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VISIONING BEYOND EXPECTATIONS:
LEADING SUCCESSFUL PRIMARY SCHOOLS –
PRINCIPALS' INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP APPROACHES

GEETA BALLI MOTILAL

A thesis submitted to the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for degree of Doctor of Philosophy Degree.

Johannesburg; 2014

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ABSTRACT

Focusing on relations between principals, other School Management Team (SMT) members and teachers, this study examines the potential of their active collaboration around instructional matters to enhance the quality of teaching and student achievement. The analysis is grounded in the theory of instructional leadership- and the conceptual framework locates instructional leadership within the context of the instructional core and the role of the school principal and SMT exercise in the learning context. The main question that drove this research was: How does the work of the school principal influence classroom practice of teachers? My study investigated the following three sub questions: i)Does leadership contribute to the ultimate success of schools?; ii) What are the three successful schools doing? and iii)How do the principals of these schools recognise, implement and bring about change that contributes to their success?

The main aims were to examine how the primary school principal leads and influences classroom practice to encourage improved academic performance and how the principal and other senior management team members work together to communicate with, monitor and evaluate teachers. In addition, it investigated how teachers perceive and interpret the actions of the school leadership around their own classroom practice. It looked into the particular behaviours, relationships and interactions between the principals and SMT members and educators that influenced or hampered the delivery of quality education in the classroom.

The sample comprised of three case studies of primary schools in Gauteng, South Africa. The methodology used was structured interviews of the principals and senior management members, focus group interviews with teachers, observations and documentary evidence. Data was collected, coded and analysed under themes that emerged from examining the data and literature around instructional leadership. The research objective was to understand the role that primary school principals play in instructional leadership and how instructional leadership can lead to effective teaching and learning. My goals were to characterize “best practice” for instructional

leadership; and to identify strategies used by the school principals that show how their work influences classroom practice.

The study found that effective instructional leadership is central to enhancing teaching and learning in a primary school to improve student academic outcomes and that the instructional leadership behaviours of school principals were significantly related to teacher's commitment, professional involvement and innovativeness and to the overall improvement of student results. This study demonstrated that instructional leadership success is not based on a one size fit all model for instructional enactment of success.

KEYWORDS: leadership, instructional leadership, distributed leadership, primary school, roles and responsibilities, actions, improvement, academic achievement.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It has been submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

_____

GEETA BALLI MOTILAL

Date: 16 October, 2014

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DEDICATION

I especially want to acknowledge my late parents, Mr. and Mrs. Kalkapersad, who were totally committed to the education of their children. I deem that their implicit belief in the value of education inspired me to reach the heights of my career as an educationist. I would like to thank them for the sacrifices they made, during trying times, to provide for their children and for their inspiration to educate me and my siblings even when they were deprived of that opportunity themselves.

This thesis is dedicated to my children who bring into my life renewed energy and inspiration. I hope that this dedication will inspire then to reach their goals and aspirations in their lives.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACE	Advanced Certificate of Education
COLT	Culture of Learning and Teaching
DoE	Department of Education
FEDUSA	The Federation of Unions of South Africa
HOD	Head of Department
IC	Instructional Core
S.A.	South Africa
SACMEQ	Southern & Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SANPQP	South African National Professional Qualification for Principalship
SASA	South African Schools Act
SASSL	South African Standards for School Leadership
SASP	South African Standard for Principalship
SMT	School Management Team

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

> *"You don't change performance without changing the instructional core,"* states *Anrig Professor Richard Elmore. "The relationship of the teacher and the student in the presence of content must be at the centre of efforts to improve performance."(City et al, 2010).*

1.1 Introduction

This doctoral research began with my work in, and visits to, many primary schools throughout South Africa. In these visits, I noticed that many educators struggle everyday to bring about meaningful learning and teaching in classrooms. Many of these educators are fully trained in their profession and have been teaching for many years.

