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How Principals use Distributed Leadership in Leading and Managing Teaching and Learning: A Case Study of Two Primary schools in Gauteng

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Research Report submitted to the University Of Witwatersrand School Of Education, Johannesburg in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education

July 2013

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

I have used books, journals and the internet as sources of information that have been carefully referenced through the required referencing conventions.

Maria Vaz

Signature_____

July 2013

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role that principals play in leading and managing teaching and learning through the alternative approach of 'distributed leadership' in order to promote quality education. As a qualitative case study of two 'township' Gauteng primary schools, data was collected by means of questionnaires and interview schedules. Perceptions of principals, heads of departments (HODs) and teachers on 'distributed leadership' were examined, as well as how the concept was applied in the day-to-day running of the school.

It was found that the principals interviewed, despite their extensive teaching and managing experience, were not fully aware of the implications of principalship within the new dispensation, vaguely referring to their roles as leaders and managers without specifying how and what they were leading and managing in their respective schools.

Recommendations are that distributed leadership strategies could be found in both schools to optimise the leadership and management of teaching and learning, and that time should be allowed for HODs and principals to implement instructional leadership and management.

KEYWORDS

Leadership

Management

Distributed Leadership

Instructional Leadership

Principalship

Shared Instructional Leadership

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANA	-	Annual National Assessment
ANC	-	African National Congress
C2005	-	Curriculum 2005
DoE	-	Department of Education
DP	-	Deputy Principal
HOD	-	Head of Department
HIV	-	Human Immune Virus
IQMS	-	Integrated Quality Management System
LTSM	-	Learning and Teaching Support Material
MTL	-	Managing Teaching and Learning
NECC	-	National Education Crisis Committee
SA	-	South Africa
SACMEQ	-	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SASA	-	South African Schools Act
SAT	-	School Assessment Team
SBST	-	School Based Support Team

SGB	-	School Governing body
SMT	-	School Management Team
TIMSS	-	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
US	-	United States

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GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Leadership –Is the action of getting things done through people with an emphasis on relations, communication, motivation and an approach based on emotional intelligence (Heystek, 2007).

Management –Involves maintaining, effectively and efficiently current organisational arrangements.

Distributed leadership –People work together in such a way that they pool their initiative and expertise, the outcome is a product or energy which is greater than the sum of their individual actions rather than fragmented efforts (Woods, Bennet, Janet, & Wise, 2004, p. 441; Harris 2010, p.316)

Instructional Leadership –Is a professional relationship involving school leaders and teachers, an *alliance* where the leaders assume a supportive role and think of others as constituents. Instructional leadership is also referred to as Managing teaching and learning (Petersen 2001:159).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Schools are complex organisations that require leaders to work in co-ordinated ways, drawing on both human and material resources in order to achieve their desired goals. Many South African schools are hierarchical in structure, adopting a form which assumes top-down power relations and bureaucratic processes. Bush and Middlewood (1997, p. 48) argue that:

> Bureaucracy stresses the importance of the hierarchical authority structure with formal chains of command between different positions in the hierarchy. The pyramidal structure is based on the legal authority vested in the officers who hold places in the chain of command.

Such structures inform professional relations among staff members and could serve to limit rather than expand roles. Given the assumptions underlying the institutional structure, leaders in the SMT could feel justified in guarding their position power as personal power and deliberately or inadvertently discourage the development of leadership talent, expertise or experience inherent in, or acquired by, other members of staff. A rigid organisational structure could also contribute to teachers being unwilling to assume roles that are considered to be managerial and therefore not within their job descriptions.

It therefore becomes important for people who work in schools and others who have an interest in education to fully utilise the available human resources in order to provide quality education, so vital in developing countries like South Africa. For this reason, this research project will investigate how principals in primary schools lead and manage teaching and learning through an alternative approach which aims to bring together these resources: namely, distributed leadership.

1.2 Background

Education in South Africa was established and institutionalised during the nineteenth century through mission stations and schools in the British Colonies of Natal and the Cape, as well as in the Boer republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal (Adhikari, 1940). Bloch (2009, p. 54) confirms that churches remained major providers of education to black people, and that by 1953 there were 5000 schools for black children run by churches. The quality of education that black children in mission schools received was of good quality, even though the aims of this education might have been questionable to some.

The education of black children then, as now, was influenced by socio-political and economic factors. However, in 1948 the National Party came to power and instituted Apartheid as an economic, social and political policy to marginalise blacks (Christie and Collins, 1982). Morrow (1990), defines apartheid as:

"A system which systematically separated groups on the basis of race classification… The country was divided into four racial groups, White, Black, Indian and Coloureds (or people of mixed race, or non-Whites who did not fit into the other non-white categories)."

The missionary schools, which had been providing better quality education, were taken over by the National Party government. Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, then the Minister of Native Affairs, introduced Bantu Education in 1955[1] thus:

"The native child should never be taught so that they can have ambitions to seek the greener pastures of Europeans."

Morrow (1990) remarks that, in line with the broader policy of segregating racial groups, racially classified education systems were established to cater for the different races. Black people, and consequently their schools, were further separated according to their ethnic groupings leading to nineteen education departments. There were glaring inequalities between the four schooling systems, in terms of:

[1]In an infamous speech.

1. “teacher qualifications, teacher pupil ratios, per capita funding, buildings, equipment, facilities, books, stationery and also results measured in terms of the proportions and levels of certificates awarded.”

2. This unequal allocation of resources had major negative consequences for black teachers and learners in terms of the quality teaching and learning, which in turn, created a ripple effect in a variety of ways in the system. According to Adhikari (1940, p.19), the closing of missionary teacher training colleges such as Loveday was disastrous in its consequences for black children as teachers were inadequately trained by state funded colleges.

3. The institution of Bantu Education did not come unopposed, though. The African National Congress (ANC) recommended a campaign against Bantu Education at its 1954 conference, a movement realised twenty years later when driven by both students and teachers (Bloch, 2009). The political struggle for equal rights and education during the 1976 uprisings forced the National Party to introduce reforms in education in the 1980s[2]. The struggle for better education continued throughout the 80s and in 1986, the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was founded to oversee the transformation of education towards a new democratic dispensation.

4. Bantu Education officially ended in 1994 when the first democratic government was elected. The new constitution guaranteed equal and quality education for all South African learners. Education was viewed by the new administration as one of the apparatuses to undo the injustices of the past. A single national Department of Education was established in which norms and standards were set. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) was adopted with the aim:

    4.1.1. “To provide a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools; to amend, and repeal certain laws

[2] The HSRC identified the reasons as: 1) persistent violent protests 2) to address economic concerns that required more black workers above the level of menial labour (HSRC 2006).

relating to schools, and to provide for matters connected therewith."

5. The funding and governance of schools was transformed and decentralised, giving schools greater autonomy to make decisions through school governing bodies (SASA 1996). A new outcome based curriculum, (C 2005) was adopted in 1998 and reforms in the bureaucratic structures were effected.

6. Since then, increased numbers of black learners have been enrolling and persisting in schools and many have been accepted into formerly whites-only schools[3]. Nevertheless, the negative legacy of the system of Bantu Education remains in South Africa as some schools are still not able to produce sufficiently literate and numerate graduates despite the new democratic dispensation ,(Bloch 2009). Fleisch (2007) considers South African schools to be in crisis, with learners unable to read at an appropriate grade level in primary schools and, particularly in black township schools, yearly underperformance in the Grade 12 national examinations. Poor outcomes persist despite South Africa spending 5.4% of its Gross Domestic Product on education (Mbeki 2011). As examples of international tests that South African learners fail to master, Mbeki identifies the Southern Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

7. Bloch (2009) paints the picture of underperformance in South African schools by articulating that our schools are:

> ... often among the worst in the Southern African region and in Africa, as South African children are routinely underachieving. International comparisons evaluating literacy, numeracy and science ability show clearly that South African children are not getting it.
>
> (Bloch, 2009, p. 23)

[3] Ex- Model C schools.

Both these authors acknowledge that there are a variety of reasons for this poor performance by South African learners, such as teachers' poor grasp of subject content, particularly in important subjects like mathematics and science, the lack of capacity in district offices and the poor leadership and management of schools. Mbeki summarises the causes of poor performance in South African public schools like this:

> The majority of public schools in South Africa have a knowledge problem. That is, teachers and principals lack the various kinds of knowledge required in a professional setting like a school in order to impact on learning… classroom knowledge and discipline, managerial knowledge and more. (Mbeki, 2011, p. 107)

The Bridge Project Report (2010) also cites the dynamics of strong unions in some provinces like Gauteng to be contributory to teachers' underperformance. 'A community of factors continue to underwrite on-going poor performance of learners in both primary and secondary state schools' (Fleisch, 2007).

Moloi (2007), however, suggests another perspective on what has weakened teacher and learner performance in SA schools. She claims that the implementation of a new curriculum and measures to decentralise the management of education has diverted the attention of school principals from their primary task of managing teaching and learning towards the many managerial and administrative tasks required by the reforms. She notes that lack of preparation for aspiring principals and those who were already practicing has also contributed towards poor performance in schools. The Bridge Project Report (2010) states that, after the first democratic elections in South Africa;

"The government did not prioritise the professionalization of school principals."

Principals are considered key to school success. The fact that the professionalization of principals was not given the required attention meant that the majority of schools, particularly

those in former disadvantaged areas, were led and managed by principals with inadequate initial training as teachers, and no formal knowledge or skills about principalship.

The Department of Education, however, is working towards ensuring that the problem of principal incapacity is addressed. In 1997, the Education Management Development Task Team report recommended the establishment of national and provincial management institutes, the aim of these organisations being to capacitate and support school leaders 'in post'. In addition, documents such as the Draft Policy Framework for Management Development (DoE 2004) and The South African Standard for Principalship (DoE, 2005) have sought to professionalise the role of education managers, including principals. The policy framework states that:

"The fundamental objective of effective management and leadership development must be, ultimately, the advancement of teaching and learning."

Bush and Glover (2009,p.27) indicate that, as the main purpose of schooling is teaching and learning, principals, deputies and HODs need to give high priority to the management of such teaching and learning.

