid legacy that entrenched control, harassment and oppression of teachers through supervision, most black teachers have mainly negative perceptions about supervision and monitoring (De Clercq, 2007). In many countries, teacher supervision and monitoring has been delegated to private organisations (Carron and De Grauwe, 2000).

2.3 Coaching as a form of on-site teacher development

2.3.1 The nature of coaching for development

The international literature indicates that there is substantial evidence that some on-site, school-based or context embedded teacher development programmes can be effective under certain circumstances (Elmore and Burney, 1997; Duncombe and Armour, 2004). Coaching is an on-site teacher development strategy that happens in the classroom and involves a collaborative relationship between the teacher and the coach (Joyce and Showers, 1983; Poglinco *et al*., 2003; Poglinco and Bach, 2004; Feger, Woleck and Hickman, 2004; Koh and Neuman, 2006; Neuberger, 2012). It is a form of professional development that involves "classroom modelling, supportive critiques of practice and specific observations" (Neuman and Cunningham, 2009, p. 538). The ultimate goal of instructional coaching is to "to empower teachers so they can carry out complex and multi-faceted teaching actions on their own" (Walker, 2010, p. 68). In the Hong Kong context, a coach is a 'consultant' who is brought in from outside the school (Li and Chan, 2007). Coaches are more experienced teachers who provide instructional support in the form of ideas about the selection of teaching materials, modelling the actual practice and encouraging reflection of instructional practice. Poglinco *et al* (2003) clearly endorse coaching as a viable teacher development strategy as they note:

> coaching provides companionship and technical feedback, prompts the analysis of applications of knowledge to instruction, encourages the modification of instruction to meet students' needs, and facilitate the practice of new methods (Poglinco *et al,* 2003, p. 1).

The coaching model provides contextualised on-site professional development. This, according to Collet (2012), addresses the problem of a lack of opportunity for the application of knowledge as the construction of new beliefs and practices is grounded in teaching experience. Duncombe and Armour (2004, p. 141) describe coaching as "school-based, active, collaborative, progressive, focused closely on pupils learning and embedded in teachers' everyday work". The classroom setting is ideal for teachers as this enables the fine-tuning of instructional skills and strategies in practice. Thus, coaching has the advantage of realism and relevance as teachers learn in the "here and now" (Koh and Neuman, 2006, p.1). Coaches are there as critical friends to monitor teachers for developmental purpose and give constructive and genuine feedback on areas where teachers could improve and on which they will give them support.

Poglinco *et al.* (2003) identify different forms of coaching: (i) technical coaching, which is typically used to transfer new teaching practices into teachers' regular repertoires; (ii) collegial coaching where teachers as colleagues dialogue and help each other reflect on their practice and (iii) peer coaching where two or more professional colleagues collaborate to improve their professional knowledge and skills.

The GPLMS coaching adopted a technical form of coaching which requires coaches to support and monitor teachers to adopt the new instructional practices specified in lesson plans.

2.3.2 Conditions for effective coaching

The literature identifies various conditions associated with effective coaching (Poglinco and Bach, 2004; Koh and Neuman, 2006; Li and Chan, 2007). Effective coaching is, to a large extent, dependent on the establishment of good trusting relationships between teachers and coaches. Hargreaves (2005) observes that, when facilitating educational change or improvement, attention needs to be paid to particular conditions of human difference as well as forms of relationships and interactions. Similar findings were obtained by Poglinco and Bach (2004) in their research on the coaching model of professional development across American schools and they found that the success of this model heavily relies on the relationship between the coach and the teacher. Li and Chan (2007) describe coaching as a process that involves complex human relationship building because the relationship between the role-players is more complicated than expected. They emphasise that the coach and the 'coached' have to enter into genuine on-going dialogue of their beliefs; develop an awareness of the teacher's teaching competencies, the teaching contexts and constraints under which teachers operate before valuable and useful suggestions can be worked out.

The coaching process is largely a skilful negotiation process: the coach has to determine the kind of support and direction that teachers need first. The process should take cognisance of the teachers' degree of self-direction and how the coach intervenes to offer assistance. A more recent GPLMS coaching study done by Masterson (2013) shows that such coaching is valuable in opening up the classroom as a learning space for teachers. The study stresses the importance for coaches to negotiate and establish working relations

with teachers based on mutual trust and respect. Masterson (2013) argues that teachers are more likely to accept guidance and instructions from the coaches who affirm teachers as qualified and experienced professionals. This is consistent with Herll and O'Drobinak's (2004) observation that the challenges of coaching adults is to understand the latter want to be originators of their own learning and in control of the selection of their learning objectives, practices and activities. Coaches cannot be judgmental and dictate. They should rather facilitate teachers' reflections and work with them on how to improve their practices (Koh and Neuman, 2006). Coaches need to be highly knowledgeable and experienced with a wide range of soft skills that make them aware of what to push when and when to stand back. The literature points to the importance for this study to examine the nature of relationships between coaches and teachers and how coaches strategize to promote teachers' change and professional growth.

The building of relationships extends to other staff members and stakeholders in the schools as coaches need the support from the principal and other external partners. Li and Chan (2007) argue that the relationship between coaches, teachers and the school is intricate and requires an atmosphere of positive co-operation to be successful. Cohesive dialogue around instructional improvement by all stakeholders is imperative as the coaching model is highly dependent on collaboration. The success of this strategy is unlikely in schools that operate in compartmentalised ways where the principal, teachers and coaches work in isolation (Tate, 2004; Nuemerski, 2012). The effectiveness of the coaching model heavily depends on the amount of buy-in and support it receives, from the teachers but also from the principal, and other stakeholders committed to instructional improvement.

Last but not least, the success of the coaching process depends on the quality of coaches who should have a wide repertoire of knowledge, skills and techniques. Careful consideration should be emphasised on the question of who qualifies to be a coach. Poglinco and Bach (2004) argue that coaches need to undergo specific training that adequately equips them with skills and knowledge relevant for the teaching of adults. It is important to note that coaches need adequate training before they model practice for teachers (Poglinco and Bach, 2004). De Ford (2007) argues for the need for on-going professional development of the coaches because they have to continue understanding adult learning. Thus, the learning has to be on-going for both teachers and coaches.

2.4 The processes of teacher change and professional growth

Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) argue that professional development is a complex process involving multiple growth pathways and, to demonstrate this complexity, they propose the Interconnected Model of teacher change and professional growth. This model states that teacher change involves multiple pathways where individual teachers undergo non-linear change sequences. It challenges Guskey's (1986, 2002) model of teacher change where changes in classroom practices lead to change in learner/learning outcomes, then lastly the teachers' attitudes and beliefs are transformed given the evidence of learner improvement. Here Guskey's model suggests that teacher change occurs in a linear fashion.

Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) Interconnected Model refutes this approach to teacher change and growth. They identify four distinct domains that characterise teacher change. The first is the external domain which looks at external sources of information or stimulus that are basically responsible for introducing new teaching strategies to teachers. Secondly, there is the practice domain where teachers experiment with new teaching strategies in their classrooms. The third is the consequence domain where salient changes in learner performance are noted and teachers are either encouraged to continue with the new instructional practices or revert back to conventional methods of instruction. The fourth and last domain is the personal domain where teachers' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes change. **Figure 1** demonstrates the Interconnected Model of teacher change.

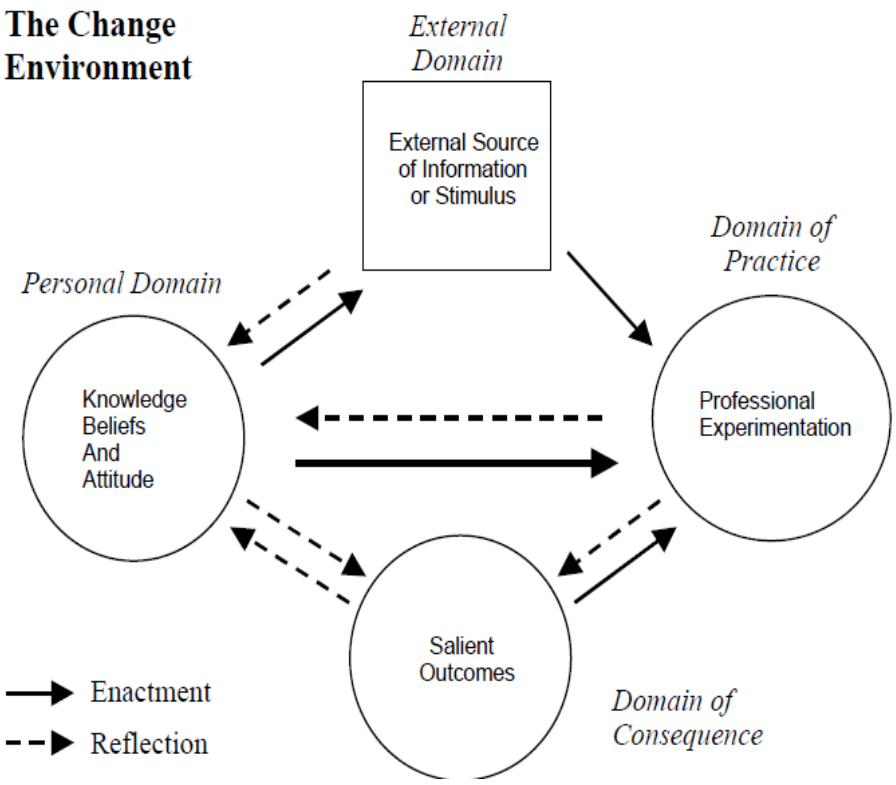


Figure 1: The Interconnected model of teacher change and professional growth adopted from Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002, p. 951)

The four domains are intricately connected as change in one domain leads to change in another. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) explain that there are mediating processes of 'reflection' and 'enaction' (represented on the diagram by broken and solid arrows, respectively) which facilitate the interconnection among the four domains. Teachers enact and experiment with new pedagogical practices from the professional development programme. They then reflect on the progression of their practice and how learners respond to the new practices. Based on this reflection, salient changes in teacher knowledge, beliefs and attitudes begin to occur and they continue to experiment with new pedagogies and reflect on their prior knowledge, beliefs and attitudes. Multiple experiments with new practice lead to further reflections based on learner outcomes and this in turn impacts on their own beliefs and attitudes. This evolving, iterative process of constant enactment and reflection ultimately results in teacher change (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002).

The Interconnected Model of teacher change is also located within contemporary theories of learning that are instrumental in accounting for the processes through which teachers learn. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) indicate that this model sits in well with Lave and

Wenger's (1991) situated learning perspective where teacher change and growth are gradually facilitated by learning and enacting new pedagogies in the very classroom contexts where they teach. This model is also partly consistent with Shulman's (1987) cognitive perspective of teacher learning where "teacher growth becomes a construction of a variety of knowledge types (content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)" (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002, p. 955). Teacher growth accordingly constitutes teachers' understanding of the structures of the subject matter, development of different forms of representing subject matter ideas and strategies of reorganising learners' conceptions and misconceptions (Shulman, 1986). It is also important for a teacher development programme to take cognisance of the kind of knowledge and competencies to be developed and the sequence in which that knowledge and competencies are developed. The Interconnected Model of teacher change and professional growth therefore attempts to account or explain the processes through which teachers develop their practice and different forms of new knowledge.

This study also draws insights from Hargreaves' (2005) conceptualization of teachers' emotions to the change process. Understanding the demographics and career age of teachers is important because, according to Hargreaves (2005), these factors determine the extent to which teachers are receptive to professional development innovations. Hargreaves (2005) gives an interesting contrast in terms of responses to educational change between teachers in their early career stage and those in the late career stage. He observes that early career teachers are largely enthusiastic, optimistic and quick to embrace change as they are still young and curious about the teaching profession. Late career teachers on the other hand become resistant toward change efforts as they approach retirement. Hargreaves (2005) further mentions that teachers in the late career stages are quite selective of the change initiatives they are willing to adopt because of having gone through many wearying experiences of repetitive educational change in their long careers. Age-based and age-attributed responses to educational innovation therefore have implications for policy or the implementation of intervention policies such as the GPLMS.

2.5 Conceptual framework

The literature on instructional coaching as a form of teacher development and on the process of teacher change and growth will inform the conceptual framework of this research study. It is clear from the literature on professional teacher development that to

effect teachers' change is a complex and at times subjective process which requires an understanding of how teachers change and develop as well as the conditions that support that change and development. Coaching is acknowledged in the literature to be promising but there are various conditions which will make its processes and conditions enabling, as opposed to constraining, of teachers' change and improvement of their practices. These conditions include the quality of the relationship between coaches and teachers which should be based on trust and respect, strong personal attributes and soft skills of coaches when negotiating the change process with teachers and, importantly, the quality of the specialised teacher knowledge of coaches.

2.6 Teacher development and research in South Africa

Teacher development is still a challenge for the South African education system as is revealed by various scholars (Adler and Reed, 2002; Fleisch, 2002, 2008; Maistry, 2008; Taylor, 2008; Welch, 2012; De Clercq and Phiri, 2013). Many TD programmes have not been appropriate for the South African teachers' context or have not been sufficiently sustained to make a significant impact on teacher performance and learners' results.

According to the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (2005), teacher development in South Africa was disorganized and fragmented with many different interventions being designed and implemented by a multiplicity of providers. The report mentions that the interventions were "ad hoc and driven by immediate needs, and, overall, the field is haphazard, not clearly focused, and directionless" (DoE, 2005, p.16). The report also warns of the importance of meaningful teacher development to improve teacher performance and learners' results while acknowledging the human and financial resource challenges in designing and co-ordinating effective teacher development programmes that meet the needs of the majority of South African teachers.

Most teacher development programmes initiated by the department have been off-site/non-school-based and consisted of short orientation workshops with little support or follow-up back at schools (Maistry, 2008; De Clercq and Phiri, 2013). The department relied on a cascade training model to familiarise teachers with the new curriculum and its different versions. Teachers were also given bursaries to follow different formal courses focusing on content and pedagogical content knowledge offered by tertiary education institutions. However, the majority of these courses turned out to be about assisting teachers to gain

some curriculum knowledge to implement the different curricula (De Clercq and Shalem, 2014). Maistry (2008) mentions that the bulk of teacher development programmes in South Africa have been used as platforms for implementing curriculum reform changes and argues that the improvement of teaching practice was overshadowed in the process. Other scholars (Adler and Reed, 2002; De Clercq and Shalem, 2014) go further and argue that teaching practice can only improve if teachers have some basic subject content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge to enable them to understand and reflect on how to improve their practices. Thus, many reports and research on teacher development programmes indicate that the majority of teachers are not sufficiently equipped to meet the educational needs of the South African learners (Taylor, 2008).

The Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) of 2005 and the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) were introduced as policy tools designed to monitor teachers' performance to inform their development priorities. These conflated interests of the department and teachers in one tool have made the implementation of the IQMS problematic as teachers use it mainly to qualify for a performance bonus. Their experience of the IQMS has resulted in teachers not expecting meaningful support and development from the department or from their senior colleagues (De Clercq, 2008).

The 2007 National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED) became the first teacher development policy that introduces the concept of continuous or life-long teacher development. It distinguishes pre-service training and continuous teacher professional development. It also stipulates that teachers must accumulate 150 points of Professional Development (PD) over a period of three years. The plan for such professional teacher development was finalised in the 2011 Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED) which announced a new era in teacher development where different initiatives and programmes will be provided by different service providers for different teachers' needs. The implementation of such initiatives which includes curriculum training by the department, formal courses by tertiary institutions, content knowledge workshops and professional learning communities at district or school cluster level is slowly developing on the ground, although the funding from the DBE remains scarce.

There is growing acknowledgement in the international literature that the improvement of learners' results depend on the transformation of classroom practices by paying more attention to the instructional core of learning (City, Elmore, Fiarman and Teitel (2009) and the direct improvement of classroom instruction or teaching practices (Hiebert and Morris, 2012). This awareness led to many on-site teacher development programmes such as mentoring, coaching and professional learning communities (Maistry, 2008). The fact that formal content or pedagogical content knowledge courses and workshops were not successful at improving teacher performance and learners' results in South African education led many to conclude that most teachers find it difficult to translate the knowledge learnt into their practices (GPLMS, 2010; Hiebert and Morris, 2012).

This background explains why the MEC for Education in Gauteng, under pressure to increase learners' average results, saw the GPLMS as a system-wide intervention for the improvement of literacy and numeracy standards of around 12,000 teachers from 990 underperforming primary schools in the province. Scripted LPs and coaching were the two key pillars of this intervention. The coaches were recruited from outside of the districts and hired to focus only on how to support (and monitor) their teachers' implementation of these new teaching practices in languages and mathematics (Fleisch, 2013).

2.6.1 Coaching within the GPLMS

The GPLMS coaching model counters the poor knowledge and pedagogical strategies of teachers from underperforming schools by prescribing LPs and relevant teaching material in the form of textbooks and workbooks, readers and teacher guides (GDE, GPLMS, 2010). Its other key pillar was coaching which is envisaged to be more restricted than the coaching identified in the international literature. Coaches had little autonomy as they had to adhere to the LPs and ensure that teachers follow, practice and improve on the implementation of these new teaching practices. This coaching was therefore not about teachers' reflections of their teaching on the basis of their learners' results. Rather, it was a form of technical coaching designed to counter teachers' poor content knowledge and pedagogical or instructional practices by prescribing standardized teaching practices and making coaches model these new practices in teachers' classrooms and continue to support and monitor these teachers as they implement them (De Clercq, 2014).

In outlining the features of the GPLMS coaching model, Welch (2012) notes that the GPLMS is committed to revise, improve and align their LPs with the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and the national workbooks of the DBE.

The aim of this study is to explore the GPLMS coaching model though the experiences of a few teachers, their coaches and supervisors with the view of understanding how coaching assists in teachers' adoption of the GPLMS instructional practices and the process of change.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

While the previous chapter reviewed the literature that is relevant and discussed the conceptual framework that informs this study, this chapter explores the research methodology and approach that was used to carry out this study. It discusses the sample, data collection techniques, data analysis, issues of validity and reliability, ethical considerations and concludes with a summary of the research journey.

3.1 Research approach

The central phenomena that required exploration and understanding in this study are the role and process of coaching, as perceived by the different actors, as a strategy for teacher support and monitoring in a recent GDE teacher development initiative. Considering that the research seeks to understand and gain insight into the coaching practice and the lessons learnt since the inception of the GPLMS coaching intervention, a qualitative research approach seemed most appropriate for this study. Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2012), is best suited to addressing a research problem in which one needs to explore and learn more from the participants.

As a qualitative research study, information was obtained directly from the actors involved in the implementation of the GPLMS coaching strategy and by spending a considerable amount of time in direct interaction with the participants in their settings (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010, p. 322). This was advantageous as detailed narratives were obtained that provide the basis for an in-depth understanding of the processes involved in coaching and the different perspectives of the different actors involved. This is consistent with Scott and Morrison's (2006) observation that qualitative research studies behaviour and actions in their natural setting by seeking to attain detailed narratives that provide in-depth understanding of these behaviours and actions.