In recent years, both international standardised tests and important internal studies have revealed that South African students are performing below average in the majority of the cases. A systemic evaluation of the Foundation Phase[1] was conducted by the government was released in June 2003 (DoE, 2003). The results of the first national evaluation of the new curriculum revealed that Foundation Phase children were struggling with both numeracy and literacy. A second systemic evaluation in 2005 of Grade Six learners further confirmed the results of the previous evaluation (DoE, 2005b). Many recent studies and the book *Primary Education in Crisis* (Fleisch, 2007) confirm that many schools are not achieving the desired results. Fleisch's book outlines 'the scope and severity of the problem of primary school failure' (2008: vi).

There reality of this crisis in South African schools is acknowledged by other researchers such as Pam Christie and even by the Department of Education's own admission. The then Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, in a speech at the University of Witwatersrand, stated that "Our performance in mathematics and

[1]Systemic evaluation carried out with Grade 3 learners in 2001/2: mission was to set out to accomplish, namely, taking stock of the education system at the end of the Foundation Phase. The scene was set in 1998 when through wide consultation, intensive collaboration and cordial consensus a set of indicators of quality education was identified that were considered appropriate in measuring the performance of the S.A. education system.

science subjects is dismal and we continue to be faced by inadequate infrastructure, poor and inefficient administration in some provinces, and disaffected and demotivated teachers" (Pandor, 2008). The Federation of Unions of SA (FEDUSA) wrote in an October 2008 press statement that the South African education system and the economy are failing the learners of the country. "The education system does not yet prepare learners for the world of work, as the recent policy reforms are not established enough to deliver tangible results in practice," said the then union general (FEDUSA, 2006 SA education system failing pupils 2006).

Taylor (2008) points out that the poor performance of South African schools compared to those in both developed and developing countries has been established at primary level in mathematics and reading (Moloi and Strauss, 2005; Howie, Venter, Van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, Scherman and Archer, 2007) and at secondary level in mathematics and science (Howie, 2001; Reddy, 2006; Taylor et al, 2007; and Fleisch and Shindler, 2007). The SACMEQ[2] scores for mathematics at Grade 1 and 6 starkly illustrate the point. These figures are important for at least two reasons. Most obviously, they show that South Africa is outperformed by eight surrounding countries, many of which, including Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, are much poorer, with gross domestic products on the order of one-tenth to one-fifth of South Africa's. Taylor reiterates that, while in general, poverty is strongly associated with performance; some of South Africa's neighbouring country school systems achieve higher quality with far fewer resources than South Africa has available (Taylor, 2008). A second reason that the patterns shown in the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ, 1995-2010) are important arises from an analysis of the mathematics scores by quintile. Even amongst the richest 20 percent of schools (Quintile 5[3]), South Africa is outperformed by Mauritius and Kenya. In the other four quintiles the South African mean scores fall below the all-country means of all other SACMEQ countries. Clearly, something in the South African system is fundamentally not working.

[2]SACMEQ(1995-2010) is the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality.

[3] Schools in South Africa are arranged in quintiles that form the basis of funding.

When Nick Taylor (2006) analysed the “results of the 2006 annual senior examination” he found that about “80%” of south African “schools are dysfunctional” with the effect that nearly “all the schools serving poor African[4] communities are ‘essentially dysfunctional” (2006 p 2). It can be deduced that the majority of the poorer schools are facing serious challenges due to a variety of reasons. If this is the case of education in these schools, then many of our schools face challenges of mammoth proportions. One of the reasons may be the capacity of the principals and staff to turn the schools around. Taylor concluded that South Africa faced a serious problem of “the inability of most schools to provide young people with the attitudes and intellectual skills required building a modern state” (2006 p 2).

South African schools face major challenges despite many efforts by the National Education Department to try to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Many of these efforts are reflected in policies that were passed after the change in the system education after 1994.

One of the strategies discussed in these efforts was to “restore the culture of learning and teaching (COLT) in schools”. A study by Nxumalo (1993) indicated that although students, parents and teachers agreed that there had “been an erosion of COLT, each of the three parties blames the other for the situation” (1993 pp 55-60). Blaming each party does not adequately address the challenges of COLT. Since the erosion of COLT was identified, it is the prerogative of the principal of each school to take accountability independently or collaboratively with other members of management and find ways to restore the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.