1.3 Aims and objectives

The main aim of this study is to examine what role principals play in managing teaching and learning through distributed leadership in South African primary schools. The poor performance of South African learners in various international standardised and national tests[4]) has thrust the role of school leadership to the fore. Research shows that 60-80% of South African schools are dysfunctional (Fleisch, 2007), and many researchers argue that poor leadership remains the common denominator. Bush's (2008) research has identified that for schools to improve learner achievement, principals have to become instructional managers. However, active involvement and accountability for the success of the educative

[4] ...such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Annual National Assessment (ANA)

project in South African schools is not a function performed solely by principals. This complex task involves other school staff like heads of department, deputy principals, subject heads, teachers, parents and district officials, all of whom have the capacity to influence outcomes in schools (Hoadley et al., 2009).

A further aim of the study is to understand how *Foundation Phase* HODs distribute leadership in their respective departments, what teachers' views are on this leadership concept, as well as whether/how it is practised in their schools. Fidler (1997) argues that schools, and many other organisations, are characterised by steeply hierarchical structures. This encourages top-down relations and therefore dependency on leaders, (and ultimately the principal), for improving the school and finding solutions to all problems faced by the organisation. Gronn (2002, p.424) states that leadership has persistently been understood as: "followers should do what the leader wants". This is a limited view of leadership that confines leadership to one person and undermines the role that followers can play in the success or failure of organisations. In schools,

"----classroom teachers, administrators, specialists and others can, depending on the leadership activity, find themselves in the follower's role" (Spillane, 2006, p. 17).

The last aim of this study is to add to the body of knowledge on distributed leadership in South Africa as an alternative leadership style[5]. There appear to be few studies that have probed how principals' relations with teachers, committees and the School Management Teams (SMTs) in the discussion of school matters can impact on the success of primary schools, especially those which operate in a very challenging and complex context given the history and politics of a country such as South Africa.

[5] Wright argues that this idea of distributed leadership was 'nascent' in Canada and elsewhere internationally in 2008. , and that the concept had a limited empirical research base

1.4 Problem statement

Bloch (2009) articulates numerous challenges the South African education system is faced with. Fleisch's (2007) research found that learners in South African schools are not reading and calculating at the expected level according to international standards. The Teacher (June 2011) lists the following as contributors of underperformance in many South African schools:

> *Principals working in isolation, SMTs not meeting on a regular basis, no designated head for every subject or phase, phase or subject heads seldom meeting with their charges for purposes of planning.*

The Bridge Project (2010) concurs: that schools are faced with many challenges, but that dysfunctionality is largely due to a lack of strong leadership capacity.

Fidler (1997, p.53) argues that for schools as organisations to function effectively, a structure is needed to achieve their goals. The principal is at the helm of the school structure and therefore is expected to influence members of staff to achieve these goals (Leithwood & Reil, 2003) by coordinating the work of teachers, middle management and the SMT towards the educative mission of the school. However, s/he can neither carry out these tasks alone nor delegate them to others completely. McNeil and McClanahan (2005) say the following about leadership:

> It is highly unlikely that a single person can provide the necessary leadership of all issues… Instead of a single individual leading to success, other individuals, who are partners or group members, take on the responsibility for leadership

In South Arica, it is clear from research and statistics that there are major flaws in the education system and within schools. Principals and SMTs in underperforming schools may not be implementing structures and systems effectively or tapping into the expertise and

experience of their staff for the benefit of teaching and learner achievement in a collaborative framework (Bush, 2008).

The reasons for this could be numerous, as research indicates. The Bridge project (2010) cites factors such as poor accountability or the limited perception of most principals of their role, or that they simply do not know how to execute these structures and manage human resources well. Blasé and Anderson (1995, p.1) suggest 'organisational micro politics', in which principals, instead of adopting the inclusive "power with" approach to leadership, prefer the "power over" approach[6]. The "power over" approach to leadership can be associated with authoritarian leadership in which principals: "…attempt to avoid, disable or ignore teachers, suppress dialogue, and exercise control through formal structures and the enforcement of policies and rules." (Blasé and Anderson, 1995, p. 17).

Spillane (2005.p.143) refutes the idea of "heroics of leadership" and advocates for distributed leadership, by saying that principals are not the sole drivers of the success of their organisations. He uses the concept of "distributed leadership" to help leaders rethink the issue of leadership. In the South African Standard for Principalship (2005, p. 3) the following is articulated concerning the cooperation of staff members, including management:

> "…the principal, as a leading professional, should carry the primary responsibility for the leadership and management of the school. S/he, working together with others in the school… must effectively promote and support quality teaching and learning."

[6] Most still view principalship as a symbol of status, rather than as a professional responsibility. Some are even threatened by the prospect of their "limelight" being usurped by an ordinary teacher with exceptional leadership skills

1.5 Research questions

The proposed study will look at the role of the principal in ensuring the provision of quality teaching and learning through the distribution of leadership. The study will therefore be guided by the following main question and sub-questions.

Main question

How do principals use distributed leadership as a means to lead and manage teaching and learning in their schools?

Sub-questions

- How do HODs use distributed leadership in the foundation phase?
- What are HODs and teachers' perceptions of distributed leadership?

1.6 Rationale

As mentioned previously, South Africa continues to produce school graduates that are not competent in literacy, mathematics and science and who are not ready for the job market or for higher education (Fleisch, 2007). This does not auger well for the future economic prospects of the country as these and other technological subjects and skills are a prerequisite for development and participation in the global village (Bloch, 2009). The need to improve teaching and learning through capacitating schools' personnel should not only be an issue for government to address.

Research is one of the most important tools that can be utilised to change the manner in which schools are run and therefore have an impact on teaching and learning. Whilst all school sectors are affected by these problems, it is in the primary school and the foundation phase[7] that the focus of this research into leadership and school effectiveness should begin. Distributed leadership has not been adequately researched in South Africa in any school

[7] As the basis of all future learning.

sector[8]. The researcher hopes that this study in primary schools will contribute towards a body of literature that is relevant to the context.

1.7 Conceptual framework

This study's conceptual framework is based on the researcher's belief, experience and research on school leadership and international research in distributed leadership. As Bush (2008) states:

"When school staffs, at all levels, work collaboratively with principals and school management teams, they have the best chance of achieving the school goals."

Collaboration, which is a precondition for distributed leadership, is encouraged in South African schools through the establishment of committees with responsibilities that impact on school development.

In the researcher's view, and based on research by (Spillane 2005; Bush 2008; Gronn 2008) there are three factors that hinder collaboration:

1) Principals' and SMTs' perceptions of leadership

2) Flawed processes in the constitution of committees. When committees are established, people are nominated into various committees without consideration of an individual's skills, expertise and knowledge as required by the function of that particular committee.

3) Principals not utilising the committees and other individuals such as senior and master teachers optimally, to the advantage of teaching and learning.

The issue of time can also not be ruled out as few teachers are willing to stay at school beyond the stipulated time. This makes it difficult for committees to meet. Meeting during contact time compromises the quality of the content of meetings as they are often rushed in order to avoid the loss of too much leaching and learning time.

[8] ....which became apparent when the researcher attempted to find literature for the study

1.8 Limitations

Limitations in research, which can be encountered in any aspect of the research process, can be described as situations or factors that hinder rather than help the process of the research. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) list what they say are “constraints on conducting research in education”, they are:

“…methodological difficulties, complexity of research problems, diversity, programme variability, public, changing institutions and legal and ethical considerations”.

The limitations of this study fall under the constraint “complexity of research problems” as the study will be limited in depth and scope. Only two government primary schools have been involved and within each school, only three participants were engaged in the research. Other constraints include the limited time for collecting data at sample schools, the researcher’s time constraints or the various human factors such as the (un)willingness of participants to engage in research or finding participants knowledgeable about the research topic etc. (McMillan and Schumacher,2010)

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Literature on educational leadership in the United States, Europe and now also in South Africa demonstrates that school managers play a crucial role in creating the conditions for improved instruction and therefore learning. An atmosphere of safety, trust and care is essential in any environment of learning, as it sets a climate for sharing, transparency and co-operation in the organisation.

These characteristics constitute the “right culture” for a school in which the principal is the custodian (Harris, 2001, p.482). Harris argues that while school leadership has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the prevalence of the right culture, they cannot achieve that in isolation, but rely on the input of their colleagues. Bell (1997, p. 77) agrees with Harris by saying: “the power of team work cannot be overlooked.”

Research shows that teachers are more likely to work effectively if their goals are consensually agreed, if they work as a team, share responsibilities and negotiate as a team. What is less understood, however, is how the principal can harness teamwork and other strategies in order to contribute towards the aim of improved instruction (Hoadley and Ward, 2008).

This study is based on the assumption that the leadership of teaching and learning in some South African schools is still considered the preserve of the SMT and that some principals are not tapping into the skills and knowledge available within their organisations to promote teaching and learning. This often stems from outdated notions of what leadership means, which reduce teachers to subordinates in a top-down structure.

This view puts sole responsibility on the principal, as described by Elmore (2000, p.14) “…principals should embody all the traits and skills that remedy all the defects of the schools in which they work…”

However, in order to achieve the maximum potential of schools, human resources should be utilised optimally in a strategy that bestows professional leadership and accountability on all.

2.2 Leadership and management

The concepts of management and leadership can be summarised thus: leadership sets goals and is about persuading people to contribute to common purpose while management ensures that proper structures are in place, facilitating vital systems and processes which keep the school organisation as a functioning entity.

Most education researchers and authors agree that the two ideas are interdependent requisites for school improvement. Lumby (2001, p.11), for example, argues for an androgynous approach, synthesising the two dimensions, while Bush and Middlewood (2005, p.3) describe them as dual activities that school principals should engage in to ensure the smooth working of the school organisation.

Management is vital too. As Bredeson and Johansson (2000) state:

"Leaders who successfully deal with their managerial responsibilities will help to create positive and supportive environments for effective teaching and learning."

However, good management is not enough to ensure the development that schools require to reach their full potential in this era of rapid knowledge expansion. For schools to function optimally, principals and other school leaders need to strike the right balance in managing and leading (ibid). Bolman and Deal (1997) caution that, on one hand, "organisations which are over-managed but under-led eventually lose any sense of spirit or purpose", whereas, on the other, organisations that are poorly managed with strong charismatic leaders "may soar temporarily only to crash shortly after".

Leadership is vital to pushing forward the agenda of schools. Heystek (2007) defines leadership as the activity of leading people, that is:

"…of getting things done through people with an emphasis on relations, communication, motivation and an approach based on emotional intelligence."

As a 'process of influence' (Bush and Glover, 2003) 'distributed leadership' is an issue of leadership rather than of management as it focuses on relationships, and the purposes of teaching and learning can be achieved if all people in the school contribute towards the same end.