3.2 Case study

This study uses the case study method as a case is a unit of analysis where a single entity, around which there are boundaries, is studied (Bassey, 1999; Corbin and Strauss, 2007). Merriam (2009) argues that studying phenomena that is not intrinsically bound does not constitute a case. This study particularly focused on different actors' perceptions of the

GPLMS coaching intervention. The case study is useful where the research seeks to achieve an in-depth understanding of the central phenomena being investigated which in this study are role players' perceptions and experiences of the role and process of coaching in teacher support and monitoring within the GPLMS intervention programme.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) note that a case study involves the collection of large quantities of empirical data in regard to one or more cases, with the intention of studying this data in depth. It "often takes the form of an in-depth study of a specific programme or activity at a certain point in time" (Scott and Morrison, 2006, p. 98). This study looked at a case of a few individuals in two schools, out of nearly 900 poorly performing primary schools within the GPLMS intervention programme. The case specifically focused on four teachers, their coaches and the coaches' supervisors as the aim was to get an in-depth understanding of the processes of coaching and how different actors constructed their views of the coaching experience.

It is important to mention that this study was mainly exploratory. It explores the features of coaching and its intricate processes through the perceptions and experiences of teachers, coaches and coaches' supervisors. It also highlights the important and problematic dimensions of the coaching process with the view to identifying what effective coaching depends on for teachers of poorly performing schools. It is important to note that this case study serves the purpose of illuminating the issues around effective coaching in the context of the GPLMS intervention.

3.3 Sampling

The sample of a population selected to participate in this study for the data collection included coaches and their supervisors from NGOs providing the GPLMS with coaching services; and teachers in schools that had adopted the GPLMS intervention. This target population, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), is the entire group in which the research is interested and which the study seeks to describe or draw conclusions about.

The sampling for this study was done in several stages where choices of participants were particularly important at different stages of the research. It is important at this point to indicate that the implementation of the GPLMS coaching intervention was being facilitated by several NGOs and thus I needed to select an organisation from this group of service providers. The first stage of sampling was largely convenience sampling where

participants were selected because they were available and willing to be studied (Creswell, 2012). My supervisor had already been in contact with a particular NGO for her own research project on the GPLMS. I requested permission from this NGO to engage in informal discussions with a few of its coaches about their work with teachers. This NGO confirmed the availability and willingness of its coaches and supervisors to participate in my study.

After several productive discussions, I moved to the second stage of sampling by relying on a purposeful sampling in selecting coaches to participate in this study. Purposeful sampling involves the selection of participants based on certain characteristics that provide the best information to address the purpose of the research (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Accordingly, two coaches were selected-one working with Intermediate Phase teachers and the other with Foundation Phase (FP) teachers. Because the study sought to find out strategies coaches used with different teachers, it was important to select coaches of different phases so as to gain insight into how coaching worked in these two different phases. This is consistent with Robson (1993) who asserts that a purposeful sample is one which enables the researcher to satisfy the specific needs of a project.

The third stage in the sampling involved the selection of schools and teachers to participate in the study from a target population of nearly 900 schools involved in the GPLMS intervention. The selection of schools and teachers was largely guided by the informal discussions I had with each of the coaches. By virtue of selecting these coaches, the choice of schools and the teachers was almost predetermined as I was limited to select from the ones each coach was working with. I however used purposeful sampling to ensure that I selected teachers who could best address the needs of my research objectives.

I then engaged in discussions with coaches about the purpose of my study and my intention to collect data from teachers who could possibly provide me with rich narratives about their experience of the GPLMS coaching. Each coach guided me in selecting two teachers from the group with whom they were working. I specifically requested those teachers they had coached for a long time as to I sought to trace the developments of their journey together during the coaching process. This sample of teachers also allowed me to gain insights into different teacher experiences of working with coaches and the GPLMS material. Eventually, four teachers were selected from two primary schools in the Johannesburg South district. From one school, two FP teachers- one teaching Grade 1 and

the other Grade 2 were selected; and two Intermediate Phase teachers - one teaching Grade 6 and the other Grade 7 - were selected from another school.

The sample of participants is thus small: two coaches, two coach supervisors and two teachers from each coach. These eight participants are therefore not representative of the target population, and generalisations cannot be drawn from this study. As Guba and Lincoln (1985) note, there is a difficulty in drawing generalisations from sampling decisions that are not based on statistical grounds. Rather, they suggest that there could be transferability of findings to other contexts similar to the one where the findings have been derived. The ultimate decision about the transferability of the findings is, however, consigned to one seeking to make the transfer. It is however of paramount importance to note that these small samples were ideal for this study because it is a case study and case studies use small samples to gain in-depth understanding of the central phenomena being investigated (Bassey, 1999). Similarly, this study sought an in-depth understanding of the role and process of the GPLMS coaching as perceived by its different actors. It was therefore appropriate to choose small samples which allowed a profound and detailed inquiry of the central phenomena under investigation.

3.4 Data collection methods

Bassey (1999) states that case study research has no specific methods of data collection but advices case study researchers to "work out your own method- from a clear ethical standpoint, and based on your research questions" (Bassey, 1999, p.81). Because this study is qualitative in nature, I used qualitative data collection methods comprising interviews, observations and document analysis. The data collection, which was done during the term 3 of the school year 2013 relied on multiple data collection (i.e. triangulation) was most appropriate for this study as it allowed the cross-checking of interview data against observational data and what I read in documents relevant to the phenomena of interest (Merriam, 2009).

3.4.1 Interviews

Interviews involve a researcher and a participant engaging in a conversation about a specific topic being investigated. The core purpose of interviews in qualitative research is to seek in-depth understandings of individuals' experience of an activity, programme or event (Scott and Morrison, 2006). Likewise, this research is an in-depth enquiry about how different actors conceptualised their participation in the GPLMS coaching

intervention programme. Interviews were useful in this study where a total of eight interviews were conducted: four teachers, two coaches and two coach supervisors. These interviews enabled me to collect original, first-hand information from the participants that allowed me entry into their perceptions and the different meanings they attached to the GPLMS coaching programme. Similarly, Merriam (2009) maintains that interviews are the best data collection method when conducting an intense case study of a few selected individuals.

Semi-structured interviews were used as questions that sought to have an in-depth understanding of the role and processes of the GPLMS coaching were asked. The use of semi-structured interviews encouraged interviewees to respond open-endedly as they answered questions in their own terms. These questions were also useful as they attested their flexibility and adaptability in that they offered the possibility of modifying my line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives (Robson, 1993). Although participants were flexible in their responses, I ensured that the interviews did not lose focus: their conceptualisation of coaching and specific details of their experiences of it. All interview sessions were audio-recorded and this was beneficial in that I managed to focus on the direction of the conversations and afterwards; intently listened to their details.

There are also limitations to interviews as research tools which are important to highlight. Major disadvantages of interviews to note are their potential for subjectivity and bias on the part of the researcher, high costs and their time-consuming nature (Robson, 1993; McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Bassey (1999) points out that interviews inevitably have a sense of formality which has potential to put participants in certain emotional dispositions such as anxiety, irritation due to lack of time and sometimes fear and concerns about who will hear what they had to say. Although anonymity and confidentiality were assured at the beginning of each interview, I could sense hesitation and withholding of information to some questions especially those that required participants to talk about other participants. Some of the interviewees reiterated the question: "By the way this is confidential?" and this signalled some fears and concerns thus some crucial information pertinent to this study might have been reserved. It is also important to mention that at the time of doing this study teachers were particularly exasperated and impatient as I approached them a week before the Annual National Assessment (ANA) tests. Although

the general atmosphere was tense given the anxiety that comes with ANA tests, I tried to limit teachers' anxiety and fatigue by making the interviews as short as possible.

3.4.2 Observations

Data were also collected using the observational data collection method and this involved observing people in a research site (Creswell, 2012). Two teacher training/briefing sessions were observed for this study where the first one was a Peer Learning group (PLG) facilitated by Coach 1 (C1) at one of the participating schools. The PLG meeting was a reflective session where the coach gave teachers feedback based on her lesson observations. C1 asked specific questions about teacher's feelings toward the new instructional practices they were implementing in their classrooms. The second observation was of a School Based Workshop conducted by Coach 2 (C2) at the other participating school. Here teachers from different schools under C2 were being trained on 'Challenges to reading' in learners. In these two observations, I had the opportunity to listen, watch and record the interactions between the coaches and the teachers, particularly those participating in this study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) point out that the observational method relies on what the researcher sees and hears rather than informants' self-reports, so it is more objective than interviews. I was therefore able to sample educational experience first-hand rather than solely depend on what participants say about what they do or experience.

Merriam (2009) underscores the importance of the role assumed by the researcher in the observation. In both observation sessions, I changed my observational role from being a non-participant observer to a participant observer as I gradually became involved in the activities being observed. Fortunately, in both sessions, coaches accommodated me and asked if I had any questions based on the issues discussed. I took this opportunity and asked questions pertinent to my research interests. This was beneficial as I managed to get explanations for some activities that I had observed.

The observations were structured and done systematically because I carefully defined and explicated the phenomena to be observed (Scott and Morrison, 2006, p. 241). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) agree that the first step is to ascertain and define in precise terms the units of observation. What to observe was therefore determined by my purpose of conducting this study in the first place. As I was interested in the role and process of the

GPLMS coaching, I paid attention to the activities and the interactions of coaches and teachers during these teacher training and briefing sessions. I was particularly eyeing for the following: What was going on? How were coaches and teachers interacting with the activity and with one another? What is the nature of relationships between coaches and teachers? What was the content of conversations in that setting? What strategies did coaches use in responding to different questions emerging during the discussions? What thoughts was I having as events unfolded?

Observations are affected by value predispositions that researchers may bring into the observation and Bassey (1999) likened them to interviews in that they have a sense of formality which often makes participants unease. At the beginning of both observation sessions teachers were awfully quiet and I could sense that my presence had 'contaminated' the climate of the setting. Scott and Morrison (2006) acknowledge that researchers have potential to interfere with the action being observed as participants may cautiously change their behaviour when they are being observed. This challenge, however, waned as time went by especially in the two hour school-based workshops (SBW).

3.4.3 Document analysis

This study used documentary material as data where relevant documents such as official records about the GPLMS; English First Additional Language (EFAL) LPs for Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase and coaches' observation sheet reports were analysed. These documents were useful to study as they contained interesting and sometimes startling insights about the GPLMS coaching process. This is consistent with Merriam's (2009) observation that document analysis enables the researcher to learn more about the situation or the event being investigated.

Determining the authenticity of documents reviewed was an important part of the data collection process. All documents reviewed were taken from the participating NGO office and a careful document validation process was undertaken with the coaches and their supervisors.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

It was of paramount importance to ensure that research findings are both valid and reliable. Validity is about whether the research is testing what it aims to test (Scott and Morrison, 2006). I ensured validity by checking if questions were appropriate, pertinent and relevant to my research focus by conducting a pilot interview. Reliability, on the other hand, is concerned with "the extent to which one's findings will be the same if done again" (Merriam, 1995, p.55). This places focus on the objectivity of the answers from the data collection. To ensure genuine and trustworthy responses, I tried to conduct the research during the most conducive times. All interview and observation appointments were made with the consent of the participants where they indicated their best time for me to interview or observe them. Although I tried, by all means possible, to avoid visiting schools when teachers were under pressure, because of time I was forced to visit them a week before they conducted ANA tests. This could potentially have negative implications for reliability of the teacher data.

Reliability was also ensured through taking the data collected from the participants along with the tentative interpretations of the data back to the participants and asking if both data and the interpretations are plausible (Merriam, 1995). This effort was unfortunately unfruitful as all participants did not respond to the e-mails that I sent them requesting that they confirm the information I had transcribed.

Triangulation was used where multiple sources of data were instrumental in understanding emerging findings (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Individual interviews were conducted along with a few observations of meetings between coaches and teachers and the gathering of informal and formal GPLMS documents. As Merriam (1995, p. 54) argues:

> if a researcher hears about a phenomenon in an interview, sees it taking place in observations, and reads about it in pertinent documents, he/she can be confident that the reality of the situation, as perceived by those in it, is being conveyed as truthful as possible.

3.6 Data analysis

This study only analysed data from interview transcripts and official or informal GPLMS documents because the observation field-notes did not yield much insights. Data analysis involves a process of "transforming data into findings" (Patton, 2002, p. 432) even though

organization and analysis of data was ongoing and started at the beginning of the data collection process. The data was organised in categories around the LPs and the coaching process and analysed in relation to the research questions and the conceptual framework.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Qualitative research, by its nature, involves interactive data collection methods as the researcher spends considerable time in contact with participants and their settings (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Because I was spending a significant amount of time with participants I was conditioned to be meticulously conscious of research ethical considerations. This study was carried out with professional integrity as I made efforts to adhere to qualitative research ethical guidelines and took stringent measures to ensure the protection of participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) emphasise the importance of observing research ethics suggesting that researchers should observe research ethical guidelines and put measures in place for the protection of participants when conducting interviews and lesson observations. Permission was sought, firstly from the Department of Education (See Appendix B) and then secondly from the school authorities to observe and interview their teachers. Permission to work with and interview the coaches was also sought from the participating NGO.

Sufficient details concerning the use of the collected data were provided to all participants. Before interviewing or observing participants, I provided consent letters where participants were requested to sign as a show of agreeing to participate in this study (See Appendix A). I then assured participants of confidentiality and ensured that information was not going to be made accessible to any other person besides me and my supervisor. Participants were also promised that all recordings and notes collected will be destroyed once the research report is completed. Ensuring anonymity was also an important ethical consideration as code names were used in place of the schools' and participants' real names (See chapter 4).

Chapter 4: Data presentation

This chapter presents the data obtained from the empirical research into the perceptions and experiences of the role and process of the GPLMS coaching as a strategy for teacher support and monitoring. It is important to note that the data presented in this chapter consists mainly of interview data. Coaches' meetings with teachers in the SBW and the PLG did not yield much data because they were held during the ANA testing and the coaches felt that teachers were extremely busy and decided to shorten these meetings and make a few points. They shared their observations and made comments on how teachers were implementing the new instructional practices in their classrooms but there was little dialogue or interactive discussion with teachers.

This chapter consists of two main sections: the first section presents data from School A and the second section data from School B.

According to the Gauteng Education MEC, the GPLMS is one of the intervention that was put in place to ensure that the GDE achieved its target of 60% of learners achieving mathematical and literacy proficiency in Grades 3 and 6 (Annual Performance Plan, GDE, 2012). The GPLMS was primarily focused on improving teacher instructional practices in literacy and numeracy. To help implement the strategy, coaches were deployed in the more than 990 underperforming primary schools to mediate the GPLMS lesson plans and provide teachers with instructional guidance. Additional literacy and numeracy resource packs such as textbooks, workbooks, readers, teacher guides and more specifically scripted LPs were provided for teachers to know what, when and how to teach. This chapter presents the perceptions and experiences of the few selected participants from two schools who were implementing the GPLMS intervention.

4.1 Background of School A and its participants

School A is a Grade 1 to 7 primary school located in a location south of Johannesburg in the Johannesburg South District. The school has a total of 32 teachers and 1588 learners making the schools' average teacher-learner ratio 1:49. There are 11 FP teachers and two participated in this study- one teaching Grade 1 and the other Grade 2.

From observations, the school seemed to have enough classrooms and adequate resource materials. The majority of learners come from poverty stricken homesteads as was evidenced by the general appearance of the learners and their uniforms. Important to mention is the schools' leadership and SMT which can be described as *laisser-faire* where they assumed a non-interference and hands-off approach to leadership. There was evidence of little or poor internal accountability as teachers were doing as they pleased. HoDs have an important role to play in the management of teaching and learning but they were too pre-occupied with their own classrooms. According to Bush and Glover (2009), the principal and the SMT should take a school-wide view where they oversee the general running of the school but this was not the case as this school was poorly performing hence was selected for the GPLMS intervention.

Table 1: Profile of School A teachers

Participant	Age and Gender	Qualifications	Experience	Phase
Teacher 1 (T1)	40+ (Female)	Junior primary Teachers' Diploma, Bachelor of Arts Degree	15 years teaching, Post level 1	Foundation phase (Grade 1)
Teacher 2 (T2)	50+ (Female)	Junior primary Teacher's Diploma, ABET Certificate and Diploma	23 years teaching, Post level 2	Foundation Phase (Grade 2)

As shown in **Table 1**, two female teachers (henceforth, T1 and T2) teaching in the FP participated in this study. Academically, both teachers are qualified. T1, in her late 40's taught for 15 years and did not seem interested with the GPLMS. She was unenthusiastic about being interviewed but expressed uncertainty about the GPLMS' potential to improve learners' performance and an obvious dislike of the demands it placed on teachers. T2 was in her early 50s and with more teaching experience than T1: 23 years on record. She had a more positive attitude about the GPLMS and was keen to share her perceptions and experiences of the GPLMS.

Table 2: Profile of GPLMS coach and supervisor in School A

Participant	Age and Gender	Qualifications	Experience
Coach 1 (C1)	50+ (Female)	Junior Primary Teacher's Diploma, Higher Diploma in Education, B. Ed,	Former teacher- 7 years, former principal- 11 years, teacher trainer- 5 years
C1's Supervisor (S1)	50+ (Female)	Junior Primary Teacher's degree	Former teacher, teacher trainer, Remedial Therapist, former principal

Table 2 summarises information about one GPLMS coach, C1 and her supervisor, S1, operating in School A. Despite being interviewed separately, they both showed a similar great concern about the development of teachers and the learning of young learners. Although C1 and S1 were keen participants, they had different views about the GPLMS. C1 was quite confident that the GPLMS intervention was going to improve teachers' instructional practices while S1 was sceptical and hesitant about the practicality and sustainability of the intervention.

4.2 Teachers' perceptions and experiences

This section starts off with teachers' perceptions and experiences of pressure and support before the GPLMS and what they considered as their development needs.

4.2.1 Perceptions and experiences of support and monitoring prior the GPLMS

Teachers' previous experiences of support/in-service training and monitoring were elicited as they may be indicative of their perceptions towards any outside support. T1 and T2 indicated that they had been exposed to several teacher development programmes but did not benefit much. OBE training stood out for both teachers as the worst ever in-service training they had received. T1 described OBE as "*a disaster*"[2] inappropriate for her and her colleagues because it had no inclusion of teacher knowledge, especially considerations of her classroom realities and contextual configurations. She said:

> *They (OBE trainers) came here with those screens (Power Point presentation) telling us that we listen and discuss with our learners… Why can't they come to us and find out what will work for us and our learners?*

[2] Occasional words and phrases in italics are verbatim quotations as spoken by those interviewed. No attempt was made to correct the speech as it enables better understanding as it is than would my paraphrasing.