Individual contributions, though valuable, cannot be as powerful as concerted action. Lumby, Middlewood and Kaabwe (2003, p.172) argue for "leading through teams" and give the following explanations for their argument:

- Teams improve communication between people.
- They offer more chance of creative solutions to a problem, because they bring together a range of talents and abilities.
- They can represent the range of interests in an organisation, which no one individual can do[9].
- Their decisions are more likely to be supported and implemented than those made by one person.
- They can offer valuable opportunities for personal and professional development, because of the range of tasks available and the range of relationships that exist.

[9] This highlights the organisational nature of schools and other institutions with people occupying different positions in the organisational structure (Fidler 1997).

2.3 School organisations

Fidler (1997) argues that it is necessary for any enterprise with more than one person to have an organisational structure. In order of authority, the South African school is structured from the SMT (principals, deputies and HODs) to teachers, administration staff and learners, thus encouraging formal power and leadership rather than professional interdependence[10].The hierarchical nature of the organisational structure, if rigidly applied, can inhibit rather than promote school effectiveness. School leaders should therefore encourage what Kopelowits refers to as:

"a flat, highly decentralised structure in both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the school"

This would be for the benefit of teaching and learning and development of teachers. The argument being that a more permeable structure would benefit the principal by relieving him/her of the many responsibilities s/he is supposed to perform.

2.4 The role of the principal

Principals in many educational contexts are expected to fulfil administrative as well as instructional leadership duties, including: 'organising and monitoring' tasks; enabling and supporting smooth processes within schools; focusing on buildings, equipment and finances and cooperating with and achieving a 'balance' between teachers, students and parents (Trnavcevic and Vaupot, 2009, p. 93). Added to these expectations, in the case of South Africa, the implementation and planning of a new curriculum is included, while in many cases, principals are also required to engage in teaching activities. Lashway (2003, p.3) argues that

"…school reforms have stuffed the principal's job jar to overflowing with new chores and have undermined comfortable old assumptions about the nature of school leadership."

[10] Kopelowits (1980: 58) contends that organisations select some of their members to play co-ordinating managerial roles and then arrange those roles in a hierarchical form.

Yet instructional leadership is the principal's core responsibility. According to Kruger (2003) cited in Bankakuu, 2008), "The primary role of the principal in the school is to make sure the educative function is carried out to the desired level."

2.5 Instructional leadership

Researchers and authors on instructional leadership give a variety of definitions and explanations of the concept. Bush and Glover (2009) argue that instructional leadership *focuses on teaching and learning*, while to Petersen (2001, p. 159) it is a professional relationship involving school leaders and teachers, an *alliance* where the leaders assume a supportive role and think of others as constituents. Marks and Printy (2003) state that instructional leadership concentrates on *leadership functions directly focussed* on teaching and learning. Lee and Dimmock (1999) refer to instructional leadership as *curriculum leadership and management* which they say encompasses "goal setting and planning; monitoring; reviewing and developing the educational programme of the school and developing staff." Blasé and Blasé (1999, p. 350) define instructional leadership as: "*a blend of several tasks* such as supervision of classroom instruction, staff development, and curriculum development."

Reitzug (1994) in Blasé and Blasé (1999, p. 352) studied the instructional leadership behaviours of one principal and found that he,

"…provided staff development, modelled inquiry, asked questions, encouraged risk taking, required justification of practices and critiqued by wandering around."

Instructional leadership is at the core of school leadership[11], so it is therefore important that principals, other school leaders and even teachers understand the role that instructional leadership should play in teaching for learning. According to a report by The Bridge project (2010), in many South African schools there is little or no instructional leadership taking

[11] If leadership in schools were appointed for any other duty except the facilitation of teaching in order that learning may occur, then school leaders would be redundant.

place for two reasons: 1) an unfortunate negative attitude amongst teachers towards supervision, an idea reinforced by certain teacher unions, because it is reminiscent of Apartheid practices; 2) the ignorance of many school principals about their role as instructional leaders and about school leadership in general. Bush and Glover's (2009) research in some South African schools revealed that principals ranked the duty of managing teaching and learning (MTL) very low on their list of responsibilities[12]. The researchers discovered that the function of managing teaching and learning was often left to HODs who were themselves full-time teachers, especially in primary schools (Bush et al., 2008).

Strong principal leadership and especially strong instructional leadership were found to be central to successful programmatic change and instructional improvement in a study conducted by a US university to investigate distributed leadership in elementary schools adopting comprehensive school reform (Camburn, Rowan and Tyler, 2003). This study also concluded that strong instructional leadership is in short supply in many schools because the "…principals' typical working days are consumed by managerial tasks which have little or no bearing on the improvement of curriculum and instruction."

What is evident from all the above literature and research is that instruction is more effectively conducted and yields better results if the school works as a team[13][14]. Team work involves the management of professional interpersonal relations as much as it is about structuring and delivering knowledge (Lee and Dimmock, 1999), and therefore necessitates the deep involvement of the leader [15] and a focus on organisational goals. Spillane and Diamond (2007, p. 4), for example, highlight that any relationship that does not influence the core activity of the organisation cannot be considered distributed.

[12] The most revered function was that of managing school finances followed by many others before MTL is considered.
[13] Bankakuu 2008.
[14] Staff need to converge to realise the goals of teaching and learning as envisaged both by the Department of Education and by the school's vision and mission.
[15] Principals need to resist the temptation of totally abdicating their duties to others.

2.6 The role of the principal in managing teaching and learning

Bush and Glover (2009) reason that the responsibility should be shared across the board[16],[17]. These authors go on to delineate the roles that each stakeholder should assume in the overall task. They argue that:

> Educators manage curriculum implementation in their classrooms, HODs have the responsibility of ensuring effective teaching and learning across their learning areas or phases, while principals and school management teams have a whole school role.
>
> (Bush and Glover, 2009, p. 5)

A principal whose emphasis is on managing teaching and learning will:

- Oversee the curriculum across the school.
- Ensure that lessons take place.
- Evaluate learner performance through scrutiny of examination results and internal assessment.
- Monitor the work of heads of department HODs, through examination of their work plans and portfolios.
- Ensure that HODs monitor the work of educators within their learning areas
- Arrange a programme of class visits followed up by feedback to educators.
- Ensure the availability of appropriate learning and teaching support material (LTSM).

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 mandates for structures like committees to be established so that responsibilities for the various activities in the school are shared.[18]Although it is the HOD who is usually the intermediary on issues pertaining to

[16] Given the principals' limited capacity or even time to manage teaching and learning single-handedly,
[17] between principals, SMTs, middle managers and classroom educators.
[18] The activities require that the principal and members of the School Management Team (SMT) work collaboratively with one or more groups or individuals.For instance, overseeing the curriculum may require the principal to cooperate with the DP and HODs to work on timetabling or schemes of work

teaching and learning between the teachers, the DP and principal, the principal takes on an enabling role towards optimum achievement institutionally.

Shared instructional leadership ameliorates the prospect of principals being viewed as "heroic leaders" and acknowledges that others, subordinate to the principal, also contribute to leading and managing teaching and learning (Spillane, 2006, p. 143). Teachers who share instructional leadership, collaboration and teamwork enhance better planning, teaching and therefore improved student performance. The HOD is also an important stakeholder and in South African schools, and, as part of the SMT should be actively involved in curriculum leadership (Busher and Harris, 1999).

2.7 The role of heads of department in leading and managing teaching and learning

Development in one department has "the potential of permeating throughout the school" (Busher and Harris, 1999, p.308). Bennett et al (2003) state that HODs

"play a crucial role in developing and maintaining the nature and quality of learners' experience."

They point out, however, that HODs cannot achieve this aim without going through the teachers who are in direct contact with learners. The HODs' tasks not only include monitoring teachers work, securing teaching and learning materials and drawing up schemes of work but also higher order duties, such as establishing departmental culture (Busher and Harris,1999, p.307). This means that HODs also play a crucial role in influencing teachers for whom they are responsible by practicing instructional leadership (Harris, 2001). Bush et al (2008, p. 9) list the following functions that HODs should perform in their respective phases or subjects:

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for the various departments and subjects. Ensuring that lessons take place and giving feedback might necessitate that s/he works with teachers together with HODs, while for evaluation of learner performance and ensuring the availability of learning and teaching materials may lead him/her to communicate with the School Assessment and the LTSM committees respectively.

- Hold regular meetings of the educator team to plan teaching and to discuss problems.
- Model good practice by giving lessons while educators observe.
- Observe educators regularly and provide structured and constructive feedback to enhance teaching and learning.
- Evaluate learner outcomes and design strategies to improve classroom instruction.
- Monitor the work of educators through scrutiny of work plans and learner outcomes.

But teachers can also be agents and have a voice. As one participant in Harris's (2001) research findings noted: "It is important that there are opportunities for two-way communication about developments that work."

Although HODs in different phases and subjects carry out their specific functions separately, there will also be a need for them work together, as schools are systems and what happens in one department or phase has an impact on the other. Development in one department can permeate the school and indeed, for schools to work effectively there is a labyrinth of interactions that need to happen[19], taking into consideration experience, expertise and sometimes designated authority within the organisation. Lashway (2003, p.3) refers to principals as "architects of organisational leadership." Distributed leadership is considered one type of leadership that specifically looks at this interaction of people within a school organisation to see how these interactions impact on the mission of the school. It especially looks at how principals relate to those whom they are required to lead. Lashway says that:

"Effective principals do not just string together a series of individual actions, but systematically distribute leadership by building it into the fabric of school life."

[19] The principal has to interact with HODs, teachers and the various committees; the HOD also needs to work together with the teachers, principal and the committees pertaining to the needs and issues in their relevant departments. This becomes much more sophisticated in Secondary schools with larger numbers of pupils, more subjects, a variety of departments, HODs and deputy principals, making the principal's work even more complicated. This study however, will focus on primary schools with a reduced capacity of all the above constituents but who nevertheless have to work together to ensure that quality teaching and learning is achieved.

2.8 The role of teachers in leading and managing teaching and learning

Bush and Glover (2009) in their research into MTL in South African schools, identify the role of teachers as managing the implementation of curriculum in their classrooms. Teachers are considered to be the most important role players in the education and moulding of a nation through the formal and informal curricula offered in classrooms. The classroom is at 'the cutting edge' of the entire education system (Lauder et al., 1998). Dlamini (2009) concurs: "teachers have more influence on learners' academic outcomes and the attainment of organisational goals than any other stakeholder in schools".

One of the central functions of instructional leadership in the literature is teacher development. Teachers' work needs the *support* of the organisation in their *continual development of skills.*) Killen (2010) says the following about teachers:

> Educators need both a broad and deep understanding of the principles of effective teaching if they are to have a significant influence on learning in their classrooms…to develop wisdom through practice, educators need to be reflective practitioners who continually strive to understand and improve their attempts to help students learn. (Killen, 2010, p. 8)

..and Glickman (2002) in Dlamini (2009) states that:

> Instructional leaders are expected to have comprehensive understanding, knowledge, skills and dispositions associated with teaching and learning. They need to have the ability to identify and understand their teachers' professional needs, strengths and weaknesses so that they can help them sharpen their skills pertaining teaching and learning

In South Africa, where many teachers received scant training and have a poor grasp of the content of the subjects they teach, it is particularly important that instructional leaders have a

mastery of the skills and knowledge that can feed the core activity of schools (Bloch 2009). Teachers therefore need to be constantly *developed in subject knowledge* to enhance their teaching.

A crucial question can therefore be asked: "how do principals use the organisational structure to support the work of teachers in order to raise the level of everyday practice?" Distributed leadership is a leadership strategy that can be considered to begin answering this question.

2.9 Definition of distributed leadership

Spillane (2006, p.144) defines the concept of "distributed leadership" by addressing the following question: "What does it mean to take a distributed perspective on school leadership?" He answers this question by first "introducing key terms and ideas" and second, addressing how leadership is distributed over an *interactive* web of people, taking into account the context ("key aspects of their situation including organisational routines, structures and tools"). To him, distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership *practice* rather than leaders and their roles, functions, routines, and structures" and a *product* of these interactions.

Similarly, Harris (2003, p.319) views distributed leadership as:

> "…incorporating the activities of multiple groups of individuals in a school who work at guiding and mobilising staff in the instructional change process."

Gronn (2002, p. 424) refers to distributed leadership as 'concertive action' and explains that it:

> …does not require an individual who can perform all of the essential leadership functions... some leadership functions may be shared by several members of a group, some leadership functions may be

> allocated to individual members, and a particular leadership function may be performed by different people at different times.

Distributed leadership is not synonymous with 'shared leadership, team leadership and/or democratic leadership' (Spillane, 2006). The author says that within the distributed perspective:

"…individuals play off one another, creating a reciprocal interdependency between their actions". It is 'concertive action' which is a product of 'conjoint activity' as opposed to 'additive action', or people working individually for collective gains (ibid).

Woods et al (2004) like Spillane (2006) argue that the term/concept has a variety of meanings, with three distinctive models: "Emergent Property, Openness of Boundaries and leadership according to expertise".

'Openness of boundaries' speaks to a broader view of leadership as opposed to associating leadership only with those who have formal authority. The last conception of leadership, that of 'according to expertise' is based on the idea that:

"…people work together in such a way that they pool their initiative and expertise, the outcome is a product or energy which is greater than the sum of their individual actions" rather than fragmented efforts (Woods, Bennet, Janet, & Wise, 2004, p. 441, Harris 2010, p. 316)

The crux of the message, therefore, is how the various actors interact for the purposes of teaching and learning.

There are, however, well-documented barriers to distributed leadership. For example, Harries (2004, p. 20) lists the following:

- The hierarchical nature of school organisations with demarcations of position and pay-scale.
- The inherent threats to status and the status quo.
- The potential placing of the principal in a vulnerable position because of the lack of direct control over certain activities.
- The need for principals to use other incentives and to seek alternative ways of remunerating staff who take on leadership responsibilities.

2.10 Distributed leadership practice

Distributed leadership is a leadership concept that disrupts the hierarchical nature of organisations including schools.

> ‘Mother’, ‘father’, ‘the old one’, ‘fear’, ‘the head of the family’, ‘hen with chickens’, ‘big dictator’, ‘puff engine’, and ‘boss’ represent one cluster of metaphors wherein power relations and hierarchy are embraced. (Trnavcevic and Vaupot, 2009, p. 98)

How school leaders and their followers perceive themselves in relation to each other influences how they work and run schools, which in turn impacts on their educational achievements.

Some understandings of the term under consideration are that of simply sharing leadership, giving staff members some of the principals’ responsibilities and reshuffling assignments. From another perspective, it could mean effective collegiality, whereas distributed leadership calls a major alteration in organisational thinking that redefines leadership as a responsibility of everyone in the school.

Some identify what it is not. Spillane, (2006), for example, finds it leaves no room for ‘heroics of leadership’ or what Gronn, (2002) refers to as ‘leader-centrism’. Spillane, (2006) defines this term by painting the following scenario:

> A charismatic leader or principal takes over a struggling school, establishes new goals and expectations. This leader creates new organisational routines and structures that with time transform the school culture. (Spillane, 2006, p. 143)

This writer further states that in this genre of leadership, other people who make up the organisation are not considered key players in the success or even failure of an organisation. The principal and his gallant acts take centre stage. Spillane and Diamond, (2007, p. 8) declare that the distributed leadership perspective moves beyond the image of "leadership heroics" and propels us to consider an assemblage of leaders who endeavour to influence school-based instructional practices. The authors indicate that leadership for instruction typically involves principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders, and classroom teachers who work independently as well as collaboratively to influence instruction. Spillane and Diamond, (2007) remark that:

"Followers choose to listen to leaders and decide which leaders and leadership messages should be heeded and which should not (often without regard to leader's official positions)." Followers therefore have the capacity to shape the principal's leadership practice particularly when it affects their own practice of teaching.

The ultimate component of leadership practice is the context: the routines, tools and other contextual factors such as the school size, maturity of staff and material resources. Spillane and Diamond (2007, p. 9) claim that "The situation of practice can make it more or less difficult to employ certain means and achieve certain ends." In South Africa the situation of practice is complicated by many factors including unions, the incapacity of district officials, principals, teachers and other important school role-players who lack knowledge about their jobs. The elements discussed above are key to how leadership in any organisation plays itself out and will be used to interrogate action in the two case studies of this research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methods used and their appropriateness for this study. The qualitative research undertaken involved a case study of two primary schools in a township in Gauteng province. The chapter also illustrates the processes that were carried out prior to and during data collection in both research sites, and how permission from the schools and individual participants was sought to gather data ethically, as required by research ethics. The researcher also presents the challenges that she encountered in the process of the chosen research methodology and instruments used in this case study approach, and the chapter concludes with her reflections on the research process.

3.2 Qualitative research methodology

> *In qualitative studies the investigator usually acts as an observer in the setting that is being studied, either as the interviewer, the observer, or the person who studies artefacts and documents* (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010, p. 322).

As the purpose of this case study research was to investigate how principals and HODs in two township primary schools in Gauteng province lead and manage teaching and learning (with particular reference to distributed leadership), a qualitative approach was chosen. The above authors (2010) emphasise that in qualitative research behaviour is studied as it occurs naturally and that the setting is "an actual classroom, a school, clinic or neighbourhood."

Schools have their own particular contexts and organisational cultures which require the researcher to observe and understand the ways of each organisation. Therefore, to enable the researcher to understand better the two contexts being researched, and to analyse from the observation, the impact on practice of leadership roles and responsibilities, a case study approach was used. Freebody, (2003) argues that case studies are used by researchers in

a variety of professional and practical areas as a way of conducting and disseminating research that will impact upon practice, and refine the ways in which practice is theorised.

Research on qualitative methodology indicates that there are five major methods for gathering and analysing the data…observation, interviews, questionnaires, document review and use of audio visual materials (McMillan & Schumacher 2010, p. 343). They further indicate that case studies normally use a variety of methods to collect data, compared to ethnographic studies that put an emphasis on observation (ibid. 346).

Questionnaires, developed in order to gather data on specific issues, were given to the principals of the case study schools prior to the date of the interview. However, HODs and teachers were given and completed them individually on the date of the interview, enabling clarification on some questions. As follow-up, semi structured interviews with principals and HODS were conducted, to enable the researcher to probe leadership issues raised by the responses to the questionnaire in more depth. Amongst these was the desire to gain better understanding of the context and gather information of attitudes to the idea of 'distributed leadership' in their respective schools. In addition, information on how the members of the SMT executed their practice as school leaders in conjunction with other members of staff was required. McMillan and Schumacher (ibid. p. 325) refer to required data as a, "detailed description and analysis of particular practices, processes, or events."

Using two different instruments or methods of data gathering helps to reinforce the validity of the research. McMillan and Schumacher (ibid. p.331) maintain that using multi-method strategies permits 'triangulation' of data across inquiry techniques and that using different strategies may yield different insights about the topic of interest and increase credibility of the findings.

Qualitative research is interpretive, focusing on gaining meaning and understanding, and building concepts and theories (Toma, 2006, p. 407), and therefore depends on words to draw meaning (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010, p. 23). The researcher must search and

explore with a variety of methods until deep understanding is achieved. The research questions and subsequently the instruments were designed in a way that participants' responses would be narrative rather than numerical.

As only two schools were studied, the depth and scope of the study was limited and conclusive generalisations cannot be made. Had more schools and thus a greater number of participants been included, a statistical understanding of how distributed leadership is used in schools would have been gained.

3.3 Population and sample

Govender (2012) citing McMillan & Schumacher (2010, p. 325) states that qualitative methods of research use different sources of information that include individuals, groups, documents, reports and citations.

The sample for this study was purposive in terms of both the choice of schools and individual participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p.138) argue that through purposive sampling:

> The researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest…a judgement is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research.

The first school (School 1) was chosen by the researcher because she had attended the school herself[20] and introduced herself as a former pupil at the school, even though the principal and staff were unknown to her. Unfortunately, the second school that was approached initially gave permission to conduct the research but later withdrew it. It had been chosen because it was a primary school with similar characteristics to the first in terms

[20] As well as feeling more comfortable, she considered her chances of gaining permission would be higher

of size and location. The third school (School 2) was then recommended by one of the principals approached while seeking a replacement.

This process in itself was a learning opportunity. McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 332) state that: "…qualitative research depends to a great extent on interpersonal skills of the enquirer such as building trust, maintaining good relations, being non-judgemental and respecting the norms of the situation."

The sample included two principals, two HODs and two teachers, chosen for their knowledge of leadership and management issues as well as knowledge of the realities of teaching and learning. Their experience ranged from sixteen to thirty eight years. Furthermore, both principals had more than basic qualifications, which led the researcher to believe that they could possibly be familiar with the concept of distributed leadership.