T2 was similarly dissatisfied with OBE training as she felt that "*the training was so short yet the change was big".* For T2, OBE training was too brief for any meaningful gains in terms of imparting new knowledge and skills. She particularly mentioned that she was confused through the training and described her experience as follows:

> *The worst experience was the time of OBE when we were using the LOs (i.e. Learning Outcomes) and ASSs (Assessment Standards). You know I was just fumbling there swimming in a drum of paraffin and I kept on going with no direction.*

T1 and T2 shared the perception that in-service training programmes were meant to empower and equip teachers with new knowledge and skills and that OBE was an in-service training programme that did not meet their developmental expectations. While T2 described all her experiences of in-service training prior the GPLMS as unproductive and wasteful, T1 however mentioned that her exposure to CAPS training was useful. She acknowledged that CAPS training offered her some new knowledge and valuable skills especially in "*classroom management, disciplining the learners and developing a routine in the classroom"*.

Establishing teachers' previous experiences of supervision and monitoring was also of paramount importance for this study. T1 and T2 explained that School A had a school-based monitoring system in place whereby HoDs and the SMTs facilitated teacher-monitoring and supervision by looking at learners' workbooks and observing teachers' lessons. T1 felt that the monitoring from her HoD (who is T2 in this case) was supportive of her work and she said:

> *My HOD comes and evaluates my work and looks at my children's books, my record books and sometimes observes lessons. I feel supported because they show you, "You can do this thing this way".*

T2, being the HoD for the FP, appreciated the school-based monitoring as it assisted teachers in so many ways. T1 and T2 expressed appreciation of the school-based teacher monitoring system in their school and they demonstrated an understanding of supervision and monitoring as an important dimension of their work.

4.2.2 Teachers' identification of their development needs

Teachers had an opportunity to talk about their developmental needs and expectations of a teacher development or support programme. T1 and T2 stated that in-service training was important to develop their content knowledge and expose them to new pedagogical

knowledge and skills. In terms of specific developmental needs, both T1 and T2 mentioned that there was an enduring language issue in FP which posed challenges in their teaching of isiZulu as a HL as more than half of their learners were not first language isiZulu speakers. They therefore identified a need to develop skills that positioned them in a better place to deal with the language issue. T1 explained:

> *There is the issue of language, this is a Zulu class but you find that at home most kids are speaking other languages so to get them to read and write Zulu is very difficult.*

This language issue compounded the problem of teaching reading and writing both in HL and in EFAL. T1 and T2 pointed out that their learners were mainly having problems with reading and writing and this was worsened by lack of assistance with homework at home. T1 described her challenge as follows:

> *The problem that I have is teaching my learners reading. The problem is that at home children are not helped with reading or with their homework. Reading and writing for the children is difficult. My challenge is how to get these learners to be better readers. I would therefore welcome a programme that can give me skills that are needed to teach reading.*

Similarly, T2 identified a priority developmental need in her teaching being time management. She explicitly stated that she needed:

> *Guidelines on how to best manage time as it is extremely difficult to move with the curriculum concepts, mark learners' workbooks and still have time to prepare for future lessons.*

The management of time and skills to progress well with the curriculum were two important concern areas for T2. The FP teachers clearly teased out and explained what they struggled with most in their teaching. Important inferences about teachers' attitudes and perceptions about teacher support interventions can be drawn from their acknowledgement of needing assistance and their ability to identify specific areas of their teaching that needed development.

4.3 Perceptions and experiences of the GPLMS

All participants in this study were role players in the GPLMS instructional intervention and this section presents their different perceptions and experiences of it. The findings include: teachers' perceptions and experiences of coaching and using the LPs; coaches'

experiences of mediating LPs and supervisor's experiences of working with teachers and coaches in implementing the GPLMS.

4.3.1 Teachers' perceptions and experiences of LPs

The GPLMS instructional intervention made use of scripted LPs which explicitly prescribe the content knowledge to be taught, the instructional methodology and the specific time and duration of teacher and learner activities. The LPs were well appreciated by T2 while T1 resented them as she found them difficult to use. T2 reported that the use of LPs in her class instilled significant positive changes in her instructional practices as she tried to adhere to the prescribed methodology. One noteworthy aspect of T2's appreciation of LPs was that, through using LPs, she managed to inculcate a consistent classroom routine and accelerate the development of metacognitive skills within her learners. According to T2, her Grade 2 learners had grasped their daily classroom routine and had become more aware of their own learning which is an important feature of learners' metacognitive development. She excitedly pointed out:

> *...I find them [LPs] useful and valuable. They help me a lot because my children I taught them that for our daily routine we need to cover four learning areas and they should tell me that we haven't done this. Every time I ask my learners what we haven't done they are quick to say "Teacher, we have done A and B, we are left with this".*

T2 commended this routine-instilling approach as this has positively reflected on the performance of her learners. She also stated that the methodologies of the LPs are fascinating and can get learners immersed and interested in learning: something she had never witnessed in all her 20 years of teaching prior the GPLMS.

T2 highly commended the LPs guidelines as quite explicit in terms of what, when and how to teach. She said the LPs were easy to use and described them as "*well detailed and stating the activities of the day"* while they were also handy in "*relieving teachers of work as they came ready-to-use"*. Prior to the GPLMS, teachers had the responsibility of developing lesson plans outlining the details of each lesson and, for T2, LPs have been a great relief. In acknowledgement of the relief of work, she said:

> *You see, before we used to sit down as a Grade 1 or Grade 2 team to plan and come up with lesson plans, but now there is relief on that side as the lessons are already planned.*

While T2 had a lot of praise for the scripted LPs, T1 who is a post-level 1 (PL 1) teacher had different views. She complained about work overload as she claimed to be overwhelmed by the multiplicity of activities on the LPs and that the pacing was inappropriate for her learners. The extract below demonstrates T1's feelings:

> *The GPLMS, hai! It's a lot of work. Just for instance today you are doing Maths and if the children didn't capture that subject, the following day it's another thing. At least if we had one thing for the whole week, not change activities every day. If you say you are doing addition, why can't we do addition for the whole week?*

The perception that the LPs were overwhelming with work was shared by both T1 and T2 who specifically mentioned Maths LPs which they said have too many activities, leaving inadequate time for any other learning areas. Both teachers also indicated that they found the one-size-fits-all pacing approach of the LPs problematic as this resulted in the exclusion of the majority of the poorly performing learners. The two FP teachers had this to say:

> *Eish! They should cut, especially the activities for Maths. They are too many… The activities are just too many for a day. These children are small and they are not fast. You find that from 8am to 10am you are doing only Mathematics, what about other subjects?* (T1)

> *The only thing is that they are useful especially for learners who are average, but for learners who are below average they are too fast for them. Let me give you an example in Language: say we introduce the phonic on Mondays and then Tuesday we reinforce the phonic by doing the mind-map, phonic words right. And then Wednesday we do the writing about those words. So for the learner who, maybe on Monday did not get the phonics on Monday, if I didn't take that learner to stay with him/her in the afternoon because maybe there is a meeting, workshop etc. The following day I have another programme which is different from the Mondays' so I don't have time to reinforce what I was doing on Monday to learners who did not get the concepts on Monday. So the lesson plan is leaving behind those underperforming learners.* (T2)

Evident in the above extracts is the teachers' perceptions of the fast pacing of LPs for the majority of their learners who, they believe, are below average. T1 was concerned about activities moving fast and constantly changing every day. T2 was extremely apprehensive about the LPs excluding low achieving learners, especially given that there was no time allocated for remedial teaching, reinforcing previously taught concepts and preparing future lessons.

The two FP teachers also mentioned that another serious challenge encountered was the introduction of DBE workbooks which required them to shift from using Lectio textbooks

(Books from Lectio Publishers). There were confusion and dilemmas as DBE workbooks were not corresponding to the activities on the LPs. This shift, according to T1 and T2, was detrimental to the progress and the uniformity they had achieved whilst using Lectio textbooks. They lamented:

> *Another thing is the issue of textbooks. When the GPLMS started it was perfect with the Lectio (textbooks from Lectio Publishers) because when we were introducing the letter sound for the week, the reading of the week was written mostly with that weeks' sound. The comprehensions had the very same sound and learners were doing the same sound throughout. Now they are forcing to push this DBE to come in and it doesn't line up well with the lesson plans. Lectio reading books were good and more in line with the lesson plans and let's say we are doing the sound 'mmm' all the comprehension would have more of the 'mmm' sound. It would be helpful if the DBE textbooks could be used just as an additional for learners who maybe finish fast when you are still busy with the slow ones. They want to force in the DBE books but they are not the best for our learners because they don't have the same letter sound as on the lesson plans for that week. Learners are now finding too many sounds in one reader. These DBE books are also not enough for all the learners so we find it very difficult to use them in class.* (T2)

> *When it comes to literacy, they (Coaches) say go to DBE books. There you find that the lesson plan doesn't correspond with the DBE books.* (T1)

The use of LPs triggered different emotions within teachers where certain features of the LPs were well appreciated and others were still areas of concern for some. Although the senior T2 appreciated and valued the LPs, she was however of the view that some aspects of the LPs such as pacing and the allocation of more time for remedial teaching needed to be considered and made appropriate for their kind of learners. Meanwhile, T1 was largely negative about LPs and demonstrated a conviction that LPs were not the answer to the challenge of poorly performing learners.

4.3.2 C1's perceptions of LPs

Based on the interview and my own observations during our several encounters, C1 seemed very enthusiastic and optimistic about the GPLMS intervention. She was quite convinced that the GPLMS was the best intervention opportunity that poorly performing schools had ever received. She was in awe of the LPs and mentioned that it was so important since the majority of teachers "*did not have direction in terms of what to do and how to it"*. For her, the GPLMS came at the right time with the relevant guidance and as an invaluable resource holding great potential to improve the pedagogic practices of these teachers and consequently the academic outcomes of poorly preforming schools.

C1 was coaching T1 and T2 and believed that LPs were ideal for them and their learners. She explained that LPs guided teachers in terms of what, how and when to teach. C1 expressed great appreciation of the already prepared LPs especially after realising that they gave teachers direction: something that was lacking in their teaching prior the GPLMS. She advised teachers to take LPs as guides where teachers are flexible enough to incorporate their own knowledge into the LPs' instructional methodologies. She explained her position as follows:

> *The teacher must see the LP as a guide and is free to be creative, that's what I believe. The lesson plan is there and my job is not to come and ensure that she follows the lesson plan to the t. She has a right to say "In my class I have taken this from the lesson plan". But I think it all starts with an understanding of the overall lesson plan and then adjusting and being creative around what is there.*

Although C1 appreciated the value of LPs, she acknowledged that there were some technical aspects of the LPs that were quite hostile to both teachers and learners. She agreed with what T1 and T2 mentioned concerning the FP Maths LPs which did not afford teachers adequate time for concepts to be taught, reinforced and for remedial teaching. Given these technical issues with the LPs, C1 had to mediate the LPs by ensuring that teachers make meaning of the LPs and have an overall understanding of their objectives for them to adapt them.

4.3.3 S1's perceptions of LPs

Unlike C1, S1 was of the view that LPs were a vindictive instrument that crippled teachers' innovation and creativity. She was quite emotive about this matter and said:

> *...we are giving teachers fish and we are not teaching them how to fish so what happens is that we are giving them lesson plans that are not their own. It's not their ideas so all we are doing is stealing the minds of people and telling them, "You know, you can't think so use this here and that's going to help you think".*

According to S1, LPs worsened the problem of teacher underperformance as they did not facilitate the development of teachers into independent professionals capable of developing their own LPs. She pointed out that: "*as long as we are giving, we are not going to be able to make change*." She equated the giving of ready-to-use LPs to apartheid education principles that sought to suppress and hinder the cognitive development of some sections of the population. Instead of replicating apartheid education by giving scripted LPs, S1 was of the view that LPs should be used for induction purposes for a short period of time as a form of teacher training on how to develop LPs. She said:

The lesson plans? I would be okay with them if they were given to teachers for the first 3 months. Let's say we were starting GPLMS in 2014, I would device lesson plans for 3 months. In those 3 months I would be taking the teachers step by step on how I arrived at those lesson plans. Then, in the 3rd month, I would train them on how to use the CAPS policy document and come up with their own lesson plans. Then we are teaching a skill. Prescription is ok but only for a certain period. You need to pull out. During that time you should have up-skilled your teachers to do it on their own.

S1 believed that LPs have been over-relied on to the extent that they have defeated the purpose under which they were developed: to build capacity within teachers to improve their instructional practices. LPs thus aggravated the already deplorable state of teachers' capacities as this over dependency on them implies that there was no structure in place to move teachers beyond the prescription.

4.3.4 Teachers' perceptions and experiences of coaching

T1 and T2's perception of the role of an instructional coach was that of helping teachers develop in areas of their teaching that they were not competent in. They highlighted that a coach helps through class demonstrations and sometimes actual teaching, especially concepts they found difficult to teach. They both perceived C1 as a professional who assisted them with new teaching methodologies and advice on how to improve their instructional practices. These conceptualisations of the main work and role of a coach were largely framed by their experience of working with C1, their first experience of working so closely with an instructional coach.

Both T1 and T2 started working with C1 at the beginning of the 2011 GPLMS project. They spoke highly of C1 and seemed to have developed a collegial bond as they described her as a "*friendly supportive colleague, a mentor and a mother who is kind and quick to help"*. T1 reported that she got a lot of support from C1 and saw herself grow as a result of C1's assistance and guidance. She particularly credited her newly developed skills of facilitating group reading to the coaching she received. Likewise, T2 acknowledged that she considered C1's advice in her teaching and confirmed that it often was useful. She said:

After the advice from my coach, things usually go smooth. I even get a different response from the learners when I use the coaches' advice correctly and the lesson becomes much easier and learners follow quite well.

After incorporating guidance from the demonstrations and the advice given by C1, T2 recognised significant improvements in her instructional practices. She also reported that her learners positively responded to her newly acquired instructional approaches. T2 confirmed that there were noticeable improvements in the learner's participation and performance and she attributed this to the coaching.

T2 also mentioned that coaching has developed her into a more resourceful, informed and skilful professional, capable of reflecting on her own instructional practices and reconsider her approaches to teaching. She explained:

> *the most important thing I learnt, especially in languages, is that I must not rush to have learners writing. I must let them talk, speak and speak and speak language before they can do the writing and prompt more questions to them and get their understanding before they can write. That for me is a plus in my teaching experience. I was rushing to have my learners write so that when the principal asks for learners' books you have a lot to show whereas most learners would be left behind. I mostly learnt that it's important to let the learners talk and play with the learning apparatus first so that they understand the concepts. It will be learning through play because the young learners need to enjoy the activities and not be very formal like I was doing.*

Instead of focusing more on presenting herself as industrious to the principal by giving learners more work, T2's primary concern had shifted to getting learners to understand concepts. T2 mentioned that, through C1 guidance, she managed to introspect into her own practices and alter some of her methodological approaches.

In terms of C1's personal skills, both T1 and T2 revered C1 and described her as a flexible and understanding coach. They had developed respect for her conduct and trusted her approaches and intentions, given that C1 had demonstrated respect for them as teachers. Both teachers had good working relations with C1. T1 was obviously fond of her coach:

> *I think she is a great coach who is patient with us teachers and learners. All her teachers speak well of her and even the children love her. I think she knows her job well and is helping me a lot...I am happy with my coach. She is like a mother to me. Bayamususa ngiyakhala*[3] *(If they take her I will cry).*

These sentiments were shared by T2 who also described C1 as a careful coach, sensitive to teacher's emotions especially when pointing out mistakes. Her perception of C1 is consistent with T1's: "*she doesn't criticise, if I make a mistake, she modifies it and says it*

[3] This expression is in isiZulu. The translation follows with a gloss in brackets.

in a right way so that I don't feel bad". It is clear from the report of these two FP teachers that they enjoyed working with C1 because she had respect for them as teachers, cared and showed great concern for them and their learners.

Besides guiding and advising the two FP teachers, C1's coaching role also involved monitoring their teaching practices in line with the GPLMS expectations. It was therefore imperative for this study to find out how coaches worked around establishing good working relations when they had to support and monitor teachers at the same time. T1 and T2 pointed out that they were mainly monitored on alignment with LPs, curriculum progression, introduction of concepts in a lesson and on the remediation of under-performing learners. They were, however, quick to say that C1's approach to monitoring was different from that of district supervisors who often intimidated and harassed teachers. T1 said:

> *The coach monitors whether I am doing my job especially on following the lesson plan. For instance this week we are doing this sound [shows sound 'sh' written on board] so she wants to see if I am in line with the lesson plan. Even if she does this monitoring, I feel supported because it helps me keep on line with the lesson plans...I think now we understand each other better than before. I used to think that my coach was here to make my job difficult but I have seen that she loves children and only wants them to learn better.*

These sentiments illustrate how T1 initially had a negative attitude toward being monitored. This is understandable given her previous experience of monitoring by district supervisors. C1's approach to monitoring resulted in a change in attitude and T1 perception as C1 fostered an understanding of its purpose in promoting better teaching and learning. T2 correspondingly expressed her appreciation of being monitored by C1 where she felt supported, even when C1 assumed her monitoring role. She elaborated:

> *For me both the monitoring and the support I see it all as support because I can tell you my coach is so different from the people who come from the district to monitor us. When we hear that they are coming the teachers panic because there is too much of fault-finding. With this GPLMS coach I am happy as I feel that I am really being supported.*

The experience of monitoring of the two FP teachers confirm that C1's approach was a radical departure from the fault-finding and intimidating tendencies of district supervisors. Such an inclination to monitoring created good working relations between the coach and the teachers. As a result, the teachers were more receptive of the coach's suggestions and were rightly positioned to change some of their instructional beliefs, attitudes and methodologies. On the whole, what is important about these teachers' responses is their

perception of C1 as a supportive coach who was keen on encouraging and developing them. They relied on her and trusted her guidance to develop them into better teachers. It is these personal qualities and attributes that T1 and T2 noted in C1 that allowed the coaching process to proceed and have a meaningful and measurable impact on the teachers' instructional practices.

4.3.5 C1's perceptions and experiences of coaching

C1 regarded her coaching role as very important in encouraging and supporting teachers. She described herself as "*someone who comes in and gives hope and encourages the teacher".* C1 noted that, for her to successfully coach teachers, she needed to possess the knowledge of teaching practice, well conversant and updated with content knowledge of subjects and, above all have the pedagogic content knowledge. C1 explained:

> *It's also important for me to be sure of what I'm doing. I have to do my research, not only on the content knowledge but I must know how to deliver it, how to teach it and I must always be ready. Content knowledge and knowledge of the appropriate teaching methodology is important because teachers can ask for demonstrations any time. Teachers have to see me as a resource.*

More importantly, C1 considered her support role as needing to take cognisance of the teachers' skills, ideas and initiatives without imposing her ideas and the GPLMS instructional methodologies on the teachers. She described her role in relation to the teachers' as follows:

> *...the teacher must feel that I don't come in to take her power; she/he is in charge of that classroom…I believe that we are not there to take power from the teachers. They are hands-on, they are there every day.*

Working with T1 and T2, C1 described her experience of coaching as *fulfilling* as she could see change in both teachers and learners. She reported that T1 and T2 had become better instructors using more effective instructional practices and learners were developing a more positive attitude towards schooling with their workbooks being a testimony of their improvements. C1 was particularly impressed with the changes and improvements in T2's learner-questioning techniques, how she now encouraged learners, raised their expectations and interest in learning. C1 also noted that T1 especially improved in teamwork with other FP teachers as she used to work in isolation. The level of performance in both T1's Grade 1 and T2's Grade 2 class had greatly improved and this made the highlights for C1's coaching experiences.