3.4 Data collection strategies and research instruments

The collection of data started in school 1 with the principal, who indicated that timing for conducting the research was bad as the school's teaching staff was in the middle of the learner-retention process and that everyone was busy, especially the HOD. A separate appointment, consequently, had to be set for meeting the HOD and teacher for their interviews, when the questionnaires were given.

In school 2, all processes were carried out on the same day for all participants as the principal had allocated the whole day to the research process, depending on how long it would take.

Although data was collected using questionnaires and an interview schedule, the researcher also had to rephrase questions as and when participants were unsure about the meaning of some questions. The responses to the interviews were audio recorded as that seemed the most effective way to capture the information, however there were some challenges in retrieving audio taped data for the principal and HOD of school 2. The researcher had to

recall all the information that was given for the interview schedule. Although this was done as soon as possible after the interviews and information in questionnaires helped the researcher during this process of data retrieval, the quality of data might have been compromised which could negatively impact on findings, as the meaning of responses might have been misarticulated by the researcher because of time lapse.

Teachers only had to answer questionnaires in order to corroborate what was said by the principal and HOD. “These forms of gathering data are used widely, (are) economical and can ensure anonymity ... and good for ethical reasons” (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). They further state that it is critical for researchers to use appropriate techniques for collecting data and in that way to ensure accuracy and relevance of the information to be obtained

3.5 Ethical considerations

For researchers to be dutiful, they need to engage with a variety of stakeholders to gain access to research sites. In the case of this study, permission was sought and granted from the Gauteng Department of Education after the Ethics Clearance documentation and a proposal for conducting the study were submitted to relevant officials. The school principals and other participants were also informed that permission had been granted from the authorities.

All participants were fully informed of the purpose and nature of the study, that participation was voluntary and that anonymity and confidentiality would be observed through the use of pseudonyms. They were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any given time if they felt uncomfortable with the proceedings.

Letters of permission were sent to the principals to request that the researcher be granted approval to conduct the research. Letters regarding participation and consent forms were also given to each participant in advance, in order that they could be thoroughly read and understood before the appointments for the interviews were made.

MacMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 338) remark that:

"A credible research design involves not only selecting informants and effective research strategies but also adhering to research ethics."

The researcher ensured that she complied with all the ethical requirements of the Witwatersrand University and was aware of the need that all research be conducted in an ethical manner in order that the investigation should not be compromised.

3.6 How the data was collated and analysed.

Questionnaires and interview schedules were the instruments chosen for collecting data, and these were given to the principals of the two schools prior to the interview date to allow participants time to reply to or go through them for information. On the day of the interview each participant was given a questionnaire to complete in the presence of the researcher as none of those that had been given to the principals were completed. The researcher then explained that follow up questions to the questionnaire would be asked. The researcher read out each question as the participant responded. Questions for clarification were further asked by the interviewer to gain better understanding from participants.

When all data was gathered, the researcher used themes from the questionnaire and interview schedule to analyse data. Data from participants of each school was analysed under themes. The researcher then compared and contrasted data from the two schools in order that the research questions could be answered.

3.7 Reflections on the research methodology

The researcher had herself attended as a learner one of the schools chosen but the participants were unknown to her as staff in the school had changed over the years. Research suggests that being unknown to participants might influence the validity of their responses, but the other way round could also be true. People tend to speak honestly if they can trust the person that they are opening up to pertaining to organisational matters. For

instance in school 1, a participant (a class teacher) voiced her concern about confidentiality as she didn't want to find herself at loggerheads with her superiors because of the contents of her responses. The researcher assured her that real names of participants or that of the school would not feature in any part of the study. The HOD at this school also seemed uncomfortable because she would occasionally laugh nervously before answering some of the questions in the interview schedule.

One of the strategies for gathering data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010, p. 343) is observation. Spillane (2006) mentions that in settings such as school meetings, members of staff, "play each other off" as each assumes a role of leadership. Attending staff meetings to observe how this phenomenon unfolds at the schools could have provided more insight and meaningful information regarding the practice of distributed leadership as envisaged by its proponents. More participants could also have been interviewed or more schools used as case studies which would have provided greater scope and depth as well as giving more compelling data analysis. However, the researcher, herself a full time class teacher and head of department, was constrained by time and logistical factors and although cognisant of the above factors, she limited the scope and scale of the study to suit the time and circumstances available for the research study to be conducted.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1.1 Introduction

Data for the study was collected from two research sites with the aim of discovering the familiarity with the concept of 'distributed leadership' and its application within these contexts.

Themes to be discussed in this chapter were suggested by the interview questions but also the feedback from participants, which are: the role of principals in teaching and learning; implementation of leadership and management of teaching and learning; challenges of leading and managing teaching and learning and, finally, sharing responsibilities in leading and managing teaching and learning.

4.1.2 Background and profile of the schools

The first school visited (hereafter 'school 1') is situated in one of the province's clusters of townships; this is a predominantly black residential area of Johannesburg. The school was founded in the mid-60s and has for decades been considered a top-performing institution.

Most learners and teachers in the school are drawn from the local area, although a few live in the surrounding zones and have to travel to the school each day. There are about 400 learners. The staff of 13 includes the principal and two HODs (one in the foundation phase and the other in the intermediate and senior phase).There is no deputy principal[21]. The teaching staff comprises mainly young teachers with only a few years' experience. However, there are several on the staff who have been teaching at the same school for more than 20 years, including the principal.

School 2 is almost the same size as school 1, with approximately 300 learners and a staff of 10 teachers, two HODs and a principal. The school also does not have a deputy principal

[21] The Department of Education stipulates that schools with less than 600 learners cannot have a Deputy.

because of the low enrolment figures. No-one on the staff during the interviews was certain of the year the school was founded, but, based on the physical condition of the building, it probably dates back some five decades or more.

Although the two schools are fairly distant from each other, they fall under the same district[22]. Both schools are 'Section 21' organisations[23] and both are classed as 'Quintile 1.

In order to warrant confidentiality, the researcher coded both schools and participants. The following tables provide the schools' and participants' codes for ease of reference in the data presentation and analysis.

[22] The Johannesburg Central District, which oversees all schools in Soweto.
[23] Meaning that they have the autonomy to administer their own funds allotted by the Department.

4.1.3 Participants' codes

Table 1

SCHOOL 1		SCHOOL 2	
Participant	**Participant Code**	**Participant**	**Participant Code**
(a) Principal	(b) PRISCH 1 (c)	(d) Principal	(e) PRISCH 2
(f) HOD	(g) HODSCH 1 (h)	(i) HOD	(j) HODSCH 2
(k) Teacher	(l) TEASCH 1 (m)	(n) Teacher	(o) TEASCH 2

SCHOOL 1

4.1.4 Biographical information of participants

Table 2

Participant	Gender	Level of qualification	Number of years spent as educator	Number of years in school
Principal	Female	Honours degree	20 years	20 years
HOD	Female	First degree	16 years	2 years
Teacher	Female	Teachers' diploma	37 years	20 years

4.1.5 The role of principals in schools

In every organisation there are particular aspects or elements which make up that organisation and each of these needs to be healthy. Any unhealthy or malfunctioning element may have a negative ripple effect throughout the system (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997, p. 17). Schools, like all other organisations, assign different job descriptions to various members of staff[24] to ensure that the goals of the organisation are accomplished. Fidler, (1997, p. 53), on the subject of effective organisational structure says that "each person needs to know his/her own task within the organisation and that of others with whom s/he comes into contact". For example, the principal has his/her own functions to fulfil but also needs to ensure that others under his/her supervision perform theirs. As this study seeks to understand how principals and HODs distribute leadership, it is important to scrutinise what

[24] Each member of staff in the school has to perform his/her designated tasks or delegate some of them to other willing and capable members.

their roles are in schools in order to understand how they can devolve leadership to achieve school objectives optimally.

The 'South African Standard for Principalship', (2005, p.14) designates the key roles of the principal as follows:

- Leading and managing the learning school
- Shaping the direction and development of the school
- Assuring quality and securing accountability
- Developing and empowering self and others
- Managing the school as an organisation
- Working with and for the community

The participants of school 1 categorised the principal's role as, firstly, that of leadership and management; secondly, the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning can take place and lastly, teacher development. These will now be discussed in turn.

4.1.5 a) Leadership and management

The principal of the first school (PRISCH 1) understood her role as being:

"…to manage, monitor and support teaching and learning".

Head teachers face the dual responsibilities of instructional leadership, (concerned with teaching and learning) and managerial tasks. Bankakku argues that, in South Africa:

> "the current trends in educational reform tend to downplay the instructional dimension of the principal's tasks with most principals neglecting and/or entrusting this all-important responsibility to someone else while engaging themselves with more managerial and administrative tasks".
>
> (Bankakku, 2008, p.10)

HODSCH1 concurred with the principal, saying that the role of the principal is:

"…to make sure that teaching and learning takes place".

The principal of this school also described her role as that of involving other stakeholders in the affairs of the school, for example

"…helping parents to be involved in their children's education".

4.1.5 b) Creation of a conducive environment for teaching and learning

Both HODSCH1 and TEASCH 1 articulated the necessity for the principal to create a supportive environment. TEASCH1's response to the question on the role of the principal was, firstly,

" to manage and maintain discipline in the school…"

The maintenance of discipline is crucial for schools as effective teaching and learning cannot take place if there is no discipline, either from the perspective of learners or teachers. The response by this teacher suggested that there is not enough discipline in one sector of the school.

Secondly, she saw relationships between personnel as being equally important in supporting a healthy atmosphere in schools.

"…to make sure that educators work together, to maintain good relationships in order to be able to produce good results…"

Bankakku (2008, p. 19) points to the role of the principal as facilitator: "it is the instructional leader's responsibility to… create enabling conditions within the school that support effective teaching and learning." However, the context is an important aspect. Creating an enabling environment can mean different things to different schools. It can also take different forms within the same school depending on the needs of teachers and learners in a particular

school setting. It becomes the responsibility of the principal, assisted by the school body, to identify what would constitute an “enabling environment” for their particular school.

HODSCH1 supported the notion of a sustainable situation where teachers and learners could be personally nurtured and supported, part of the principal’s role being:

“…to oversee the wellbeing of teachers and learners…”

4.1.5.c) Teacher development

TEASCH 1 further highlighted the need for principals to play a role in the professional development of teachers:

“…to encourage educators to grow in their teaching, improve methods of teaching.”

This developmental responsibility of the principal is supported in the literature, for example by Blasé and Blasé (1999, p. 350). It was however not clear how the principal in this school developed the teachers as she only mentioned that she was giving feedback from the workshops that she attended at the district office or elsewhere. PRISCH 1 did not mention any workshop that was specifically based on staff needs.

Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & van Rooyen (2009, p. 2) point out that:

“…leader involvement in the oversight of, and participation in, curriculum planning and co-ordination and teacher learning as well as professional development is crucial.”

4.1.6 The definition of distributed leadership

Spillane, Diamond and Jita (2010, p. 535) argue that:

> School leadership is best understood as a distributed practice, stretched over the school’s social and situational contexts. It is not simply a function of what a school principal, or any other individual leader-assistant principal, teacher leader does.

During the interviews, TEASCH 1 gave the following response when asked to define distributed leadership:

"…educators (ought) to be given a chance to lead in different committees, to share ideas and … to be allowed to participate in all school decision making".

This raises two issues that are tied to distributed leadership[25]. The first is that of forms of distribution, which she advocates as committees while the second is of collegiality and 'democracy'.

MacBeath categorizes two types of distribution: namely, the 'planned' and 'spontaneous', describing different processes through which leadership is distributed in schools (MacBeath, 2005, p. 357). In some South African public schools, the type of distribution that is prevalent is the 'planned' type where tasks or functions of leadership are given careful, prior planning by all members. Bush (2008) points out that: "in collegial models, all stakeholders partake in decision making processes".

TEASCH 1 also indicated that, in her school, teachers were given opportunities to lead and manage teaching and learning, as their contributions were valued by the SMT.

The principal and HOD indicated that they were not familiar with the concept of distributed leadership. However, this may not mean that the concept is not practised: the term may be unknown to the participants, as it is a fairly recent one, yet it might be prevalent in practice. For instance[26], teachers were encouraged to share knowledge acquired at workshops with the rest of their colleagues on their return (HODSCH 1) and presented demonstration lessons to other staff (PRISCH1) in order to share best practice or new methods.

[25] ...but that do not adequately define distributed leadership as envisaged by its advocates
[26] in response to a question asking how the management of teaching and learning is shared among staff members.

4.1.7 Leadership and management of teaching and learning

The researcher enquired as to how the leadership was distributed. They responded that various leaders:

"Monitor day-to-day running of the class, workshop educators, check learners' books and educator files and analyse results each term". (PRISCH 1)

The principal, in response to the question on her duties, limited them to "ensuring that teaching and learning takes place", an answer which was so vague it could be read in several ways[27].However, there was evidence that she used some of the strategies that are suggested in the literature. In response to the question regarding her most time-consuming tasks, she replied:

"Disciplining learners, teaching and administration"

and admitted that she spends the least time on

"supervising educators and overseeing teaching and learning".

She indicated that the HODs and others took over these functions.

Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & van Rooyen (2009, p. 2) add to the list of duties that an instructional leader gets involved in, which is to:

- Monitor the work of HODs, through scrutiny of their work plans and portfolios.
- Ensure that HODs monitor the work of educators within their learning areas.
- Arrange a programme of class visits followed by feedback to educators.
- Ensure the availability of appropriate learning and teaching support materials (LTSM).

[27] This could be read as failure to answer the question fully, or that she felt she was solely responsible for it, or that she may simply not be engaging in these tasks at all.

However, middle managers[28]*do* have an important part to play in the management of teaching and learning. Bush and Glover (2009, p.7) suggest that they should:

- Spend more time analysing learners' results
- Jointly develop departmental improvement plans with fellow educators.
- Monitor educator classroom records on a regular basis.
- Establish direct observation of educator teaching
- Set improvement targets with teachers.

In response to the question regarding her duties, the HOD also limited hers to that of ensuring that teaching and learning should occur:

"..by making sure at all times that teachers are in class and are teaching" (HODSCH 1).

She mentioned later that she checked teacher files and occasionally learners' books, but that she only observed lessons when IQMS was implemented and the SMT was free to observe lessons as they had their own teaching loads to deal with. It has been experienced by the researcher that foundation phase HODs are afforded no time to fulfil other duties, especially within contact time. Without a more flexible timetable or an alternative arrangement, HODs are limited in carrying out essential tasks such as classroom observation.

4.1.8 Sharing responsibilities in the leadership and management of teaching and learning

PRISCH 1 and HODSCH 1 both specified that they shared responsibilities, but seemed not to use the same approaches. The principal, for example, relied on the efficient work of committees-

"Yes we do share responsibilities in the school. We have committees, (finance, condolence and administration). Each teacher belongs to one of these committees." (PRISCH 1).

[28] Heads of Department, Phase and Subject leaders.

The South African School's Act (SASA) has mandated that schools formulate a variety of committees in order to ensure that decisions in schools are taken by a variety of people and so distributing leadership. The committees directly concerned with teaching and learning are the School's Assessment Team (SAT), the School-Based Support Team (SBST) and the Integrated Quality Management Systems team (IQMS). However, there are many other "peripheral" committees that are present in schools which support the effective management of these institutions. These vary in importance depending on the environment[29].

The principal used various strategies for sharing responsibilities. She mentioned that 'senior teachers' and 'subject heads' had different responsibilities, the former taking part in overall school decision-making processes and the latter on matters on the curriculum.

The HOD tended to delegate:

"Yes, I share responsibilities with other teachers, and I choose teachers with expertise. If she does not have expertise she won't do the work properly" (HODSCH 1).

She gave the example of delegation of one teacher to help with learning and teaching support material. Other participants emphasized that they made sure that a person given a particular responsibility was comfortable with it. They also pointed out that when an educator showed passion for doing certain tasks, this energy could be harnessed for the good of the school and the individual.

4.1.9 Challenges regarding the leadership and management of teaching and learning

Regarding the challenges faced in its management, the principal stated:

"…being a full time teaching principal." (PRISCH 1)

[29] In her response the principal listed the "disciplinary and sports and culture" committees as committees on teaching and learning. Also, although all other committees are important in achieving the aim of decentralised leadership and management, the principal and HOD did not mention these committees as platforms for sharing the responsibility of teaching and learning.

She explained that, because of shortage of staff, she herself resorted to teaching full time in order to alleviate her teachers' workload, particularly because they had large classes.

The HOD felt inhibited by a lack of:

"Resources, we have a problem with teaching and learning resources." (HODSCH 1)

She was however not sure which teaching and learning resources she was referring to, despite the researcher probing as to how resources could inhibit the activity of the managing of teaching and learning[30].

All three participants had divergent views on several other focus themes of the questionnaires and interviews. For example, the principal and HOD of this school did not respond to the question on distributed leadership[31] and on the role of principals in managing this in their schools.

[30] Perhaps the participant did not understand the question or gave an answer that came first to mind without thinking it through properly.

[31] This could be because the principal had more experience in leadership and managerial issues in schools as compared to the HOD who had only been in the leadership position for nine months. Another factor is that school leadership incumbents receive no formal training on the responsibilities that are bestowed on them.

SCHOOL 2

4.2.1 Biographical information of participants

Table 2

Participant	Gender	Level of qualification	Number of years spent as educator	Number of years in school
Principal	Female	First degree	38 years	15 years
HOD	Female	Honours degree	13 years	1 year
Teacher	Female	Teacher diploma	37 years	34 years

4.2.2 The role of principals in schools

Starting with the question on her role as the principal, PRISCH 2 listed the following activities:

"To lead, manage, monitor and direct human and physical resources, To build strong bonds between the school and community, To enhance the vision of the school community."

Although Beare et al (1993, p.141) do not say the school leader should "enhance" the vision of the school, they argue that leaders should have a vision for their schools. They also emphasise the fact that "…the vision should be shared by teachers as well as the school community."

HODSCH2 pointed to additional aspects that principals should consider besides leading and managing:

"… to be an example. To offer support and encouragement, to motivate and praise where necessary."

The teacher 's reply to this question was:

"A principal must work and liaise with other educational institutions in developing the school and conducting the extra curriculum. S/he must see to it that effective teaching and learning takes place in the school. S/he must workshop in order to upgrade, enrich and develop educators professionally." (TEASCH 2)

Of the three, she seemed to have a more complete insight than some of the others.

4.2.3 The definition of distributed leadership

The principal in this school mentioned that she had entrusted all the management of the school to her HODs and teachers. She understood distributed leadership as:

"…shared responsibility among stakeholders". (PRISCH 2)

The word "share", which is often associated with distributed leadership, was used by the principal to allude to sharing responsibility generally. However, the teacher used it to show how members should help each other tackle professional matters concerned with teaching and learning, saying:

"Leadership should be distributed amongst all stakeholders in the school ... sharing of professional ideas, working as a team. There should be loyalty and trust in leadership." (TEASCH 2)

The HOD did not respond to this question, but while she may not be familiar with the term, her lack of response does not necessarily translate into her not distributing leadership to others.

At this point, it might be well to advise that the shared/democratic aspect of 'distributed leadership' is not universally agreed. Spillane (2006, p.149) warns that distributed leadership is frequently used as a synonym for shared, team and democratic leadership. Distributed leadership is however more profound that these other forms of leadership as it looks at how a group of people with a variety of knowledge and expertise is pulled together for the purposes of maximising school performance.

4.2.4 Leadership and management of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are the core activities that happen in all schools and should be the centre of everything that happens in the school. Principals need to be aware of what is expected of them as instructional leaders. Bush and Glover (2009, p. 5) comment that, in general, South African principals do not conceptualise their role as instructional leaders.

The principal of School 2, on how she managed teaching and learning said:

"By going into the classroom myself, with me it is a matter of do as I do, not do as I say".

This was because, as a full time teacher, she could model teaching for the rest of the staff:

" I am subjected to all the roles of teaching and learning, that is: being a full time teacher, marking books submitting books and records to my HOD." (PRISCH 2)

This principal emphasised that she loved teaching and when asked if she was in class because there was a shortage of teachers, she replied that she would '*die*' if she could not teach any longer.

The HOD managed teaching and learning by:

"…honouring our contact time, which has to do with proper teaching and learning". (HODSCH 2)

The teacher (TEASCH 2) did not answer the question regarding the monitoring of learners' and educators' work by the SMT although she had answered all the other questions meticulously.

School leaders need to ensure that there are no gaps in the curriculum, but, most importantly, to strategize for continual improvement. Bush and Glover (2009, p. 3) maintain that research on school improvement shows that the two main factors influencing the quality of education are classroom practice and leadership.