4.3.5.1 C1's coaching strategies with T1 and T2

One of the virtues of a good coach is the ability to use different strategies of coaching given teachers' varied capabilities and weaknesses. Although C1 stated that the training for coaches was inadequate in equipping them with skills of working with different teachers, she managed to work well with both teachers as she designed her strategies according to each teacher's individual needs. While the training of coaches covered details of adult learning, C1 reported that she relied more on personally learnt skills to work with the different teachers. She said:

> *I think it's not so much of the training but more of one's personality that comes in handy there. I actually have colleagues who are struggling with teachers and they are threatened, teachers don't want them and so on. I think it's more of your own attitude now. You have to realise that people have their own pride and you might go into a classroom and find that a teacher is not doing something well because maybe they don't know. How you pick it up and point out to the teacher can either result in losing that teacher or winning them. Just being aware of such things and where those mistakes come from is important. It's therefore of the coaches personality.*

C1 pointed out that successful coaching depended on a coach's interpersonal skills and attributes where she mentioned the importance of patience, respect, humbleness, honesty and being a good listener. She emphasized the need for the right attitude whenever teacher mistakes are pointed out and corrected: "*How you pick it up and point out to the teacher can either result in losing that teacher or winning them."* Coaching is therefore, according to C1, a role that has to be assumed with caution. Tapping from her interpersonal skills, C1 mentioned that she was able to work with T1 and T2 knowing who to push, when and how, and when to lay back. Her description of T1 and T2 demonstrated how she understood their different capacities thus informed how she used different coaching strategies with them. Her description of T1 and of T2 was as follows:

> *People are different and I can tell you that. T2 is very eager to learn and to implement and she has grown in her confidence and wants to play around with what she's got- her knowledge and those skills that she has gained. T1 on the other hand is receptive but she doesn't display a lot of confidence to say "Ah now I can do this with this new material and ideas". She is kind of worried thinking "What if I make a mistake and I don't want this coach to see me failing". I think there is that inside of her; whereas T2 doesn't worry about making a mistake because she trusts and believes that I will not come down and heap a tonne of bricks on them. It's the issue of trust really and sometimes you see that some of these things are deep seated within and it's not easy to have teachers open up. I think it's something in her, I just don't think it's me.*

The above excerpt demonstrates that C1 had come to know T1 and T2's different levels of confidence and potential and this awareness was crucial in making decisions of the kind of

pressure and support she could exert. She further explained that T2 displayed more confidence in her teaching thus with her she did more of lesson observation then afterwards engage in a reflective dialogue about the lesson and gave the teacher feedback. Her approach with T1 was different as she had identified T1's biggest concern: lack of confidence and inability to instil a routine in her classroom. T1 thus needed a lot of demonstrations to convince her of the teaching methodologies used in the GPLMS and to gradually build her confidence. She explained:

> *T1 is a bit reserved and not so confident in teaching English... she's umm, not sure of herself and normally code-switches when teaching English. What I normally do is when I get to her class I find out if she has done English and I do the daily routine first where I ask the learners what day it is, what the previous day was and what the following day will be. T1 has been amazed to see that the learners respond well without me code-switching. With her, besides her lack of confidence in teaching English, I also think that she doesn't believe that the Grade 1's can understand instructions in English and at the same time respond in English. I think if I can get her over the code-switching and get her to engage with the learners in English without them feeling threatened as she often complains that if she does not code-switch the learners do not respond. She therefore needs guidance on the questioning strategies without underestimating the learners…T1 doesn't believe that these learners can do it and I have to push and demonstrate in her presence that they can but umm…. She is coming along.*

While T2 was now competent in using the GPLMS instructional methodologies, T1 was still struggling in her teaching of EFAL. C1 identified T1's challenges and changed her support strategies by offering guidance on learner questioning through demonstrations and more encouragement.

4.3.6 S1's perceptions and experiences of coaching

S1 considered herself as a mentor to coaches and described her supervising role as involving guiding, training, monitoring and generally overseeing the work of coaches. Her perception was that the GPLMS coaching was a good intervention, one that could foster improvement in the teaching of FP learners. She however highlighted a number of reservations about the manner in which coaches had generally conducted themselves in schools. S1 stated that the role of coaches was to support teachers and give them guidance in the use of GPLMS instructional methodologies. She argued that this role had not been carried out with adequate diligence by the majority of coaches she had been supervising given their lack of knowledge. She mentioned that this was worsened by the fact that their

training did not address what it was meant to address. For instance, coaches were not able to give teachers the support that they needed. She analyzes the situation as follows:

> *Umm, when you don't have knowledge you tend to latch on anything that puts you in an authoritative position. A person with knowledge is humble because they come from the position: "I didn't know, now I know; now I want to impart". But if you don't know and you are expected to know then you are coming across as knowledgeable when you don't have it. So you've got to be harsh with the teachers, you don't know how to guide the teachers. You then go in as an inspector and everything is about the lesson plans: "Why are you on this page when you are supposed to there? Why are you using this methodology instead of this one? The most important thing is achieving the aim, the coaches can't see beyond that.*

Unfortunately for S1, coaches were not all very knowledgeable and were incapable of functioning outside the LPs. Instead of working with teachers' knowledge and allowing some flexibility, coaches emphasised more the monitoring and alignment with the LPs. S1 argued that: "*coaches should be by far above the lesson plans"* where their focus should have been on achieving the LP objectives through the use of various creative methodologies. Because of the overemphasis on teacher monitoring, S1 stated that some GPLMS coaches started to behave like district supervisors who are known to pressurize and harass teachers. This kind of 'district supervisor' approach, according to S1, was unfortunate in that it attracted union intervention (SADTU to be precise) and some coaches were resented and eventually thrown out of schools.

Besides being knowledgeable about the subject, S1 also pointed out that the attitude of coaches was an important interpersonal attribute that greatly determined the success of the coaching process. She suggested that

> *the attitude has to change... some of the coaches are actually younger than the teachers they are coaching, so it's about respect for people...they can achieve a whole lot more if their attitude is right.*

She further mentioned that some coaches' attitudes in schools were a major hindrance to the success of the GPLMS. She recommended that supervisors should develop a course on soft skills geared to develop coaches' interaction with teachers in a much more respectful way. She asserted that such course would be instrumental in curbing scenarios of coach eviction from schools, something that did happen.

4.3.7 Teachers' adaptation of the LPs and the coaching process

As was noted earlier, teachers found it difficult to implement the LPs but they found ways of bargaining with the demands of the LPs and the coach's advice. T1 admitted to negotiating with the LPs and customising into her own instructional practices which she sometimes saw as more suitable for her learners. Evident in her statements is that in some instances she had compromised the requirements of the LPs for the benefit of her learners. She admitted to improvising by cutting the number of activities per subject and that sometimes she used her own discretion to create time for other learning areas. She said:

> *…sometimes I use my own discretion. [Laughing] Aah sometimes the lesson plan will be saying learners should write 10 Maths problems, I give them 5 because they are slow otherwise I will spend the whole day doing Maths. I have to create time for other subjects buy cutting the number of activities they do in a single subject.*

T2 concurs with T1's view that sometimes, as a teacher, there is a need to exercise one's own judgement which may be in violation of the LP or the expectations of the coach. She mentioned that LPs were so tightly rigid on time allocated for an activity and do not afford separate time for remedial teaching. Rather the LPs instruct teachers to go around looking at learners' work and correct or remediate while they write an in-class exercise. Instead of complying with this LP requirement T2 revealed that:

> *…now because of the frustration of the pilling of marking, sometimes we steal time and sit down and mark so that when FAL comes you give them the Maths exercises to work on. Really at the end of the day you don't want a pile of marking for all learning areas and sometimes there are meetings and workshops and that marking should never go to the next day unmarked as that day has its own activities. The issue of time is so frustrating and that time you are supposed to go around and look at the learners' work you have a worry about marking so you sit down and mark.*

Thus T2 challenged the requirements of the LPs in order to relieve herself of marking overload. She lamented the unfortunate absence of time for remedial teaching as an unfulfilled gap. T1 and T2's classroom realities informed their decisions and they mentioned that the bargaining and negotiations were made specifically for the benefit of their learners and for themselves so as to ease their working conditions.

The negotiations teachers made with the coach's advice had significant implications to the sustainability of GPLMS practices, if and when the project is phased out. Although T1 and T2 expressed their interests in continuing with GPLMS instructional practices, their practices largely indicated that it would be difficult and highly unlikely for them to

continue with GPLMS instructional practices as is, in the absence of C1's monitoring. Even though T2 acknowledged that GPLMS offered better instructional methodologies, she however noted that it demanded a lot of work. Although it is too early to make conclusions, the workload that the GPLMS intervention placed on teachers largely indicate that the possibility of teachers sustaining GPLMS instructional practices in the absence of coaches was seriously compromised and highly unlikely.

4.3.8 Perceptions of how to improve the coaching process

There was general agreement amongst all role players interviewed that the implementation of the GPLMS could have been done differently and better. While T1 and T2 agreed that LP activities could be reduced, T2 further expressed dissatisfaction with the coaching process where she indicated that contact time between teachers and coaches was inadequate. She felt that visits from C1 were insufficient as she needed guidance in many instances. T2 mentioned that she had resorted to writing down problem areas for discussion with her coach on future visits which was not ideal. Her view was as follows:

> *...one visit will never be enough for every learning area and for every concept. Sometimes I feel that I cannot reach my learners, for example when dealing with the concept of number line in Maths. The concepts are many so you can never say enough of that coach. I ask my coach what I can do to reach all my learners maybe with the minus and the addition number line. Sometimes it's the division and this we teach in a different way in Grade 1 and 2 and sometimes I try to explain it and see that I cannot reach these learners. When my coach comes, I ask how best to teach the concept of division so that I can reach my learners. From time to time I have problems that I put aside for my coach to come and solve for me.*

As is demonstrated in the above extract, T2 was of the view that the coaching process could be more productive if teacher-coach contact time was increased.

C1 also pointed out that the coaching process would have been more effective in changing and improving teachers' instructional practices if coaches were getting adequate support from their supervisors and from the district. She explained:

> *Yes, there is support and monitoring from our supervisors but I would like to see it more often. I don't think it's happening enough, both the support and monitoring. And because of that, I find myself not sure how much I should involve myself in things that are happening in the school that are affecting my work in the school so I have to trade very carefully there and make sure that I don't step on anyone's toes. I would like to see the district on this side of the table and not standing on the other side, pointing fingers at us (GPLMS coaches) and saying you are the problem. I would like to see them on our side and say "You are doing your work and that's as far as you go and this is where we meet you in doing your work." At the end of the day it's not about me or you, it's about the child getting the best.*

C1 was obviously not getting enough support and informative feedback from her supervisor to improve her work as a coach. She further suggested the development of a partnership between the district and the GPLMS where they collaborate for the benefit of the learners instead of competing and criticising each other.

Besides getting support from supervisors and the district, C1 also talked about lack of support from within the school management. She highlighted that SMTs were largely unsupportive of the work of coaches and were uninvolved and appeared uninterested with the GPLMS. She lamented:

> *...principals are not behaving like project managers and I don't know whose fault is that. If the principals had owned it and knew exactly what was happening, they would be more involved. They would understand the lesson plans and the multitude of tasks teachers are faced with and they would then be able to speak against additional tasks for the teachers. But because they don't know what the project is about they don't understand what the teachers are doing and why they complain about too much work.*

It was therefore C1's view that structures were needed in schools, especially at the level of SMTs, to oversee and complement the work of coaches.

4.4 Summary of School A findings about GPLMS, LPs and coaching

Findings from School A indicate varied perceptions and experiences of the GPLMS intervention. The two FP teachers, T1 and T2, expressed contrasting views of the LPs and the coaching process. T1 was quite negative about the LPs, arguing that they were not ideal for her and her learners while T2 was highly appreciative of the LPs and the advice and guidance from C1. It is important to note that T2 and C1 were of the same age and had almost similar calm temperaments and it may have been easier for them to find common ground and establish an understanding. The case was however different with T1 who was younger and C1 had to be careful and highly strategic to get buy-in from her. Although both teachers found some aspects of the LPs inappropriate and a bit difficult to use especially with their kind of learners, they appreciated the support and assistance they got from C1. It is important to note that despite these challenges, C1 managed to gain optimum control of the fusion of support and monitoring embedded in LPs and coaching as was evidenced by her acceptance by the two FP teachers.

C1 largely perceived the GPLMS as a worthwhile project which made quite significant milestones in improving teachers' instructional skills and knowledge. She found her experiences of coaching rewarding especially when she could enumerate specific areas of T1 and T2's teaching that had developed and unfolded right before her eyes. C1 confidently said that T2 was capable of continuing with GPLMS instructional practices but was sceptical about T1 sustaining these newly learnt skills as she described her as rebellious. It is imperative at this point to acknowledge the importance of a balanced and well-thought fusion of support and monitoring in the coaching process so as to foster sustainability of newly learnt instructional practices. S1, on the other hand, was uncertain about the GPLMS approaches and methodologies. She was suspicious about the LPs as they spoon-fed teachers and did not foster the development of independent professionals; she wondered about some coaches, their poor training and problematic interpersonal skills that scared teachers off. She had important qualifications about the GPLMS failing to inculcate enduring and more sustainable skills within teachers.

4.5 Background of School B and its participants

Like School A, School B is a public primary school in a poor black informal settlement community in Johannesburg south. There are 28 teachers and 1288 leaners giving a teacher-learner ratio of 1:46. The learners are coming from very poor backgrounds and the school has a nutrition programme where learners are given a meal at school. There is generally an atmosphere of enthusiasm and inspiration among the teachers. It is also important to note that school has very close ties with the community as the school was established through a community-driven initiative. The leadership and SMT were hands-on because the school seemed to be quite organised although many contextual factors militated against the school.

The physical infrastructure is quite reasonable except that the classrooms had furniture shortages. The foyer in the administration block is immaculately decorated with medals of excellence, trophies and certificates of participating in numerous district and provincial choir, sporting and academic competitions. The school however poorly performed in the ANA at below 40% in Grade 3 and 6 hence was one of the target schools for the GPLMS intervention.

Table 3: Profile of School B teachers

Participant	Age and Gender	Qualifications	Experience	Phase
Teacher 3 (T3)	50+ (Male)	Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma	12 years teaching, Post level 2	Senior Phase (Grade 7)
Teacher 4 (T4)	60+ (Male)	Teacher's Certificate, Diploma in Further Education	32 years teaching, Post level 2	Intersen Phase (Grade 6 and 7)

Table 3 above explains that T3 and T4 are male; above middle age and both qualified teachers teaching EFAL in the SP. T3 is the English HoD while T4 is the Life Skills HoD. Both teachers were keen participants but T4 saw it as a platform to express his dissatisfaction with the GPLMS project.

Table 4: Profile of GPLMS coaches in School B

Participant	Age and Gender	Qualifications	Experience
Coach 2 (C2)	40+ (Female)	Higher Diploma in Education, B. Ed, Honours-Inclusive Education	Former teacher, remedial teaching specialist, facilitator
C2's Supervisor (S2)	40+ (Male)	Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma, Further Diploma in Education, B.Ed. Honours, M.Ed.	Former teacher, teacher trainer, assessor and facilitator

Table 4 above profiles C2 and her supervisor, S2. C2 joined the GPLMS in 2012 and is one of the coaches recruited in the second phase of the project. C2 was particularly interesting participant as she was the only female participant, coaching two senior male teachers and having a male supervisor. S2 worked in the GPLMS project since its inception in 2011 and was interestingly younger than both T3 and T4.

4.6 Teachers' perceptions and experiences

Similar to School A teachers, teachers' views about their experience of support and/or in-service training and monitoring prior the GPLMS are presented as well as their perceptions of areas of their teaching that they consider for development.

4.6.1 Teachers' perceptions and experiences of support and monitoring prior to the GPLMS

T3 and T4 expressed the view that their experience of most professional development programmes did not meaningfully contribute to the development of their skills and knowledge. T3 was not keen to identify any specific in-service programme because many were a sheer waste of time. T4 boldly mentioned that OBE training was his worst ever experience of teacher development as it was "*a monster that confused teachers."* T4 specifically criticized and condemned OBE's cascade approach where trained teachers were to go back to their schools and train their peers. He remarked:

> *We were being trained by people who were short-trained and after they have been short-trained, they short-train us and expected us to train others and it goes to the learners*.

Despite his obvious dissatisfaction with OBE training and many others that he chose not to mention, T4 however acknowledged that he did benefit some useful skills from CAPS training especially from facilitators in Life Skills. He described CAPS trainers as "*knowledgeable, competent and conversant- they knew their story*."

Teacher monitoring was also pertinent and T3 and T4 mentioned that they were monitored by the SMT and, as subject HoDs, both teachers were quite familiar with their school-based monitoring system. T3 was positive about SMT monitoring and supervision and he strongly believed that it was a necessary procedure. His comment was as follows:

> *I believe that monitoring and supervising teachers is an important function of the management, it's one of their duties. If there is monitoring and supervision, it's for development and it's meant to make sure that there is some form of order in schools and someone has to make sure that learners are being taught.*

While T3 expressed appreciation about school-based monitoring, T4 had rather strong views about teacher monitoring, particularly from district officials. He expressed dislike of district supervisors, arguing that they have a tendency to intimidate, harass and demean teachers. He pointed out the IQMS and classroom visits by district inspectors as

unpleasant experiences and emphasised that teachers do not welcome hostile supervisors. He elaborated his views stating that:

> *That military attitude is not wanted. You see teachers are very militant and when they decide to close the gate on you, they come together along with the union and they close it for sure. We always joke amongst ourselves and say "The day you get a promotion, please behave like a facilitator not like an inspector. Be friendly". The challenge still is that the teacher does not want class visits.*

T4 suggested that coaches approach teacher monitoring in a radically different way from that of old district inspectors who had a "*military approach"* to teacher accountability. T3 and T4 held different perceptions to teacher monitoring where T3 emphasised its important role in improving and making teachers accountable for their work, and T4 pointed out the problematic aspects of monitoring that have a negative impact in making teachers defensive.

4.6.2 Teachers' identification of their support and development needs

The most pressing need for T3 was in the area of remedial teaching as he felt that the majority of learners were academically challenged. He further noted that the needs of teachers in economically and socially disadvantaged communities were way beyond instructional interventions. He stressed that they were teaching in much more complicated circumstances and that their needs required much more than instructional intervention programmes. His explanation was as follows:

> *Well, there are a lot of challenges especially the area that we work in. You see the community out there, they are struggling and it's a very poor community. Some of the learners come to school without having eaten anything and even if you look at them, at the way they are dressed, you can see that they are coming from quite challenging homes. I'm sure when you walked in the school you identified with what I'm saying.*

Teacher support programmes are, according to T3, not adequate in addressing issues contributing to underperformance in schools.