4.2.5 Sharing responsibilities in the leadership and management of teaching and learning

Spillane and Diamond (2007, p. 7) refer to sharing in distributed leadership as the "leader plus" aspect. The principal explained that she shared responsibilities with her immediate subordinates, by:

"…allowing HODs to take charge of their departments in overseeing matters of monitoring teachers and learner discipline."

The principal said she did not interfere with HODs' work as it was their responsibility that their departments ran as smoothly as possible. She also indicated that she did little in terms of managing the school as all teachers were involved in management. As an example, she cited a very good teacher that managed all the finances of the school on her behalf with the help of two school receptionists.

The HOD also shared responsibilities with other members of staff:

"Sometimes I let other teachers go to workshops on my behalf and we make sure that everybody has something to do by being in the school committees."

The use of committees in sharing responsibilities should be prioritised as it is mandated by SASA.

4.2.6 Challenges regarding the leadership and management of teaching and learning.

The lack of time seemed to be a common challenge for both participants in this school. PRISCH 2 said:

"as I said earlier, there is not enough time for me to do other things like monitoring because of my full time teaching schedule but I trust my teachers and HODs"

Full-time teaching also presented problems to the HOD:

"I teach full time and my administration work falls behind, so I don't leave the school at 3pm. I stay behind so that …I catch up with my other work that I have to do." (HODSCH 2)

4.2.7 Summary of research findings

The summary of the findings compares and contrasts participant responses to enable the researcher to discern any similarities and/or differences on how distributive leadership is practised in these schools.

The principals' and HODs' responses did not reveal the intricate nature that the role of principals has evolved into today. Principals vaguely referred to their role as leaders and managers of schools without going into details of what they were leading and managing. The principal of school 1 however, raised teaching and learning as an activity that she needed to 'attend to'. Despite the fact that both principals had extensive experience as both teachers and managers of schools did not help them articulate their roles comprehensively enough.

The HOD's responses, also, on the role that principals should play, leaned heavily on what Hargreaves (1997, p. 239) refers to as: "expressive-social cohesion" where there is a need to maintain social harmony[32]. Other tasks that principals should perform, particularly

[32] Collaboration of teachers in some township schools is often not taken seriously enough, yet they impact on school effectiveness. Firstly, educators either volunteer or are nominated to partake in a particular committee but expertise and experience are not taken into consideration and teachers prefer to be in committees that are perceived to *reduce academic demands*. Committees concerned with the quality of teaching and learning, such as the school assessment team (SAT), the integrated

instructional leadership, were not elaborated on by these participants. Ironically, the *teachers* from both schools gave more comprehensive descriptions of the role of the principals as compared to their seniors. Possibly the concise replies from the principals and HODs could be linked to the structure of the questionnaire that had limited space, compared to that of the teachers which had much more room for them to elaborate on the question. The other could be that both teachers had a vast amount of teaching experience[33] and therefore better insight into what principals ought to do in school.

There was a marked difference in how the two principals implemented instructional leadership. Principal 1 identified strategies that research and the literature suggest as useful tools: development, monitoring teacher work through scrutiny of their files, learner books and analysis of the results. Her counterpart, however, used another approach, in that she guaranteed that teaching took place by engaging in teaching herself as she had a full time class she taught every day.

The two principals also diverged in terms of how leadership of teaching and learning was shared in their schools. On one hand, PRISCH 1 denoted sharing of *leadership*, but not *leadership of teaching and learning,* in that the finance and administration committees that she alluded to were not directly linked to teaching and learning. On the other hand, PRISCH 2 *delegated this task to the HOD*. Both HODs nevertheless highlighted activities that were related to sharing of responsibilities and to teaching and learning matters.

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quality management systems (IQMS) and the school based support teams (SBST)[32] are avoided. Some teachers refuse altogether to play a part in any committee. Secondly, principals often do not insist on the frequency of meetings so that communication is rare. Spillane and Diamond (2007) comment:"…despite heavy administrative demands, the principal must be able to orchestrate ways to influence classroom instruction, working to connect her work as a leader and manager to that of the teachers." The responsibilities of leading and carrying out activities related to the committees are often left to HODs. The researcher is a Foundation Phase HOD, and finds that the challenges of juggling a class fulltime, monitoring teacher's work, managing departmental resources, conducting meetings and being involved in various committees at school compromises the quality of work for both herself as an HOD and teacher and also for the teachers whom she is supposed to develop and support.

[33] Both teachers had taught for more than three decades.

The one common task that the principals, together with one HOD, unanimously agreed on was the challenge of having to teach full time. Although the principals were both engaging in teaching, they were doing it for different reasons and it was seen to inhibit the task of leading and managing teaching and learning.

Distributed leadership is a way in which principals draw on the strength of other members of staff to accomplish the mission of the school. Christie (2007) points out that 'schools that work' use their capacities effectively. Even though HODs and other members of the SMT are bestowed with positional authority, and are remunerated for their posts, this will not automatically ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place. Principals need to acknowledge and embrace the fact that leadership can no longer be viewed as the terrain of only those with formal authority.

It can no longer be claimed that principals can single headedly bring about the success of a school or even its failure. Wright (2008) says:

"The days of the lone instructional leader are over…substantial participation of other educators is required."

Bush (2008) states that:

"…power is shared among some or all members of the organisation."

Principals also have to understand that followers make up the components of the leadership practice, and are not just subjects that are always led.

Principals need to recognise other people in the school as leaders who work in a coordinated manner at times and in parallel at others as they might have unique expertise either through their experience or professional qualifications. Bush and Middlewood (2005, p. 109) refer to the concept of working with others rather than alone as teamwork. The authors explicate that team composition should go further than structural issues to consideration of the roles played by team members. Principals need to begin practising

“power with” rather than “power over” other school stakeholders for the benefit of the core business of the school (Blasé and Anderson, 1995).

Principals have to establish ways to foster team work amongst their staff. Blasé and Blasé (1999) indicate that principals who encourage practice dialogue engage in the following activities:

“…making suggestions, giving feedback, using enquiry and soliciting advice/opinion and supporting collaboration”. (Blasé and Blasé,1999,p. 359)

In conclusion this chapter has revealed through the presentation and analysis of the data, that the concept of distributed leadership can be a good model that principals can adopt, to review their practice as leaders, strengthen professional relationships with their followers and take the opportunity to involve others when the need arises. The data analysis and findings appear to support the research presented in the literature review. This related specifically to the exploring of the concept of distributed leadership as a form of leadership that could help principals achieve the core purpose of schools which is the provision of quality teaching and learning and the understanding and application of the concept of the school as a learning organisation..

Chapter 5: General Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

Today, principals are afforded less and less time to engage in instructional leadership matters because of added responsibilities pertaining to administration and associated functions of management not directly linked to teaching and learning activities. A school without focus on its core purpose of achievement in and improvement of teaching and learning is not a functional school.

In order that instructional leadership can be implemented, principals need to establish ways to devolve this important task to other members of staff, even to those who are not formally within the management structure of the school but who may have the necessary expertise and knowledge. Timperley (2006, p. 4) argues that principals and schools should adopt a more realistic and sustainable conceptualisation of leadership which is distributed across multiple people and situations with a focus on improving instruction.

The researcher found that neither of the principals were fully aware of their roles in schools generally and their role as instructional leaders specifically. While both principals indicated the need to lead and manage their schools, only one touched on the issue of managing *teaching and learning*, but without elaborating further on the other roles required of the principal as set out in the South African Standard for Principalship (2005). This same principal also mentioned some strategies that the literature suggests in managing instruction, such as: monitoring teaching daily, developing teachers, checking learner books and educator files, analysing learners' results, and creating a suitable environment of learning and teaching.

In both case study schools, leadership and management of teaching and learning was distributed, but was being applied in different ways and for distinctive reasons within the context and culture of the individual schools. Both principals said that they distributed

leadership, although one was more inclusive in terms of the number of people involved in leadership as compared to the other. In one school, leadership was only distributed to the HOD while in the other, the HOD, grade heads and senior teachers played a role in leading and managing teaching and learning. However, their roles in this process were not clearly stipulated, with the exception of the HOD. In both the schools, the principals were engaged in class teaching which increased their need to distribute leadership, through constraints of time to fulfil their roles and responsibilities fully; but their reasons for engaging in class teaching differed. In school 1, the principal was involved in class teaching for the reason that there was a shortage of staff, while the principal in school 2 wanted to be an exemplary model to her staff and according to her: “ensure that teaching and learning” happened at her school. The latter principal used her involvement with classroom instruction as a strategy to encourage her staff to do their work.

The HODs also differed in the tasks for which they distributed leadership to teachers. In school B, the HOD distributed leadership for some matters related to teaching and learning. For example, a teacher had been given a leadership role in teacher development and monitoring teachers’ work by checking learners’ books. The other HOD worked through other teachers for administrative purposes, such as managing the LTSMs, (partly a teaching and learning task).

The HODs, like the principals, cited lack of time to be a challenge in management implementation, but both schools reported no challenges in implementing the distribution. They mentioned that everyone in their schools was willing to take on a little extra work and that there was no conflict between those who were given more responsibilities and those who were not. Teachers felt that their contributions on matters of teaching and learning were taken into consideration and appreciated.

The findings of this study reveal that instructional distributed leadership was partially practised in both schools, but in school 2 not practiced optimally, as suggested by research

literature. It is also evident that the limited distribution of leadership in these schools takes place within existing departmental structures such as committee structures and staff meetings, but not exclusively with regard to teaching and learning.

The researcher can therefore say that the three research questions posed were answered within the limitations of the scope and depth of the case study itself as noted earlier.

1) In response to the main question, regarding how principals lead and manage teaching and learning through distributed leadership, the study shows that these principals do distribute leadership although mainly not for purposes of teaching and learning. The leadership of teaching and learning in one of these schools is still heavily invested in the formal authority structures because only the HOD is given leadership powers for matters pertaining to teaching and learning. However, other staff[34] despite the fact that they are not in formal leadership positions are given responsibility according to their experience.

    a) The answer to the first sub-question regarding how HODs use distributed leadership in the foundation phase is also positive: the HODs in these two schools attempted to use distributed leadership albeit very unsystematically and scarcely for the benefit of teaching and learning.

    b) To the last question, regarding HODs and teachers' perceptions of distributed leadership, answers revealed that these participants were not aware of the benefits of distributed leadership as a means for sharing information, learning and development. The distribution seems to have been done in answer to a directive rather than a strategy for development and enhancement of the teaching and learning.