T4 was adamant that his instructional practices were perfect and he could not identify any need for further support or development. He was livid that his school was classified as underperforming and claimed that it was an error. He was convinced that teachers in his school were not in need of any training or development:

> *Now unfortunately our school has been categorised as an under-performing school because of a mathematical error. It's a mathematical error that placed us there. In all spheres it is not an under-performing school. The district will tell you that and they*

know that this school is good and is functioning well…Madam I have been teaching for a very long time and I have seen it all. I can't say there is anything I struggle with.

Although T3 had 12 years of experience, he welcomed teacher professional development programmes, especially training on learner remediation skills. T4 strongly discarded any consideration of further professional development with his 32 years teaching experience.

4.7 Perceptions and experiences of the GPLMS

This section presents data on School B's participants' perceptions and experiences of the GPLMS intervention.

4.7.1 Teachers' perceptions and experiences of LPs

Mixed reactions to the LPs were noticed from the participating teachers from school B. T3 was full of praise to the whole GPLMS and particularly the LPs and said:

Wow1! Actually it's an excellent one. You see we teachers have so much work to do. It's like hectic. You have to start with the planning and the GPLMS has alleviated that for us. We only teach and no longer have to do the planning. Actually it allows us to do what we like, we like to teach. Planning, although it is part of the teaching, we are not so much into that. So the GPLMS lesson plans have really helped a lot.

The above extract shows T3's appreciation of the ready-to-use LPs which he said had relieved him and others extra work of planning and developing lessons. While T3 was ecstatic about the LPs and grateful for their usefulness, T4 found them offensive to teachers' professionalism and having a demoralising effect. The idea of using ready-to-use LPs was not plausible to T4. He was not as ardent as T3 on using these LPs and noticeably demonstrated feelings of despondency where the use of the LPs was concerned. His main critique of the LPs was that they denied teachers creativity and innovation and indeed proclaimed that he was well-trained to develop his own LP. He voiced quite strong opinions about this issue and said:

You know a lesson plan, my lesson plan is going to differ from one created by another person. We were taught to prepare a lesson plan- you have to have the aim, the presentation, step 1, step 2 and you have the conclusion. That! Just the skeleton and you fill in the meat. I think that is still the best...Where is your input as a teacher? Guys let's wake up and let's do our lesson plans. With me I prefer my own lesson plan. Give me the topic or the theme and the guideline, that's all. I can develop my own lesson plan. You bring me teacher aids, I can't use those. I've got to build my own. Let the teacher be free to build their own lesson plan and teacher aids because it makes you not to be creative. The creative part of it has been smashed. Let the teacher explore.

While T3 was in awe of the LPs saying they were *precise and straight to the point*, T4 on the other hand, did not welcome the precision and detail on the LPs. He paralleled the LPs to a cage keeping a bird incarcerated: he felt like a bird trapped in a cage as he was not flexible enough to be creative and innovative as a professional teacher. He even projected a situation where the continued use of the restrictive LPs would provoke teacher resistance culminating to an uprising against the whole GPLMS programme. Rather than being confined to the LPs, T4 mentioned that he preferred having the GPLMS LPs as alternatives to his own lesson plans and his concerns were as follows:

> *Don't make it [LPs] the overall thing. It's ok as an alternative for schools that are not performing…Let the bird fly. There is no free bird in the cage. Let us not be kept in the cage. Some of us we are not like this in a classroom stuck to step1 and step 2. No! I have been teaching for a long time and have produced 1st class students, distinctions and so on. Now you cannot work like that. The best is if you grasp the aim and the steps of them coming up with this lesson plan, how you approach the presentation is not important. If the aim is children must read fluently, that's fine. You've got your material and the strategies of how to get learners to read fluently, that's it. So let them leave the bird to fly. It's not a question of them keeping their jobs, let the bird fly. Once the bird does not fly it's going to cause trouble in the cage. Watch the cage every day.*

T4 also raised a concern about pacing as the EFAL LPs had too many activities that it was difficult for him to move with the LPs without disadvantaging some of his learners. He raised his concern saying:

> *…but now the GPLMS does not leave space for any other thing. It has been brought in as an intervention but it does not do intervention enough to help those learners who need intervention. It's too fast and books are just getting full. Half the year the lessons the learners are full speed writing. What about that kid who needs intervention? The pace has to be reduced. But for those kids who are really moving its holding them back.*

The observation that LPs have too many activities is also shared by T3 who acknowledged that the LPs had a lot of work, but he nonetheless considered it beneficial and relevant to his learners. T3 was of the perception that a wide variety of activities kept learners engaged and stood a better chance of benefiting academically if they were kept busy. T4, however, maintained that the multiplicity of writing exercises and activities in the LPs, unfortunately, were not a reflection of substantive learning.

4.7.2 C2's perception of LPs

C2 was responsible for mediating LPs to T3 and T4 and she expressed great appreciation of the LPs because they helped teachers structure their work by channelling what they were to teach and how to teach it. She commented:

> *I think the lesson plans are good because they tell the teacher "Don't go that way, it's this way". It's a way of channelling the teacher up until they get used to it. Before we [GPLMS coaches] came the lessons were not done, if they are done they are done poorly. You can see that this teacher needs something to structure the way the lessons are conducted otherwise the lessons are a mess every day. So the teachers are used to messing up so the lesson plans are a good instrument to use. It's like a whip, "Why are you not following the programme? Go back to the lesson plan." Otherwise if the lesson plan was not there it would be a whole mess.*

C2 was emphatic that LPs were an effective way of distilling the culture of laziness in teachers as they made sure to implement them knowing too well that coaches monitored them on LP compliance. Prior the GPLMS, C2 pointed out, lessons were either done poorly or not done at all so the LPs were an important instrument that ensured that lessons were done, and in the right way.

Although C2 was positive about the LPs, she noted their unfortunate effect of developing a dependency syndrome in teachers. She regretted that some teachers were taking advantage of the already prepared LPs and were no longer investing time to prepare for lessons. She said:

> *Even now you find a teacher coming in front of you with a lesson plan and open it without any preparation*.

This was an unfortunate realisation because it showed that some teachers had no understanding of what the LPs were for.

4.7.3 S2's perception of LPs

S2 was of the opinion that LPs offered basics of instruction but were not the absolute solution for underperforming schools. His argument was based on the premise that different reasons, besides poor instructional practices, determine the performance of schools. Some schools were underperforming because teachers lacked subject content knowledge and some suffered due to weak SMTs. S2 maintained that LPs were inadequate in terms covering for teachers' lack of conceptual knowledge and poor school administration. He acknowledged, however, that LPs have a strong point of "*covering the*

basics of instruction: the instructional core", quite ideal for schools struggling with instruction.

S2 further pointed out that the main weakness of LPs was its one-size-fits-all approach despite different schools' levels of performance. He cited that the use of LPs was particularly problematic in former Model C schools where teachers complained that their learners were above the pitch of the LPs. S2 was overly pessimistic about the LPs when he realised that they were only suited for instructionally challenged schools and did not hold much promise for the majority of schools classified underperforming as their problems were way above teachers' instructional practices.

4.7.4 Teachers' perceptions and experiences of coaching

Perceptions of School B teachers were similar to those of School A as one teacher was in awe of the coaching process and the other one disregarded any possibility of it improving teachers' instructional practices. T3 highly regarded the coaching process and could not identify any useful training prior the GPLMS other than the GPLMS itself. He maintained that the GPLMS offered him his best experience of in-service training and teacher support. His perception of a coach was that of that of a professional teacher trainer who supports and guides teachers through the implementation of different instructional methodologies. He attributed his improvements in instilling vocabulary in learners to the training he got from C2. His comments were as follows:

> *The GPLMS has equipped me with so many skills like vocabulary, instilling vocabulary in these learners, to be specific: vocabulary and sentence construction. It has helped me a lot.*

It is noteworthy that T3 started off resisting the coaching process as he reported to have been initially hostile to C2 and unreceptive to the unfamiliar instructional methodologies. He went through a process of trying to understand the new approaches brought in by the coach and described his transition stages as follows:

> *You know what, change is difficult and painful so there were many tensions and it was just difficult to do things that you have been doing for a long time in a different way. You know implementing change, especially the new teaching methodologies, it was eish! But when you get a grasp of what is expected of you, you tend to begin to understand and say, "Oh, but this is the right way to go". With the support of the coach, I came to understand how it's done.*

T3 grew to understand and appreciate C2 along with the new knowledge and skills that she was introducing. He began to appreciate the GPLMS programme and his coach whom he described as quite knowledgeable. In fact, he stated that he valued her support and guidance and could not see any skills, knowledge and general competencies missing in her as a coach. Through the coaching process, T3 claimed to have gained invaluable skills, especially in various teaching methodologies. He stated that assistance from his coach was systematic and on-going as he could request a demonstration whenever he was not sure of anything. As a result of this, T3 described his experience of working with C2 as beneficial to his practice.

T3's experience of working with C2 was made more meaningful as he was exposed to different ways of working where he collaborated with other teachers. He appreciated C2 as she "*brought cohesion among educators: she encouraged teamwork*." This cohesion and teamwork was extended in the SBWs that C2 facilitated where she made all her teachers collectively discuss and reflect on their practice. T3 was excited about these training sessions:

> *These meeting are very fruitful. That's where we get to share our challenges and frustrations that we meet in the classrooms and obviously we come up with the solutions for issues.*

SBWs for T3 were an important follow up activity which was instrumental in stimulating his professional growth along with other teachers.

T4's perception of the coach was somewhat similar to T3's as he described a coach as an *"advisor, an intervener, a motivator and a person you can rely on"*. He emphasised that content and pedagogical knowledge were particularly important for a coach to have as teachers had a natural tendency to develop confidence in knowledgeable and reliable coaches. He said: "*I should not look at my coach and say "But aah…this one I can put behind the desk and teach".* Coaches' content and pedagogical knowledge were therefore imperative assets if teachers were to be receptive of coaches' advice.

Besides being knowledgeable, T4 emphasised that the ability to give teachers constructive feedback while maintaining good working relations was a non-negotiable requirement for coaches. Unfortunately for T4, many GPLMS coaches had aroused feelings of resentment and distrust within teachers. He considered a failure any coach who failed to approach

teachers with the right attitude, collaborate and work with teacher knowledge and allow teachers' innovation.

It was interesting to note that, while T3 was explicit in making comments about C2, T4 was rather elusive and restrained in his responses. His comments were always about GPLMS coaches and he made no direct comments about C2. His statements were however suggestive: he was obviously uncomfortable with the idea of having a coach and was, for the most part, critical of coaches and the coaching process. An example of his comments is as follows:

> *With the knowledge I think they [i.e. GPLMS coaches] are fine: strategy, methodology they know their stuff according to GPLMS. But they should also give credit to teachers who know their stuff not as a result of being trained by the GPLMS. They must not impose, they must say let's share the knowledge that we have here. 'We have extra intervention strategies we have from GPLMS, what do you have?' We have other intervention strategies from the district and we have people who are doing work in that section, so let's share. Let's look at my strategy and their strategy. Let's look at both of them for the sake of the learner.*

Thus, T4 seemed convinced that GPLMS coaches were knowledgeable about their methodologies. He, however, was of the view that coaches were not receptive and tuned in to teacher knowledge. He was totally against coaches imposing their knowledge on teachers and completely undermining teachers' autonomy in the classroom.

Besides imposing their knowledge on teachers, T4 also made an important point about the attitudes of some GPLMS coaches. He said that accepting advice from coaches *depends with the attitude…of respect and if there are coaches like that, then there is no problem.* Coaches' attitude, for T4, was more important than their knowledge and expertise.

4.7.5 C2's perceptions and experiences of coaching

Similar to C1's optimism about the GPLMS, C2 also seemed enthusiastic about teacher learning and development. She was quite positive about the GPLMS promise for improving teachers' instructional practices. She had confidence in the LPs and the work of coaches. She mentioned that, before the GPLMS, *teachers were nowhere* and this programme had brought along with it the hope of reviving poorly performing schools.

C2 started working with T3 and T4 in 2012 and mentioned that these teachers had been allocated a coach before her. Because of their experience with a more lenient coach, T3 and T4 proved to be very difficult for C2 to win over as they compared her with their previous coach. As a result, C2 was met with a lot of resistance as she tried to instil a certain work ethic within T3 and T4. She described her initial experience in School B as follows:

> *My main problem with that school is that they resisted my entry into the school. Before me, there was another coach whom I think was not hands-on. I remember the way they looked at me, Yooh! It was terrible. In that school I had to work and try and gain their trust. It was so hard at the beginning.*

After a lot of hard work, C2 began to see a change in teachers' attitudes and responses to her advice: "*There is a mutual relationship of trust such that when they see me they know that I am there to help. Now they are welcoming, they want to be with me."* The change greatly improved C2's working experience and T3 and T4 were more likely to benefit from her coaching.

C2 raised the point that her experience of coaching gave her a different and better understanding of the complexities of schools, as she found herself confronting the school's administration matters. It constantly required her to remind herself of what her primary role was as a coach because her role became extended as a problem solver led her, at times, to assume responsibilities that were not part of her job. She explains:

> *Coaching comes with a lot of things. We go into classrooms and observe, take notes and try to score teachers but there are a whole lot of challenges that we find ourselves getting into. In this school I help with management and when I go to report to the principal we sit and talk about the staff and how to discipline the teacher and I end up sitting with the teacher and the SMT to resolve some issues. The next time I go there I find something else so you find yourself being a problem solver. You get in a school where teachers don't work hand in hand with the principal or with the HoD. You must try and resolve those conflicts and sometimes you ask yourself, "Who am I here?" We are juggling here...*

C2 also pointed out that her experiences of coaching have done more than develop her professionally: it built her character. Through the different challenges she encountered in schools and the different teachers she has had to work with, C2 discovered that she needed specific skills to work with teachers. She particularly stated that she had to develop patience and a better understanding of the other. These skills were however not much covered in her training and it came as a form of experiential knowledge. She explained:

> *We were trained how to bring teachers on board but the real life experience of coaching teachers in the schools was not catered for in the training…So most of the time you find yourself empathising, humbling yourself even when you can see that they are wrong. That's one of the skills you got to have as a coach otherwise you won't survive out there. There are unions and there are teachers who are giving schools problems and we come in to add on all of that. You have to be humble and be neutral.*

C2 can be described as a passionate individual who took up the challenge of winning over two pretty resistant, older male teachers because she believed strongly in the coaching process. Her hard work and perseverance is a demonstration that she was convinced that the GPLMS intervention held great potential in changing and improving teachers' instructional practices as well as in improving learner performance.

C2 reported that she also learnt that different teachers come with different skills and potentials and that all her teachers were differently positioned in relation to the GPLMS programme, hence the need for wide-ranging strategies to work with different teachers. C2 mentioned that she had to acknowledge each teacher's uniqueness and level of competences and views about change. She allocated more time for weaker teachers than for stronger ones. She explained:

> *When I go into a school where there is a 'green' teacher I just pass and check how they are doing and then focus on the weak ones. It's a flexible type of programme which allows me to take time from the 'green' teachers to focus on the weak ones. Sometimes I need to do demonstrations and intervene during the lesson but with the 'greens' you just sit and observe the lesson.*

C2 categorised teachers according to their competencies before using GPLMS instructional methodologies. 'Green' teachers were those who grasped and could teach more independently by using GPLMS resources and instructional methodologies. She described T3 as belonging to the 'green' teacher category and confirmed that, with him, she did more of lesson observation and giving feedback. T3 had grown and only required *continuous encouragement*. She approached T4 differently and devised different strategies for him. T4 was an 'orange' teacher i.e. one who has begun to understand and use GPLMS instructional practices but has not yet developed independence from the methodologies. Since T4 was quite resistant, C2 used a lot of praise and compliments in acknowledging his efforts and as a way of encouraging him. Although she saw change and growth in both teachers, she specifically noted that T4 "*needs a lot of motivation and good words*."

C2 alluded to an incident while coaching T4 when she had to employ a harsh strategy and seek SMT intervention. She reported that, at that time, T4 was impossibly difficult as he would neither use the LPs nor her advice. She explained:

> *You know the problem was when you get a teacher who has been teaching all his life they will try to resist no matter how much you say "Try this and that". They were saying "I have never done this" and they always want to go back to their old style of teaching especially T4. He did not want to try anything new up until I had to ask for intervention from the SMT. The principal then persuaded him to try out what I was saying and he even threatened to take away English from T4. There are cases like that where you go to the SMT and say I can't work with this teacher because of the resistance.*

Because T4 was older, had a long history of teaching and was convinced that his approaches were fine, he became a real challenge for C2 and she decided to seek help from the SMT. C2 also mentioned that she strategically sought some buy-in from T4 through T3 who happened to be the team leader of all teachers she coached in School B. She said:

> *I put pressure on the team leader knowing fully well that he understands me and has a lot of influence on the other teachers. That's my strategy because I know some teachers don't prepare for lessons. So I send the team leader, in this case T3, and I say "Go to Mr so and so's class and see what he has done in preparation for the lesson.*

Clearly, coaches need to devise different strategies for different teachers so as to know when and how to push and when to lay back.

4.7.6 S2's perceptions and experiences of coaching

S2 was rather pessimistic and felt that schools had so many challenges that there was need for much more than an instructional intervention. He was not as confident about the GPLMS and that it could achieve its intended objectives of improving literacy and numeracy in poorly performing schools. He saw some flaws in the GPLMS intervention but said: "*the education system is so bad that even a flawed programme like the GPLMS is making a difference"*. He acknowledged that the intervention seemed to be making change given the verbal reports they were getting from informal discussions with teachers and from recent ANA results.

In terms of the relationship between teachers and coaches, S2 stated that his experience of working with coaches and teachers enlightened him on some attributes essential for the

success of coaches. Firstly, he highlighted that coaches need to be knowledgeable in terms of content and pedagogical knowledge to effectively mediate the LPs. Secondly, S2 emphatically stated that strong interpersonal skills are equally important. He said:

> *They need to be exemplary to teachers. They need to have very strong interpersonal skills because we have found that whatever your level of subject knowledge and your expertise as a teaching professional, if you do not have the ability to speak to people in the right way, to motivate people, to lead and to advise then your job as a coach becomes very difficult. So I would say the main things would be: subject knowledge and interpersonal skills.*

Interpersonal skills, according to S2, enabled coaches to transcend all barriers the coaching process presented before them, such as working with older teachers who were more experienced and more knowledgeable, working with stubborn and resistant teachers and even in establishing good working relations with their supervisors. Content and pedagogic content knowledge and strong interpersonal skills are key in determining the success of the coaching process in changing teachers' instructional practices.