[34] like senior teachers and grade heads

5.2 Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following to enhance the distribution of leadership in the two schools:

- Information: Principals and HODs need to be well informed about their responsibilities and possible strategies regarding instructional leadership so that they can prioritise effectively for school improvement outcomes. They need to be knowledgeable and skilled about how distributed leadership works to embrace its principles.
- Application: Principals need to actively embrace leadership and its benefits in order to encourage broader participation in instructional matters.
- Focus: Committees that directly promote the improvement of teaching and learning such as the SBST, SAT and IQMS should be fully implemented, as they have the potential to impact on instructional issues through the leadership development of others.
- Time and staffing: The Department needs to be realistic regarding time required for the proper functioning of instructional leadership, especially for principals and HODs, whose most important duty is to lead and manage teaching and learning.

5.3 Conclusion

The study partially confirmed the researcher's view that principals are not tapping into their staffs' potential in order to maximize leadership, and therefore learner achievement. Moreover the study confirmed that some of the structures, which have been put in place through directives at district and provincial level, and are meant to devolve the leadership and management of teaching and learning, are not effectively utilised for the many reasons outlined in the study..

The study confirmed that leadership of teaching and learning is mostly vested in HODs who already teach full time in the foundation phase and already exercise leadership by virtue of their positions as opposed to “open boundary leadership” advocated for by distributed leadership.

Principals need to find ways of ensuring that as they delegate the responsibility of instructional leadership, so those who are given this duty will do so effectively. HODs and others to whom leadership of teaching and learning is given should be afforded time to execute their duties optimally without disruption of classes.

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APPENDICES

1. Letter for permission to conduct research study (Appendix One)
2. Information letter to participants (Appendix Two)
3. Consent form for participants (Appendix Three)
4. Questionnaire for principals, Deputy principals and Heads of Department (Appendix four)
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APPENDIX 1

Letter for permission to Conduct Research study in a school

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Division of Education Leadership and Policy Studies

June 2011

THE PRINCIPAL

Name of School

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: Request for Participation in Research Study

I am Maria Vaz student number : 0420441n a part time Master of Education student in Educational leadership studies, at Wits School of Education (University of Witwatersrand) will be undertaking a research study as part of the degree requirements. My research topic is: *The role of the Principal in Managing Teaching and Learning through distributed leadership: A case study of two Gauteng primary schools.*

I am requesting your permission to conduct this research in your school. The research would involve you as the principal, and a small number of staff members in the completion of questionnaires and in any follow up individual interviews with me, Maria Vaz to discuss educational issues raised by the questionnaire. The duration of the follow up interviews, with me Maria Vaz would be approximately one hour. Dates and times will be arranged with willing participants as convenient to them.

Participation in this research study is purely voluntary and you and the staff participants have the right to withdraw at any time, without prejudice. Any information that is disclosed will be

treated in strictest confidence and will be used purely for research purposes. Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured through the use of fictitious names.

All raw data obtained for the purposes of the research will be destroyed within five years in accordance with the requirements of the University of Witwatersrand.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated and I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

Maria Vaz

APPENDIX 2

Information letter to participants

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Division of Education Leadership and Policy Studies

Wits School of Education

Parktown

June 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request or Participation in Research Study

I am Maria Vaz, student number: 0420441N a part time Master of education student in educational leadership studies, at the Wits School of Education

(University of Witwatersrand) and will be undertaking a research study as part of the degree requirements. My research question is: *The role of Principals in Managing Teaching and Learning through Distributed Leadership: A Case Study of two Gauteng Primary schools.*

I am requesting your permission to participate in this research. The research would involve you in the completion of a questionnaire relating to educational leadership, and in a follow up individual interview with me Maria Vaz to discuss in more detail the educational issues raised by the. The duration of the follow up interviews, with me, Maria Vaz would be approximately one hour. Dates and times will be arranged with as convenient to you.

Participation in this research study is purely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time, without prejudice. Any information that is disclosed will be treated in strictest

confidence and will be used purely for research purposes. Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured through the use of fictitious names.

All raw obtained for the purposes of the research will be destroyed within five years in accordance with the requirements of the University of the Witwatersrand.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated and I look forward to your response

Yours faithfully

Maria Vaz

Appendix 3

Consent Form

I, _____, agree to participate in the research study conducted by the researcher, Maria Vaz who is a part time student at the Wits School of Education (University of Witwatersrand). I have read the information letter and understand its contents. I am aware that the interviews will be audio recorded for later transcription for use in research analysis. I am also aware that I may withdraw from the research at any time and that there will be no remuneration given in return for the information I have given.

I hereby grant permission for the following (*Please tick relevant box*):

Use of information from questionnaire for research purposes	
Audio recording of interview	
Use of information from interview for research purposes	
Publication in the research report of anonymous data from questionnaire and interview	

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX 4

Questionnaire for the Principal, Deputy Principal and Heads of Departments

Instruction: Please tick as appropriate

School Information

District: _____

Type of school: mixed ☐ girls only ☐ boys only ☐

Total number of learners: _____

Total number of educators: _____

Biographic information ☐ ☐

A. **Gender: Male Female**

B. **Level of qualifications:**

Masters ☐

Honours ☐

First Degree ☐

Teacher Diploma ☐

Other (specify) ☐

C. Total number of years spent as an educator: _____

D. number of years spent as an educator in this school: _____

E. Total number of years spent in a leadership position: _____

F. What is your position at the school:

Total Principal ☐

Deputy Principal ☐

Head of Department ☐

Leadership Experience

G. What is your understanding of the role of the principal in school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

H. Are you familiar with the notion of Distributed Leadership

☐ ☐

Yes **No**

I. If yes, what do you understand by Distributed Leadership?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

J. How do you ensure that teaching and learning takes place at your school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I. **Which tasks do you spend most of your tasks on?**

i. **Discipline of learners** ☐

ii. **Dealing with parents** ☐

iii. **School finances** ☐

iv. **Teaching** ☐

v. **Supervising educators** ☐

vi. **Overseeing teaching and learning** ☐

vii. **Liaising with district officials** ☐

viii. **Administration** ☐

ix. **Other (specify)**

_____

J. **Which tasks do you spend least of your time on?**

i. **Discipline of learners** ☐

ii. **Dealing with parents** ☐

iii. **School finances** ☐

iv. **Teaching** ☐

v. **Supervising educators** ☐

vi. Overseeing teaching and learning ☐

vii. Liaising with district officials ☐

viii. Administration ☐

ix. Other (specific) ☐

K. Do you do lesson observation of your educators

Yes ☐ No ☐

L. Who is the main person responsible for academic issues in the school

The principal ☐

The deputy principal ☐

One of the HODs ☐

One of the subject heads ☐

Individual teachers ☐

M. Who is most responsible for overseeing the educators cover the whole curriculum

The principal ☐

The deputy principal ☐

The HOD ☐

Grade heads ☐

Subject Heads ☐

The educators themselves ☐

N. Who is involved in the decision making process at school

The principal ☐

The deputy principal ☐

The HOD ☐

Grade heads ☐

Subject heads ☐

The educators ☐

O. Who makes the final decisions regarding teaching and learning issues in the school?

The principal ☐

The deputy principal ☐

The HOD ☐

Grade heads ☐

Subject heads ☐

The educators ☐

P. Describe one example where the management of teaching and learning is shared among members of staff.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____-

_____

Q. Which tasks do you delegate to other staff members and which staff members?

_____

_____

_____

R. Do you seek staff input when drawing up the management plan?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

S. **How often do you meet with the SMT**

Once a month ☐

Twice a month ☐

Once a week ☐

Once a term ☐

Too busy to meet ☐

T. **On which activities do teachers work together?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX 5

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Instruction: Please tick as appropriate

School Information

District _____

Type of school: ☐ **mixed** ☐ **girls only** ☐ **boys only**

Total number of learners: _____

Total number of educators: _____

Biographic Information

A. **Gender:** ☐ **Male** ☐ **Female**

B. **Level of Qualifications**

Masters ☐

Honours ☐

First Degree ☐

Teacher Diploma ☐

Other (specify) ☐

C. Total number spent as an educator: _____

D. Total number of years as an educator in this school: _____

E. What is your understanding of the role of principals in schools?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

__

F. What do you understand by the term distributed leadership?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

G. Indicate in the boxes below whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

7. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

a) There is good communication between educators and managers in the school.

1 ☐ **2** ☐ **3** ☐ **4** ☐

b) Educators and managers are given opportunity to contribute towards decisions about teaching and learning in the school

1 ☐ **2** ☐ **3** ☐ **4** ☐

c) Contributions made by educators towards teaching and learning in the school are always valued

1 ☐ **2** ☐ **3** ☐ **4** ☐

d) There is generally a culture of trust and working together between educators and management in the school

1 ☐ **2** ☐ **3** ☐ **4** ☐

e) Educators work together and help each other with teaching and learning in the school

1 ☐ **2** ☐ **3** ☐ **4** ☐

f) There is effective monitoring of learner and educators work by the SMT

1 ☐ **2** ☐ **3** ☐ **4** ☐

APPENDIX 6

FOLLOW UP PROBING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PRINCIPAL, DEPUTY PRINCIPALS AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS

---

1. **Do you share responsibilities in the school** **yes** ☐ **no** ☐
2. **If yes, how?**

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. **Who helps?**

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. **How do you decide on who shares the responsibilities?**

   _____

   _____

   _____

_____

_____

_____

5. **What responsibilities are shared?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. **What, if any challenges are faced regarding the distributing of responsibilities to others in schools?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. **What committees are there in the school that is related to teaching and learning? Who heads these committees?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. **Do you have a system of monitoring educators and learners? Who does the monitoring?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. **How often are meetings convened where the focus of the meeting is teaching and learning? Who chairs these meetings?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. **What are some of the challenges that you face with regard to the management of teaching and learning in the school? How have you dealt with these issues?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix 6

FOLLOW UP PROBING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PRINCIPALS, DEPUTY PRINCIPALS AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

---

1. **Do you share responsibilities?** **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐
2. **If yes, how?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. **Who helps?**

_____

_____

_____

4. **How do you decide on who shares the responsibilities?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. **What responsibilities are shared?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. **What, if any challenges are faced regarding the distribution of responsibilities to others in the school?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. **What committees are there in the school that are related to teaching and learning?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. **Do you have a system of monitoring educators and learners? Who does the monitoring?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. **How often are meetings convened where the focus of the meeting is teaching and learning? Who chairs these meetings? How often?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. **What are some of the challenges that you face with regard to the management of teaching and learning in the school? How have you dealt with these issues?**

_____

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_____