S2 further emphasised that their organisation made it clear to coaches that they should be distinct from district officials in their approach of working with teachers. S2 explained:

> *…coaches do not have a legitimate authority over teachers so they should do their best to show teachers that they have the necessary expertise, skills and the necessary subject knowledge to help teachers*.

S2's comment is important on the expectation that coaches' main role is to support teachers rather than focus on teacher accountability. He further explained that their duty was *to help teachers, support, motivate and mediate the implementation of the lesson plans*. It was also the attitudes and approach of coaches which contributed to the success of the coaching process.

4.7.7 Teachers' adaptation of LPs and coach's advice

The GPLMS instructional intervention was quite prescriptive and T3 and T4 admitted that they did not always find it easy to follow all guidelines as prescribed. T3 mentioned that initially he interpreted and implemented instructions in the way he understood. He reported that he used the LPs as was expected because he grew to understand them and realised it was difficult to work outside policy provisions. He said that LPs were part of the GPLMS which is policy, just like any other policies within the school and, therefore, they needed to be followed to the core. T3 did not compromise with the required LPs as he

was aware that it was an obligation to use them. T4 was much more resistant and constantly reverted back to his old instructional practices and methodologies, much to the disapproval of the coach. He devised strategies of making the LPs work for him and used his own methodologies, although he made sure they were well-aligned with the objectives of the LPs. He vented strong opinions regarding the use of the LPs and advice from the coach:

> *If the advice [from the coach] does not give the learners a challenge, then it gives me a challenge to come up with another challenge. Once I come up with a challenge then I and the coach don't agree…I go back to my methodology and I teach in line with the aim of the lesson. If the children are comfortable I go ahead with the children but you are going to be at loggerheads with the coach. For me the bottom line is the learner who has benefited. You and I can fight but let the child win at the end of the day.*

For T4, the focus is the learner and he stated that he uses his own strategies irrespective of the mandates of the LPs or the coach's advice. He maintains that LPs do not capacitate teachers as independent and innovative professionals and therefore he bargains with the requirements of the LPs and with the coach's advice.

4.7.8 Views on how to improve the coaching process

Identifying conditions essential for a better teacher-coach relationship and a more effective coaching process was a central concern of this study. School B participants shared similar views on how to improve the coaching process. While T3 was content with the nature of his relationship with C2, T4 had a lot to say about how to enhance the coaching process and coaches' efficiency. His main concern was that many coaches' attitudes were not in the best interest of the coaching process as they were often harassing teachers. He voiced his concerns as follows:

> *Let the teacher not feel harassed. Because we are having this problem of teachers feeling harassed. Teachers are readers and they know especially when it comes to a political issue. They know that one has no right, I have the right. Let them try to build it in such a way that there are good working relations between teachers and the GPLMS.*

Besides these concerns about the coaching process, T4 made a suggestion concerning LPs with which he had an unpleasant experience. He reckoned that they were not ideal for him and his learners and believed they were also a problem for many other teachers. Hence he suggested that they should be optional as they stood a better chance of being accepted by

teachers if they were not mandatory. Being imposed on teachers prompted their resistance, hence his proposition that they be non-compulsory.

On improving the implementation of the GPLMS, C2 noted with regret that schools were not adequately supporting the programme. As observed by C1, C2 mentioned that the SMT was neither interested nor concerned about the work of the coach. She was anxious about this and said:

> *The SMT doesn't know about the programme especially where the HOD doesn't even check work or what's happening in the class. I have tried to bring them on board…they don't monitor. This is the major reason there will be a break in the programme- the internal monitoring. If the SMT was doing their job and know exactly what's going on then the programme won't phase out.*

C2 was worried about the sustainability of GPLMS instructional practices as School B lacked instructional leadership from the SMT. She believed that most teachers were incapable of maintaining GPLMS instructional practices because the schools' SMT were neither supportive nor forthcoming in creating a climate promoting instructional improvements.

4.8 Summary of School B findings about GPLMS LPs and coaching

Teachers demonstrated different perceptions about the GPLMS, with T3 showing a much more positive attitude to both the LPs and the coach's advice while T4 was rather negative to the whole intervention programme, arguing that it was too much a top-down approach, inconsiderate of teacher knowledge. T3 and T4's views and experiences suggest that T3 is most likely to retain GPLMS instructional practices whereas, with T4, there is no indication that GPLMS instructional practices will be retained in his practices.

What is interesting to note is the relationship between C2 and the two teachers. As was noted earlier, numerous factors militate against a successful coaching process. Firstly, C2 was a much younger woman than both male T3 and T4. So, greater maturity and care was required for working with these two teachers. Secondly, both teachers had vast teaching experience and occupied senior positions as HoD's and hence were used to exercising authority over junior teachers. Thus, the initial resistance from T3 and absolute resistance from T4 were the result of various accumulated forces.

Because of the more complicated and sensitive relationship between teachers and coaches, S2 was convinced that the GPLMS did not have enough potential to turn around teachers' poor instructional practices and consequently learners' performance. He pointed out that, in the structuring and design of the GPLMS intervention, there were conceptual flaws in the LPs, problematic coach attitudes and the absence of a plan to ensure sustainability of GPLMS instructional practices in future. Therefore, coaching as a strategy for supporting and monitoring teachers requires good trusting working relations between teachers and coaches for sustained shifts and improvements in instructional practices.

4.9 Comparison of School A and School B

Although they were both under-performing schools, the first difference between School A and B was found in their resources, management and the SMT as School B seemed to have much poorer resources as well as weaker SMT than School A. Because of possible gender and age dynamics, and poor administration and management of SMT, resistance to the GPLMS was more pronounced in School B. Although both C1 and C2 highlighted the need for SMTs to be more supportive of teachers and coaches and be more involved in the GPLMS, there seemed to be ambivalence towards the GPLMS from both schools' SMTs.

Another interesting contrast was that School A sample was an all-female group whereas School B sample had a female coach and supervisor; and two male teachers who both held senior positions within the school. The coach in School A was more senior and can be described as mature and more composed as compared to C2 in School B who was younger than the male teachers she was coaching.

Interestingly, little or no resistance to the coaching was experienced in School A as teachers were working with C1 who once assumed a principalship position. It is probable that C1 had stronger interpersonal skills than C2; hence she managed to generate a balance between supporting and monitoring the teachers at the same time. It is important to acknowledge that C2 was working in a much more complicated school environment with a weak SMT than C1, hence more was expected from her in terms of coach quality and attributes. It is also of utmost importance to note that some specific support and accountability components of the GPLMS were not accurately adhered to in School B to promote teacher change and learning.

From the data presented above, it is clear that a successful coaching process depends greatly on coaches as their attitudes and knowledge can either win or lose teachers. These findings are analysed and interpreted in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Data analysis and interpretation

This chapter starts with an analysis of the data presented in the previous chapter. It identifies the major findings of the study and interprets them in terms of the conceptual framework as well as other relevant literature on effective teacher development and learning. It argues that teachers' previous experiences of support and monitoring and their school contextual circumstances influence their responses and attitudes to an instructional intervention programme. The study also underscores the fact that, while the GPLMS is a noble instructional intervention with good intentions for poorly performing schools, important issues have to be considered for such instructional intervention to be effective in changing and improving teachers' practices. The findings of this study show that the quality of the LPs and coaches as well as the strategies that coaches use in mediating these LPs are essential aspects that require scrutiny in terms of their appropriateness for the learning and development of context-specific teachers. Important insights were inferred from the analysis of the findings of the GPLMS coaching intervention of teacher support and monitoring.

After a brief analysis of the teachers' different contexts and responses to the GPLMS intervention, this section interprets the findings, mainly through the Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) Interconnected Model of teacher change and professional growth, which argues that teacher change is a complex process involving multiple non-linear change sequences which result in idiosyncratic and individual teacher learning and growth processes. It also draws from the analytical insights of Hargreaves (2005) and his conceptualisation of teacher's emotions to educational change whereby teachers' age and career stage influence responses to specific professional development innovations. The process of effective coaching is also examined from the perspective of findings of previous conceptual and empirical research that established and documented such conditions.

5.1 The influence of past experiences and existing school context

As mentioned earlier, teacher development has been a subject of much concern given the ever-pressing need to improve teachers' instructional practices and learner performance. Unfortunately, in South Africa and elsewhere, many teacher development initiatives are

inappropriate, poorly organised and/or do not meet teachers' needs. These efforts have been especially unsuccessful in translating ideas from teacher development programmes into significant improvements in teachers' instructional practices (Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education, 2005; Maistry, 2008).

The historical trend in South Africa has been that many teacher development programmes have been mainly driven by immediate policy needs, overlooking enduring challenges to do with addressing teachers' poor content, curricular and pedagogical knowledge. Training workshops to assist the implementation of OBE and CAPS provide some examples of short-sighted, impromptu and make-do programmes that failed to address teachers' needs and professional growth in engaging more effectively with their work. This findings presented in this study confirm these observations as participating teachers indicated that their attendance and participation in many teacher development programmes had not been associated with any growth in conceptual knowledge and teaching skills or gains in learner outcomes. As a result, teachers' demand for professional development is weak. As Hill (2009) observes, because of poorly designed learning opportunities, teachers have little appetite or trust for more. Hargreaves (2005) also mentions that teachers in the late career stage especially have gone through numerous episodes of educational change thus become quite selective of the change initiatives they are willing to adopt. Such frustration and lack of interest was especially evident in T1 and T4 who were sceptical about the GPLMS or any other form of teacher development partly because their previous teacher development experiences gave them no opportunity to learn; hence, their negative and largely passive attitudes and contemptuous responses to the GPLMS. Teachers were more likely to reject a teacher development programme unless they thought it could provide them with some benefits.

The study also found out that teachers' school contextual circumstances had a strong influence on how they initially responded to the GPLMS instructional intervention. The way they were socialised in their school context influenced who they are, what they do and say. The general school culture of School A was characterised by low learner expectations and little motivation of teachers, which explains T1's persistence that learners were young and could not cope with the pacing of the LPs. Unlike T1, T2 was a personally-driven individual who expected more from her learners and believed that she could learn more and improve the teaching and learning process.

In School B, which has a weaker school management, T3 and T4 revealed that their predispositions to the GPLMS were largely shaped by how they had experienced other forms of teacher development programmes and how they were socialised in their school context. Both T3 and T4 were male HoDs, above 50 years old with T4 close to retirement age. T3 initially resisted the coach and the new instructional practices but gradually came to develop some appreciation towards them. T4, from the onset, was not keen on being 'challenged' by outsiders and believed that he needed no assistance from the coach. In addition, there was a culture of male domination in higher grades in School B where the majority of teachers were male and not keen on being challenged especially by a younger female coach, hence their resistance to coaching. The behaviour and attitudes of these two teachers is consistent with Elmore's (2004) observation that existing default school cultures are quite powerful in influencing teacher's reactions to change.

Given the stage of their teaching career, T3, and especially T4, were quite content to maintain familiar, traditional and conventional instructional practices rather than adopt new practices introduced by a much younger female coach. According to Hargreaves (2005), teachers do not respond to educational change in the same way because different career stages and ages are associated with different emotional statuses. T4 had three decades of teaching and was in the last stage of his career and he seemed to carry with him meanings about teaching that were defined and derived from his generation and sense of purpose. He was nostalgic of conventional practices and thus resistant to the new instructional methodologies. Hargreaves (2005, p. 975) described such teachers as disenchanted in that they "use the deep vessel of their experience and the unsinkable status that comes with upcoming retirement to be resistant towards and resilient in the face of unwanted change".

The school context represents what Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) refer to as the environment in which teachers work. This can have a considerable impact on teachers' professional growth in that it can either interrupt or promote teacher professional development, depending on the amount and level of support given to teachers from within the school. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) argue that the professional growth of teachers is, to a large extent, made possible by particular elements of the school environment. School principals and SMTs play pivotal roles in teacher professional development

(Leithwood, Begley and Cousins, 1994; Fullan, 2002). Tshabalala (2013) concurs, arguing that school heads should assume the role of instructional leaders whereby they take responsibility for teacher-learning as much as for student-learning. This means that they create support structures and an enabling environment for teachers to engage with new teaching practices. According to Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), every stage of the professional development process is largely influenced by the school context which makes professional development opportunities accessible (or not) to teachers; restricts or supports participation in professional development programmes; encourages or discourages teachers to experiment with new teaching practices; and, sometimes poses administrative restraints or support in the use of new ideas. C1 and C2 made reference to the importance of support from the SMT as a fundamental school contextual element essential for any successful professional development programme. As was indicated in the preceding chapter, the GPLMS intervention was not very well received in School A and B, partly because of a lack of managerial support to teachers changing and the work of coaches.

It is also clear from the findings of this study that teachers' perception of monitoring were greatly influenced and framed by their previous experiences of supervision where overt bureaucratic means were used to intimidate and victimise teachers. De Clercq (2007) reports that black South African teachers experienced a long history of unfair and illegitimate school inspection before 1990 and have thus a legacy of suspicious and negation to any form of inspection or monitoring. Likewise in the US, Marshal (2005) observes that conventional supervision and evaluation seldom guided teachers in their work; instead, it instilled fear in teachers and generated resistance to criticism. The findings of this study provide credence to Sayed's (2004) observation that overt bureaucratic approaches to teacher monitoring are ineffective as teachers resist any innovation they feel undermines their autonomy in the process. Although T1, T2 and T3 conceived teacher-monitoring as a potential source of inspiration and support, they were quick to point out that district supervisors were unpopular for harassing and judging teachers. It can therefore be deduced from these findings that supportive professional approaches to teacher monitoring are only accepted if the instructional practices were to contribute to teachers' genuine change and growth.

5.2 The role and process of coaching

Coaching is a teacher professional development strategy that provides one-on-one learning opportunities focused on improving teaching practices (Duncombe and Armour, 2004; Poglinco and Bach, 2004; Neuman and Cunningham, 2009). It plays a crucial role in providing "job-embedded professional development" (Collet, 2012, p. 30), affording teachers opportunities to learn from their classroom settings. Because it is learning situated in practice, coaching caters for the problem of transfer where teachers find it difficult to translate ideas from teacher development settings far removed from their classrooms. Collet (2012) argues that coaching has potential to increase teachers' capacity for sound decision-making, help them become more analytical and deepen their understanding of their work as it offers opportunities to discuss and reflect on their teaching. The ultimate goal of instructional coaching, according to Walker (2010), is to empower teachers to carry out complex and multi-faceted instructional actions. The findings of this study did confirm Masterson's (2013) conclusion that coaching opens up the classroom as a learning space for many teachers. It is however important to note that the participating teachers, with the exception of T2, were hesitant and reluctant to embrace this opportunity to learn. It took time for T3 to develop confidence and proficiency in practising independently the new instructional approaches that came with the GPLMS. T1 was unwilling and complacent and T4 utterly disregarded the GPLMS, dismissing this opportunity to learn.

The GPLMS Mathematics Intermediate Phase Worksop 1 of 2012 (p. 7) states that the training of teachers "should have a strong practical component". Coaches should coaches demonstrate lessons using different teaching strategies and activities and give teachers opportunities to try out the strategies. This instructional coaching approach was one of the first large-scale teacher development strategies where coaches supported and monitored teachers regarding new instructional practices as well as helped them understand and use the provided instructional resource packages. The GPLMS instructional intervention was indeed centred on instructional coaches providing professional support to teachers in adopting new instructional strategies through lesson demonstrations, facilitation of workshops and other modelling activities.

5.2.1 The introduction of coaching in schools A and B

The implementation of the GPLMS coaching model in the two schools that participated in this study shows interesting findings. Coaches were introduced to guide and support

teachers. They facilitated 'just-in-time training' where they talked about specific lessons for the term and what was expected of teachers before in delivering those lessons. 'Just-in-time training' was devised to ensure that teachers are trained to effectively use the resources provided and improve their classroom practice. Because it was done at the beginning of the term before teachers implemented the LPs, 'just-in-time training' thus helped teachers in lesson preparation. Although 'just-in-time training' was later phased out for reasons neither teachers, coaches nor coach supervisors could spell out, T1, T2 and T3 and their respective coaches affirmed that it was a useful exercise which prepared them well for their lessons.

Practical modelling of lessons was also done through lesson delivery demonstrations which coaches did in classrooms, working with teachers' learners. Coaches showed teachers how to teach a lesson, using particular instructional approaches, how to work with the available resource materials and how to work with diverse learners and get them engaged in the lesson. Modelling lessons was therefore a key instrumental element of the coaching process as it provided teachers with 'living modelling examples' (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) and laid out the "structures and instructional techniques that teachers are expected to adopt" (Poglinco *et al.,* 2003, p. 33). As T2 mentioned, she benefited a lot from the practical training as she was afforded an opportunity to observe and learn how to work with new instructional strategies along with the resource materials in an actual classroom environment. Instructional support, as was observed in this study, was teacher-centred and classroom-focused which, according to Barber and Phillips (2000), is a rich professional development solution to poorly performing schools.

Furthermore, the GPLMS coaching model also encouraged reflections when coaches facilitated discussions focused on teaching practices in one-on-one teacher-coach dialogue, as well as through PLGs and SBWs. Teachers, equally benefited as they got to talk about their progression with the new instructional practices as well as made sense collectively of changes in their learners' responses. The findings show that the PLGs and SBWs were essential discussion platforms in promoting the process of teacher change and growth. These discussions afforded teachers an opportunity to collaborate and learn collectively. Through reflection, teachers thoughtfully engaged with one another and learnt to appreciate the limitations of their personal experience, re-examine their practice and collectively offer viable alternatives (Tate, 2004). Although T4 was an unwilling

participant in these reflective discussions, ample evidence from T1, T2 and T3 indicate that PLGs and SBWs were useful sessions where teachers shared and learnt some aspects of good practice from amongst themselves and other teachers from other schools. These findings are consistent with Collet's (2012) observation that dialogue is an 'enactive' opportunity for teachers to interpret learner data and analyse their responses to the new instructional approaches. Collet (2012) agrees that dialogue based on practice is a means by which coaches provide and adjust instructional support in the teacher learning process. In other words, dialogue allows coaches to make adjustments, reinforce certain aspects they are supporting teachers on, give feedback and continuous guidance.

5.2.2 Fusion of support and monitoring in instructional coaching

The GPLMS had a teacher-monitoring component whereby coaches monitored teachers' work in line with the LPs and compliance with the instructional methodologies therein. The LPs set out specific activities and teachers' role specifications and coaches came in to support and in a way influence instruction in line with the GPLMS parameters. The monitoring component of the GPLMS is much like clinical instructional supervision where teachers have face-to-face contact and discussions about their practice with a supervisor with the intention of improving instruction (Mhofu, 2007). The instructional coaching in the GPLMS was conceptualised to fuse in one instrument both teacher support and monitoring and clear expectations and conditions were set to guide the work of teachers as well as support structures to ensure that teachers get all possible assistance required to meet the set criterion.

This study confirmed Barber and Phillips' (2000) assertion that, if teachers are subjected to too much pressure, there will be conflict and teacher demoralisation. T4 appeared disheartened and demoralised by the coaching process, suggesting that coaches ought to trade carefully so as to balance the support and pressure exerted upon teachers. Barber and Phillips (2000) further state that a well-balanced combination of pressure and support is the best recipe for high performance and rapid progress. While T1 may not show signs of change and improvement as a result of the coaching of C1, T2 provides some indication that a well-balanced combination of pressure and support can yield much in terms of changing and improving teachers' instructional practices.

5.3 Conditions for effective coaching

There is ample evidence in this study to suggest, as the literature asserts, that coaching is a powerful professional development strategy focused on instruction with great potential to change and improve teachers' instructional practices because it provides a space in which teachers can develop *in-situ*. There are, however, several conditions that are required if the teacher-coach interaction is to be successful in changing teachers' instructional practices. Because it is a process, some aspects of coaching can inhibit its potential to develop significant or lasting effects on teachers' practices. Some of the key factors discussed in this section are what the findings revealed: coaches' level of content knowledge and understanding of people's emotions; level of trust, respect and collegiality; and the degree to which school leadership support the work of coaches.

5.3.1 Coaches' knowledge

The GPLMS coaches are the primary source of skills and knowledge and teachers are expected to tap from them in order to adopt and improve on the new instructional practices. Coaches' knowledge comprises subject content knowledge, teaching knowledge and an understanding of teachers they coach. The first refers to have adequate knowledge in the subject they were coaching as this was essential to assist teachers in terms of helping them to understand conceptually what to teach. The coaches, according to their teachers' reports and their overseeing supervisors, were quite knowledgeable and demonstrated satisfactory skills in modelling lessons for teachers. T1 and T2 expressed confidence in C1 as she had demonstrated an acute knowledge of both FP Maths and EFAL and an understanding of the learning of FP learners evidenced in her ability to get them intensely engaged in the learning process. While T3 was convinced with C2's subject content knowledge as well as her ability to relate to learners, T4 felt that C2 lacked an understanding of his learners thus his out-right resistance to the new instructional methodologies she was introducing. It is important to note that teachers were more receptive to coaches' advice when they identified them as knowledgeable. These findings confirm Poglinco and Bach's (2004) observation that the need for coaches to be knowledgeable in the subject content knowledge is undisputed as it is virtually impossible to coach on a subject they are not in control of.

Some aspects of PCK were evident in the two coaches as they tried to familiarise teachers with strategies of understanding what made the learning of specific topics easy or difficult

for learners. After several lesson observations in School A FP classes, C1 discussed in the PLG for FP teachers how and why their lessons unfolded the way they did. She particularly highlighted the fact that teachers needed to be well-prepared for lessons as the way of presenting subject matter knowledge was crucial to assist learners to learn better. Shulman (1986) emphasises the need for teachers to represent and formulate subject matter ideas in ways that make it comprehensible to learners. Similar PCK was demonstrated by C2. During the SBW on 'Challenges to reading', C2 took teachers through common errors learners make and challenges faced in EFAL reading in the Intersen phase. Strategies of improving learners' understanding are crucial aspects of PCK as learners of different age-groups and backgrounds bring different conceptions and misconceptions to the classroom (Shulman, 1986, p. 9). It is therefore imperative for coaches to have some PCK to help teachers deal with learners' misunderstandings.

The second kind of knowledge that coaches need to have is teaching or pedagogical knowledge to explain to teachers what is behind various instructional methodologies. Pedagogical knowledge was well demonstrated, according to T2 and T3 by both coaches as they modelled practice to teachers' individual classrooms and collectively in PLGs and SBWs. T3 found the new instructional methodologies easier to understand after observing C2's demonstrations. T2 attested that C1 made the use of LPs clearer through demonstrations. The pedagogical abilities of coaches appear to have been important in facilitating some teachers' change and growth as the used the models of lessons as points of reference. These coaches' practices were in line with the GPLMS coach workshop guide (2012), which stipulates that coaches should have an understanding of GPLMS resource packages and instructional approaches and methodologies so as to be well-positioned to support teachers in using them. This is also consistent with Masterson's (2013) finding that teachers appreciated coaches and their working knowledge of GPLMS preferred practices which they could explain to teachers so that they could implement them correctly. Precise comprehension of the policy documents accompanied by teaching competence was essential for successful coaches. Poglinco *et al*. (2003) emphatically state that content knowledge should be accompanied by teaching ability because coaches are expected to model for teachers instructional techniques in the classrooms. It is of paramount importance for coaches not only to be knowledgeable in subject content knowledge and curricular knowledge but they should also have strong pedagogical skills

and knowledge to instil the adoption of new practices and cause growth in terms of skills and flexibility in instructional practices.

The other skills that a coach should have are inter-personal skills. This refers to a specific kind of knowledge where coaches understand the teachers they coach and this is instrumental when it comes to devising appropriate strategies for each specific teacher's needs and response to changes. Especially noteworthy in this regard are the different strategies C1 used with T1 and T2. On modelling practice, C1 moved around with her camera and took photos of good practice and asked her best improved teachers like T2 to emulate. With such support, T2 admitted to have moved beyond the mere use of new techniques without thinking about their usefulness and how learners could potentially respond to them. Having realised that T1 was struggling with the new instructional methodologies and with the pacing of the LPs, C1 decided to first explain through demonstrations how T1 could adapt better to match her learners' diverse abilities. C1 explored more with T2 through observing her lessons and giving appropriate feedback, whereas, with T1, she was restricted to doing more of lesson demonstrations and giving instructions. C1's approach and use of different strategies with different teachers concurs with Collet's (2012) argument that an important dimension of coaching is that the support provided changes depending on the progress made by the teacher. Panigrahi (2012) also emphasise that instructional supervisors should by all means try and match supervisory techniques to teacher's level development needs.

C2 used different strategies with T3 and T4 as they were at different spaces in terms of using the new instructional strategies. C2 affirmed that, at the beginning of the GPLMS intervention, she frequently provided models of instruction through lesson demonstrations. Later on, especially with regards to T3, C2 observed that he was gaining confidence in using new instructional methodologies and came up with more probing challenges. Probing questions, according to Collet (2012), prompted teachers to be thoughtful users of the new instructional approaches as well as have them challenge their own assumptions in their practice. C2 mentioned that, at times, she praised, affirmed, questioned, recommended ideas, modelled practice, depending on teachers' individual needs. Because T4 was quite emotive and sensitive about the whole instructional intervention, C2 resorted to use more encouraging strategies with him whenever he adhered to the LPs or used the advocated instructional practices. Understanding teachers' different emotional

dispositions, their strengths and weaknesses in instructional practices are prerequisite and important techniques for successful coaching. Because teachers progress differently with the new instructional strategies, knowledge and understanding of teachers and their specific competencies enables coaches to device strategies appropriate for the different teachers. Coaches' content knowledge and in-depth understanding of teachers' varying abilities are essentials (but not sufficient) in determining the success of the coaching process: coaches need more.

5.3.2 Coaches' personal attributes - trust, respect and collegiality

Besides content knowledge, coaches' inter-personal skills and the level of trust and respect they generate with the teachers they coach are crucial. In this study, C1 exemplifies what it is to be a humble and respectable coach who earned the trust and respect of her teachers and developed effective coaching relationship, especially with T2, thanks to her personality. Similarly to Masterson's (2013) findings, the four FP teachers appreciated their coach as they found her approachable, flexible, dependable, friendly, helpful and of a good sense of humour hence a successful coaching relationship. Quite contrary in this study, C2 was strict and lacked flexibility to accommodate different kinds of teachers. Her relationship with T4 had an unhealthy condition for a successful coaching process. Teachers have different emotional reactions to teacher development interventions (Hargreaves, 2005) because they come with different aptitudes and knowledge, as was exemplified in this study. There is evidence in literature (Poglinco et al., 2003; Li and Chan, 2007) of the importance of coaches' interpersonal attributes or who they are as social beings in the coaching process.

Both supervisors, S1 and S2, emphasised that successful coaches have to draw quite a lot from their personal skills in order to survive in schools. They reported of coaches who were thrown out of schools, having failed to earn teachers' trust and respect and generally establishing good working relations with teachers. Accordingly, S1 and S2 agreed that a multitude of people-oriented skills, which include tact, patience, good communication and flexibility, are important attributes that sustain coaches despite the difficult teachers they encounter in schools (Poglinco *et al*., 2003). Li and Chan (2007) conceive coaching as a process that involves complex human relationship building and, based on their research findings on instructional coaching in Hong Kong, they conclude that the coach-teacher relationship is more complicated than is usually expected. Teachers prefer to work with

someone they trust and whom they have confidence in because for them confidence and credibility clearly outweigh information and experience. Reciprocal trust, respect and collegiality are important ingredients of a successful teacher-coach relationship. The main responsibility of the coach is to earn teachers' trust and respect. Once trust and respect are established, teachers feel easier about de-privatizing their teaching and they open up to coaches about their fears, anxieties and weaknesses. Thus, coaches need more than content and curricular knowledge: they need to be thoughtful, tactful and emotionally intelligent to understand different teachers' emotions and handle teachers' various dispositions.

One of the factors inhibiting successful coaching relationships, as was established in the case of C2 and T4, is a greater inclination toward accountability rather than being more a source of support to teachers. Kapfunde (1990) observes that teachers associate monitoring with the rating of teachers and cannot view it as a process that helps improve their teaching. This was the case with T4 who was obviously suspicious and sensitive about being monitored, especially given his years of teaching experience, age and gender compared to those of the coach. Because T4 was resistant to the coaching and the GPLMS intervention, C2 had to refer to the school SMT to force him to adopt practices which he did not believe in. This, unfortunately, caused further hostility between T4 and his coach. Koh and Neuman (2006) cautioned that coaches should provide non-judgemental feedback and never be placed in a position to evaluate teachers. Instead, teachers ought to perceive coaches as friendly professionals or supportive critical friends.

C2 admitted that she did not receive sufficient training for playing the role of supporting and monitoring resistant teachers. Because of this lack in training and in tacit knowledge about teacher monitoring and supervision, her relationship with T4, and initially with T3 also, was ambivalent, and did cause teachers' distrust and resentment. As a result of her poor teacher monitoring skills and people-oriented skills, C2 failed to establish collegial working relations with T4. Danielson and McGreal (2000) observe that most professionals tasked with monitoring teachers have limited experience and skills in providing adequate feedback while maintaining healthy working relationships. This observation confirms Panigrahi's (2013) argument that most supervising officials face challenges in their monitoring of teachers because they lack training in supervision principles and skills. T4 and C2's sour relationship was unfortunately a major contributory factor to T4's resistance

to the whole GPLMS intervention, resulting in all the coach's efforts to change and improve his instructional practices being fruitless.

5.3.3 Support for coaching from within the school - issue of school leadership

Instructional coaching is a process whose success rests also on the support that it gets from within the school. School leadership needs to support and encourage teachers as they try out new instructional practices as well as be supportive of the work of coaches. The findings in this study show that poor and inadequate support and follow-up of the instructional intervention from both School A and B's SMT influenced somewhat the poor levels of teachers' change and improvement. Both coaches confirmed the very low SMT interest in the GPLMS as they claimed to be overwhelmed with administrative work to be involved with the instructional intervention. School B was a dysfunctional school with a weak SMT, as it even appealed to C2 to help out with duties which were outside her coaching responsibilities. Such SMT did not encourage teachers to embrace and be supportive of the GPLMS.

Both coach supervisors mentioned the lack of interest, follow-up and support from the schools' SMTs which, they say, was one of the hurdles that the GPLMS has been facing since 2011. According to Louks-Horsley (1998), a support system within the school is essential if teachers are to try out and maintain changes in their instructional practices. Leadership, especially the SMTs, have the responsibility of creating an environment that is positive for coaching and teaching (Taylor, 2008). This suggests that even SMTs ought to embrace the instructional intervention programmes if the latter are to be successful. The assignment of the instructional coach within the school and the working relationship the coach should have with the principal and other curriculum administrators within the school is of paramount importance. Hartnett (2011) points out that, although changing teachers is an individual process, it is also an organisational process because schools need to work in teams providing follow-up and support to teachers. School organisational capacity is imperative for the coaching process as the whole school should buy into the change process. Louks-Horsley (1998) argues that individuals are unlikely to sustain what they learn if their organisation does not support them to do so. Hence Fullan (2001, p.6) warns: "never send a changed individual into an unchanged culture". This warning suggests that teachers cannot succeed on their own in adopting new instructional practices

without the support of the school leadership. The whole school, especially curriculum leaders, need to be supportive of the change that coaches are trying to instil.

Another way for schools to support an instructional intervention such as the GPLMS is for them to have strong internal accountability systems (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Taylor, 2008). C1 could have made much more significant changes with T1 if the school had a strong internal accountability system. The FP HoD in School A- T2, had little or no time to monitor other FP teachers; T1 was left to do what she pleased. Also in School B, T4 was the Life Skills HoDs who himself was not keen to adhere to GPLMS instructions; hence he was not interested in ensuring the compliance of other teachers. Taylor (2006) examined efforts in South Africa to improve school quality through the combined tools of accountability and support. His findings showed that schools having strong internal accountability systems responded better to reform programmes as opposed to those with weak internal systems. This was evident in this study as both Schools A and B had weak internal accountability systems and responded poorly to the GPLMS intervention. An effective school leadership with strong internal accountability has to create a suitable environment for the coaching model of teacher professional development to thrive.

5.4 Teacher change and professional growth

The coaching provided by the GPLMS offered teachers opportunities to be actively involved in the process of building some content and pedagogical knowledge and getting familiarised with new instructional practices. Professional growth of teachers means that teachers had to change their teaching practice and adopt new instructional practices. Coaching on the LPs was meant to develop teachers' better understanding of the curriculum sequencing and pacing as well as how to use the instructional material that was made available for them. The findings show that most participating teachers went through a process of change which was accompanied by some professional growth, even if for some of the change did not result in further growth. Hartnett (2011) argues that teacher professional growth is related to, but different from, teacher change as some teachers can change without growing professionally. Genuine professional growth, as was postulated by Hollingsworth (1999), results in more lasting change in teachers' practices and beliefs when they experience successful outcomes.

The findings of this study show that, while there is evidence that teachers changed some aspects of their instructional approaches, only T2 underwent genuine professional growth partly because she was keen to grow by trying new instructional practices. This does not mean that the four participating teachers did not go through some processes of change which are discussed in the next section, using Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) Interconnected Model of teacher change as an analytical tool.

5.4.1 Teachers' external stimulus to change instructional practices

Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) point out that the Interconnected Model of teacher change has been used quite successfully as a tool for the categorisation of teacher change data. The model suggests that teacher change and professional growth are complex processes that are non-linear but take on multiple pathways. The model locates change in four domains. The first domain is the external domain where change is located outside the teacher's personal world. This domain consists of the external source of information and ideas geared towards changing and developing teachers. In this study, the ideas, skills and knowledge provided by the GPLMS intervention are the stimulus for teacher change. Coaches provided curricular support through mediating LPs and thus stimulated changes in teachers' content knowledge, curricular knowledge and some aspects of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) where pacing and sequencing were a major focus of their support.

This study shows that coaches offered teachers support inside and outside the classroom. Inside the classroom, they demonstrated lesson delivery using new instructional methodologies and observed as teachers implemented these methodologies in their teaching inventory. According to Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), this new information stimulates teacher change as there was some support and encouragement for teachers to change and emulate practices demonstrated by the coach and scripted by the LPs.

Outside the classroom, coaches engaged in discussions about practice and these encouraged teachers to think about their teaching. Participating teachers reported that coaches facilitated reflective discussions in the PLGs and in SBWs where teachers would collectively reflect on their teaching and how they were progressing in relation to the preferred scripted instructional practices. The PLGs and the SBWs were important platforms of the GPLMS that gave coaches insights into teachers' thoughts, anxieties and

their general experiences of these new teaching practices. As teachers and coaches collectively deliberated on different issues of practice, they sought solutions for various challenges which further stimulated change in their practices. These reflective discussions were external sources of motivation as teachers shared their experiences with one another and learnt from each other. Ideas from the coach and other teachers were then applied to their individual classroom practices.

5.4.2 Teachers' experiences with new instructional practices

The Interconnected Model of teacher change posits that change in one domain is associated with change in another. While the external domain often is the one which facilitates change through exposing teachers to new skills and knowledge, this domain directly impacts on what Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) call the second 'practice' domain whereby teachers experiment with the new ideas from the teacher development intervention. In the GPLMS intervention, the experimentation of new ideas is mediated through a process of "enactment" where teachers put into action new pedagogical practices modelled by coaches in the lesson demonstration session, the PLGs and the SBWs. Three of the participating teachers, T1, T2 and T3, confirmed that their coaches were supportive in demonstrating the new instructional methodologies and they went on to observe teachers as they used them in their own teaching. According to Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), teachers' growth indicators in the 'practice' domain are embedded in the process of constructing a variety of knowledge types as individual teachers actively participate in the experiences offered by the professional development programme. Coaches' support in the form of demonstrations, lesson observations and encouragement in PLGs and SBWs were quite important in the process of experimenting and engaging with the new instructional methodologies as they facilitated an important process of teacher change and reflection. Reflection, according to Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), is a process whereby teachers make careful considerations of the new instructional practices measuring them against their conventional ways of teaching. This process often happens when they have enacted and experimented with the new practices offered.

In this study, the level at which teachers experienced the new instructional methodologies differed. T1 used the new methodologies because she was forced to do so; there was not much reflection afterwards as she was convinced that the GPLMS intervention was not suited for her and her learners. T2, on the other hand, clinically used the coach's advice

and all the LP's guidelines and was stimulated into genuine reflection, which prompted her to persevere with the new practices. T3 was initially defensive and sceptical about the advocated instructional practices. Like T1, he tried to adopt these practices in his classroom as he was mandated to. He showed evidence of reflection as he later reported to have acquired new knowledge of some teaching strategies which he subsequently put into practice. Unlike the other teachers, T4 showed his completely resistant stance as he was not keen to adopt the new instructional practices. T4 rejected any encouragement from the intervention coach and blatantly refused to acknowledge and take the coach's advice. This rejection, according to Hollingsworth (1999), constitutes a form of change as the lasting change in a teacher's beliefs is related to the denial of the ideas presented in the teacher development programme.

5.4.3 Outcomes of new instructional practices

In terms of the Interconnected Model of teacher change, learners' outcomes are an important element of the third domain of consequences. One of the observable outcomes in this research is T2's 'consequence' domain where she reported that most of her learners developed growing interest in learning as was attested by their different and improved levels of participation and engagement. T2 engaged in multiple back-and-forth processes of enactment and reflection with new instructional practices and eventually noticed changes and improvements in learner motivation and participation. These changes in learner involvement and commitment were marked by her adoption and consistent use of the new instructional practices which made content curriculum knowledge easily accessible and comprehensible to the learners.

Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) mention that changes in the 'consequences' domain are linked to teachers' values where their beliefs influence their interpretation of any noticeable changes in learner behaviour and outcomes. While it took some time for T2 to see the benefits of the new instructional approaches, T1 immediately concluded that these new practices did not work for her despite ample opportunities of enacting and reflecting upon the new practices. The same can be said of T4 who did not even consider using the new teaching approaches as he had a negative attitude from the onset. Interestingly, T3 was reluctant to put into practice ideas from the intervention but once he did, he gradually developed an understanding of the methodologies and consequently an appreciation of them and their impact on his learners.

5.4.4 Changes in teachers' knowledge, beliefs and attitude

Changes in learners' responses to the new instructional practices have a direct effect on teachers' fourth personal domain which, according to Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), refers to changes in their knowledge, beliefs and attitude. Changes in teacher knowledge in this study were difficult to trace as the support offered by the coaching did not focus on that. There were aspects of PCK such as new practices based on a better pacing and sequencing of the curriculum which coaches tried to promote. Developing these PCK elements in teachers involves two important foundations, namely: representing and communicating subject matter knowledge to learners in comprehensible and appropriately paced and sequenced ways and developing understanding of what makes the learning of specific content knowledge difficult (Shulman, 1986). These specific elements of PCK were also touched on in the collective reflection in PLGs and SBWs even if the main focus of the coaching was on adopting new instructional practices.

What is interesting to note are the traceable changes in teachers' beliefs and attitudes, as evinced by T2 and T3. T2 developed a new conceptualisation of the learning of FP learners through multiple processes of enactment and reflection. She gained a new repertoire of instructional practices, marking a revolutionary change in her ideas about instruction and what she could expect from her learners. In translating ideas from the coaching into his practices, T3 also came to change his attitudes about the GPLMS support and monitoring and change consequently his beliefs regarding instructional practices. T1 and T4 were adamant in rejecting the new instructional practices, and did not move in changing their beliefs and attitudes about instructional practices.

In summary, based on the Clarke and Hollingsworth's model, **Figure 2** below represents the four teachers' different change sequences and pathways:

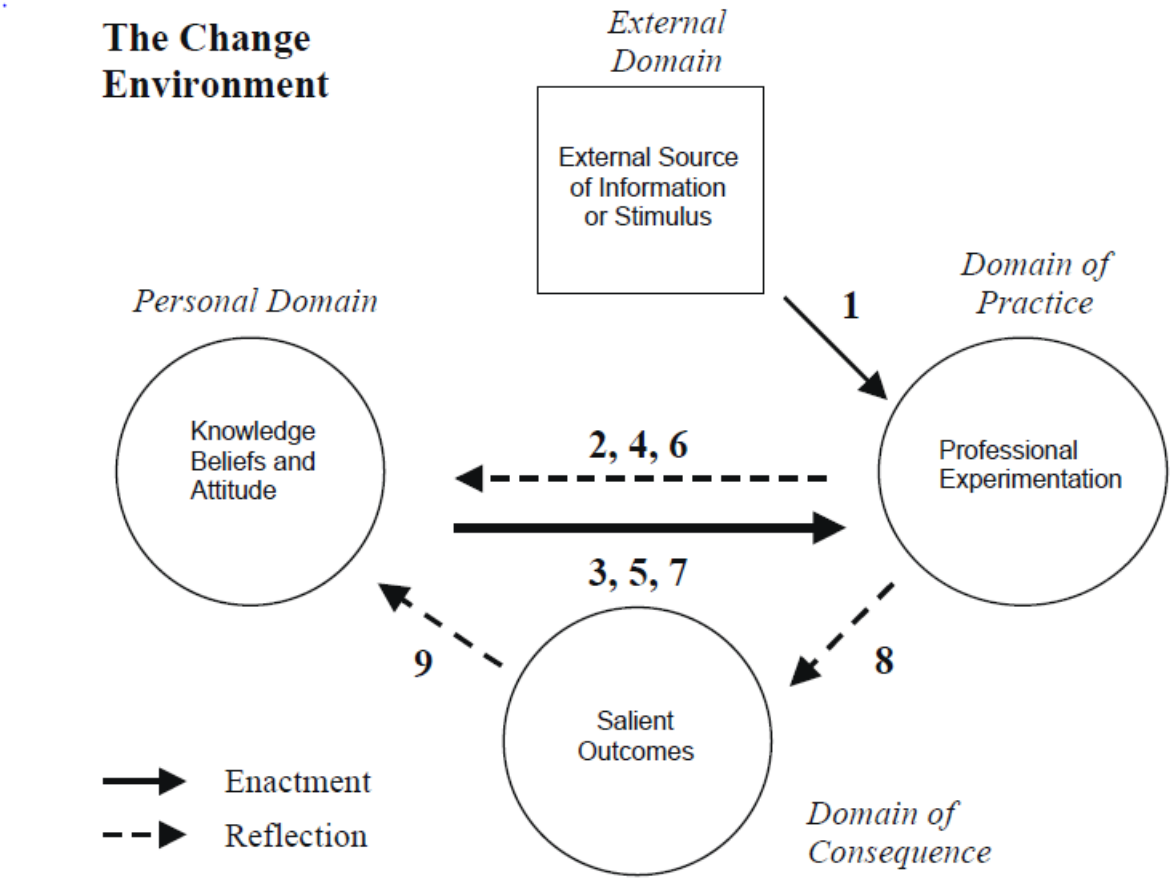


Figure 2: Sequences of change with different teachers' reflection and enactment.

Figure 2 above represents the four participating teachers' processes of change since their exposure to the GPLMS intervention. Arrow **1** shows teachers putting into practice ideas from the coach and implementing the LPs. Although T1, T3 and T4 were initially reluctant in using new instructional practices, they complied as they felt obligated to do so. The experimentation with new instructional practices led to back-and-forth processes of reflection and enactment where teachers developed interest and curiosity about the new pedagogic practices. The domain of practice involved trying out the new activities and practices simultaneously with careful consideration of their traditional instructional approaches. T2 and T3 went through these deep reflection and enaction processes which started to challenge their own beliefs and practices about instruction (marked by arrows **2, 3, 4, 5, 6** and **7**). According to Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), the processes of enactment and reflection are responsible for mediating genuine teacher change and consequently professional growth. As was shown earlier, T2 and T3 engaged in a process of reflection and gradually grew to understand and appreciate the new ideas offered by the coaching support. Unlike T3, T2 goes all the way through the change sequences as she

observed significant changes in her learners' participation and performance. Arrows **8** and **9** are representatives of her reflection on the new instructional practices. The reflection was influenced by the changes she observed in her learners and her new found satisfaction due to the new instructional knowledge and skills. T3, on the other hand, was hesitant in believing in the efficacy of the new instructional practices. He eventually acknowledged learning new teaching strategies, although he did not reveal similar conviction and change as T2.

T1's change pattern is represented by arrows **1**, **8** and **9** where she moves from trying out new practices from the coaching and concludes quickly that it is not suited for her, without any attempt to reflect on the new instructional practices against her own. T1, based on her observation of her learners in the consequences domain, is convinced that the new instructional approaches will worsen the poor performance of her learners. Her knowledge and beliefs are in the process not changed but they further develop an attitude of resentment of the coaching and all ideas it brought with. Similarly to T1, T4 was forced by the SMT to use C2's advice and the instructional practices. As a result, T4 was resistant to all ideas of the coaching process. The mediating processes of reflection and enactment thus did not apply to him as he rejected the intervention from the onset without any considerations to the recommended practices.

The findings of this study therefore indicate that the teacher support offered by the GPLMS coaching intervention in the two schools largely resulted in momentary or superficial changes in teachers' practices as T1, T3 and T4's attitudes went against any form of sustainability of the new instructional practices. Only T2's case suggests lasting change and genuine professional development.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

This study set out to explore the meaning and role of coaching in mediating GPLMS LPs based on the perspectives of four teachers, two of their coaches and the coaches' respective supervisors. The study sought an understanding of the possibilities and constraints of fusing teacher support and monitoring in the coaching model of teacher development. It was also a central focus of the study to consequently draw lessons from the implementation of the coaching process in the two participating schools. This chapter draws together what was learnt about teacher change and professional growth by referring to what was presented in the literature, the findings and their analysis and interpretation. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the limitations of the study and making recommendations for further research.

6.1 Conclusion

This study was committed to developing an understanding of the role of instructional coaching as implemented by two GPLMS coaches in two poorly performing primary schools in the Johannesburg South District. Because the study sought an understanding based on perceptual data from various GPLMS role players' standpoint, it took an exploratory approach. As such the research questions and methodology approach were exploratory in guiding a discovery of participants' construction of coaching based on their perceptions and experiences.

A set of research questions were developed to guide the investigation of the study. The first research question was: *What are teachers' experiences, attitudes and responses towards the GPLMS coaching process?*

The evidence gathered in this study, primarily through interviews, shows that teachers have different experiences and attitudes towards the coaching model of teacher support and monitoring, hence responded differently to the coaching intervention. This study therefore identifies four distinct types of teacher experiences and responses to the GPLMS coaching. T2 was an exceptional teacher who demonstrates a willingness to learn and tries her best to implement GPLMS ideas to her fullest capacity. Her efforts were fruitful as there is evidence of her improvement in her instructional practices through compliance hence genuinely developed. T3 gained substantive understanding of new instructional

practices as he later enthusiastically complied after some hesitation and scepticism; T1 had reservations concerning some aspects of the intervention hence reluctantly complied. Finally, T4 was openly defiant and resistant to change, arguing that the GPLMS teaching strategies were not suited for his classroom and that coaches undermined the knowledge of teachers and their autonomy in the classroom. Contrary to Masterson's (2013) findings, this study shows that the four participating teachers had mixed perceptions and attitudes to the coaching process, with a few teachers indicating that the GPLMS teacher support and monitoring initiative was not welcomed in schools. This suggests that interventions such as the GPLMS, especially their monitoring component, still have a long way before they can be wholeheartedly accepted by a majority of teachers in these poorly performing schools. There is a strong need to orient teachers and introduce instructional interventions in ways that are sensitive to their concerns to obtain teachers' buy-in.

The second research question was: *What are coaches' (and supervisors') experiences and strategies in mediating the LPs to different teachers?* Similarly to teachers, coaches and their supervisors had different experiences of coaching and mediating the Ps as they worked with different teachers. Both coaches, C1 and C2, believed that coaching was an ideal intervention for poorly performing schools and were hopeful about its effectiveness, although they remained suspicious that all teachers on the ground would come to appreciate and adopt these new instructional practices. Both supervisors argued that not enough was done to ensure genuine professional development and warrant sustainability of GPLMS instructional practices. These perceptions have implementation implications as was noted in this study in that some negative attitudes and beliefs by coaches and teachers can result in a poor GPLMS implementation and little change in teacher practices. Successful implementation of a teacher development programme such as the GPLMS requires all role players to demonstrate high levels of commitment and buy-in, especially those who are entrusted with disseminating the strategy to teachers.

This study however shows that successful instructional coaching can offer teachers support and monitoring which is appropriate and customised for teachers' specific needs. The strategies used by coaches were therefore adapted to a specific teacher's progression around the new instructional practices. While these coaches gave instructions, model and demonstrate LPs to teachers still struggling with the methodologies, they also observed

and gave feedback to improving teachers' confidence and practices. The pressure exerted with the teacher monitoring needs to be tactful and appropriate, depending on how teachers moved and adopted the new ideas provided by the coaches. No short-cut can be made as it takes some time for the most resistant teachers to witness first-hand the differences in the teaching and its outcomes and be convinced to change their practices.

The third research question was: *What factors influence positively the coaching process and interaction with teachers*? It is evident from the study's findings that coaching involves complex relationship-building (Li and Chan, 2007) and if collegial teacher-coach relations are not established, opportunities for teacher change and professional development are undermined. C1's coaching with FP teachers was more successful as she managed to establish trust, respect and collegial working relations with her teachers, especially with T2. C2's teachers in Intersen did not benefit as much because the coach-teacher relationships lacked respect and trust, especially as far as T4 was concerned.

Successful coaching depends on a positive coach-teacher relationship as in the case of C1 and T2. It is associated with the quality of coaches employed. Coaches need to possess high content knowledge, some PCK, pedagogical skills and a deep understanding of how to relate with different teachers. These are some conditions for effective and successful coaching. It has also been revealed that, because teachers have considered, for a long time, the classroom as their private domain of practice, many will be sensitive and afraid of support programmes which involve classroom observations. If coaches are to operate successfully in this space, they need a wide repertoire of interpersonal skills. Sustainability requires continuous monitoring and support by coaches (De Ford, 2007).

Another significant factor illuminated by this study is the importance of school leadership to support coaching. Although there is pressure for schools to improve learner performance, this study has shown that some poorly performing schools are not doing enough to support interventions, such as the GPLMS, that are designed to support and improve teacher practices. The two sampled schools have shown that poorly performing schools have poor internal capacity which does not enable them to engage constructively with external support and monitoring systems. Thus, these schools' capacity to engage with and benefit significantly from instructional interventions constitute an important target (Mintrop and Tujillo, 2007). The principals and SMTs of schools were not included

in the GPLMS to create or develop a nurturing school environment that fosters teacher's professional development or encourages the improvement of new teaching practices. As a result, some teachers approached the GPLMS teacher professional development programme with ambivalence and little commitment to the ideas introduced. It is therefore of paramount importance that school leaderships needs to be committed to the improvement of teaching and learning through supporting their teachers and intervention programmes such as the GPLMS.

Another factor which can positively influence the coaching process is that teacher support and monitoring in struggling schools need to be school-based, on-going and long-term. Continuous support and monitoring is difficult to implement and sustain but, once initiated and working, teachers gradually change their practices and eventually their beliefs about teaching, promising some kind of sustainability. As was observed in T2, continuous guidance in experimenting with new practices eventually brought results with which the teacher is keen to continue. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) are convinced that, with continuous stimulus, teachers will see the value and impact of new improved practices in both learner performance and in their own professional progression as more competent instructors. It is therefore essential to mention that continuous school and practice-based professional development, such as the GPLMS coaching mediating LPs, are much more useful as teachers are more adequately supported and guided in adopting new instructional practices.

The final research question read: *How does the coaching process contribute to teacher change and the adoption of new teaching practices?* It is apparent that some important observations can be extrapolated from this study of coaching and the processes of teacher change. These derived from the various lenses provided by the literature and the conceptual framework. Teacher development and change is a complex process which needs to be looked at idiosyncratically. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) emphasize that teacher change takes multiple pathways as teachers engage differently and emotionally with ideas from a teacher development programme. This is consistent with Hargreaves' (2005) argument that teachers' age and career stages influence their emotional responses to specific professional development programmes. As was observed in this study, all participating teachers were of different ages at different career stages and with different

attitudes towards change, which may have contribute to why they went through different processes in working with coaches.

Teachers respond emotionally differently to the coaching process and they may be a correlation between older and mature coaches and younger dynamic teachers and their positive responses - as in the case of C1 who gained a lot of respect from her younger teachers. Effective coaching should carefully consider and analyse different teacher dispositions and anticipate their responses to a teacher change programme. The process of matching a teacher to a coach has to be taken into account more seriously as more capable and knowledgeable coaches could be paired with the most resistant teachers. It takes coaches with strong inter-personal skills and an in-depth appreciation of the obstacles inherent in teacher change and professional growth as well as the various processes that teachers have to go through.

6.2 Recommendations

This study was initially aimed at establishing the impact of the GPLMS instructional intervention on teachers' change of practices and how that reflected in learners' performance. One of the major deterrents to pursue this line of inquiry was the time factor as impact studies tend to need a longer time period. Because of the time allocated to this MEd research, I was forced to change the focus to an exploration of participants' perceptions and experiences of coaching and developing a premise to better understand the conditions essential for effective coaching. However, undertaking this study with such a focus was an eye opener and allowed me to identify areas for further research on how to monitor the changes in teacher' instructional practices.

Another shortcoming of this research is that it was limited to an exploration of the coaching process and coaches' mediation of LPs but it did not look at the appropriateness of the design of the GPLMS LPs. Although coaches were available to model for teachers how to implement LPs and explain how to use them in relation to other resource materials of the instructional package, most teachers continued to raise concerns about the appropriateness of the LPs and their activities, their fast pacing (which is linked to the ambitious CAPS coverage) as they were difficult to follow with the kind of learners of these schools who are under-prepared and often slow learners, according to their teachers. Thus, this study may appear to have made an unwarranted assumption that the LPs, along

with the other resource materials, were well designed, appropriate and easy for teachers to implement. Challenges and consequent failure of using faithfully the LPs could possibly be linked to the LPs themselves which are not totally suitable for these schools. It is therefore recommended that further research is conducted on the appropriateness of the LPs in such struggling schools.

Although this study is a small research report and generalisations cannot be made from its findings, it enabled me to develop an understanding of the causal links between coaching, teaching strategies and learners' learning. This is an important three-step relationship that requires further and more careful scrutiny. Neuberger (2009) pointed out that improving student learning is the ultimate goal of coaching or any other teacher professional development initiative. Correlating changes in teachers' practices and beliefs with changes in learners' learning is an important future longitudinal investigation. Research that seeks to establish the worthiness of an initiative such as the GPLMS is therefore undeniably crucial and with the potential to transform the conceptualisation of teacher professional development in the majority of South African schools. This is why I believe the insights of this study can pave the way for further research on a bigger scale and other evidence than interviewing data to understand the appropriateness and impact of the GPLMS in poorly performing primary schools.

It is therefore my recommendation that an impact study of the GPLMS coaching intervention is undertaken to develop a more comprehensive understanding of teacher learning through such form of teacher development as well as its effect on learners' learning and performance. This is a challenge for many researchers: "One challenge for theorists has always been to account for the demonstrable diversity of individuals' knowings within the evident commonalities of action associated with participation in a common social setting" (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002, p. 955). There is therefore a need for extensive research to establish and enhance understanding of the causal relationship between coaching process, teacher learning and student learning. Such research should try to establish the impact of coaching on teachers' instructional practices and consequently on learners' performance. This would be a worthwhile research as it will significantly contribute to the South African teacher development literature and to school improvement policy developers who also stand to benefit from the findings of such research which could greatly inform their practice.

Based on the findings of this study, I have come to appreciate that coaching as an instructional strategy that fuses pressure and support is quite difficult to implement as teachers easily feel undermined and subjected to too many outside interventions. The evidence here suggests that coaches' personal attributes and professional competencies are significant and determinant factors for the success of the coaching process. It is therefore imperative that practising coaches' aptitudes and knowledge are sufficient to balance quality teacher support and gentle professional accountability.

Besides being difficult to implement, instructional coaching is a fairly new form of large-scale teacher support strategy in South African schools and this requires more research and inquiry to be understood better. Accordingly, a research which investigates the training, hiring and continuous professional development and monitoring of coaches is also highly recommended. Because coaching involves teacher support and monitoring – which are highly emotive practices, especially in South Africa given the legacy of teacher harassment by supervisors prior 1990 (Carron and De Grauwe, 1997; De Clercq, 2007). New research knowledge and insights as to how to train, hire and continuously develop and monitor coaches could go a long way in improving the quality of coaches in future intervention strategies.

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