Pillay (2003) in his study found that while in many schools a COLT does not exist today; it is questionable whether a strong functioning COLT existed for many of these schools in the past. A culture of learning and teaching requires that all aspects of compulsory schooling must be followed. Conditions such as regular attendance of learners and teachers, following a proper timetable and acceptance of authority and leadership should be firmly in place. This calls for a line of action where both the principal and staff would be required to set rules and standards; that

[4] In this context, the term African communities refer to Black South African people whose ancestors came primarily from the African continent.

would require all stakeholders and learners abide by these rules and standards; and try to rectify and institute quality practice. Often given South Africa's history, the default form of leadership to institute such clarity is authoritarian. An authoritarian leadership style is when a leader dictates policies and procedures, decides what goals are to be achieved, and directs and controls all activities without any meaningful participation by subordinates. An authoritarian line of action is when subordinates are given no authority to act how they decide, but rather to follow what the head of the institution dictates. It is a hierarchical, top down approach.

Chisholm and Vally (1996) stressed that "before addressing the factors that would potentially contribute to, restore, reconstruct and/or build a culture of learning and teaching, in order to improve the quality of practice in primary schools" (1996 p 1), it is crucial to highlight the broad aims of promoting a culture of teaching and learning. Some of these aims were;

> • To foster creative, critical and independent thinkers with skills and competences that is transferable.
>
> • To foster attitudes and values that is compatible with the ongoing transformation of society.
>
> • To promote values of critical thinking, self-discipline, empowerment, respect for the dignity of others, and a commitment to lifelong learning.
>
> • To develop new social relationships in schools founded on new forms of discipline, commitment and accountability for all stakeholders in education".
>
> (Chisholm & Vally, 1996 p 1)

These aims are ambitious, but are critical to providing quality education and require proper interventions to address the challenge. What these aims lack are explicit and implicit ways of understanding, implementing and applying them to the various contexts in which principals find themselves. Aims and policies are only effective to the degree of implementation.

The training and retraining of teachers and numerous workshops, staff development programmes and seminars have tried to address the challenges facing schools. The Department of Education instituted a variety of different Advanced Certificate of Education (ACE) courses, and although an impact study has not been done in this

area, it has been conveyed by a number of experts including the then Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, that most were not successful (Pandor, 2008).

These initiatives indicate a desire by the Education Department to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools; but also reveal that the many challenges facing primary schools in South Africa are daunting and multifactorial. One of the major factors is the limited pedagogical knowledge of teachers due to lack of qualifications, inadequate training and limited professional development. For some teachers the desire to change the quality of education may be genuine, however, they may lack the knowledge of how to actually implement the necessary changes. Others seem to lack even the desire to change. Many principals do not understand government policies sufficiently; making it even more difficult to interpret and relay these policies to staff. Sometimes policies get interpreted incorrectly and the gist of the policy is then lost and does not serve the intended purpose. Thus many instructional changes go awry and schools remain in the same state that they were in. The principal should support and initiate new learning for teachers to improve teaching and learning in the classroom. The vital questions, therefore, arises from the evidence presented are: Why is it that, despite the many initiatives and changes, primary schools struggle to provide improved instruction and quality education? Why are the schools still in crisis?

One possible answer to this question locates the problem with school principals. International literature has identified the leadership of principals as being key to turning around schools in times of crisis and as being a key factor in helping schools perform better. It is imperative to look into this fairly new concept in South African education and to add it to the knowledge gap about successful practices among South African principals. Principals in South African schools face many duties in their day to day running of the school. Some of these are to make decisions on administrative matters, school governance, curricular matters, pedagogical and instructional matters.

In order to improve the quality of instruction and the academic achievement of learners, Spillane (2001) highlights the importance of “substantial change for existing classroom instruction”(2001 p 1), which in South African schools is embedded in outdated teaching methods, lack of conceptual knowledge and an

inability to teach subjects that are allocated to them. Many of the district managers themselves are not capacitated to be able to provide the support and guidance required by these teachers and by principals. Many district officials do not have the resources and means to make and maintain the fundamental intervention required by the schools. The principal should be the enabler of change and should be accountable for the policy changes, for empowering teachers with the help of appropriate district personnel and for driving effective instructional leadership to make the school a success.

Bush and Glover (2009) in their study of a new South African school leadership initiative state “the importance of improving the quality of learning requires an approach to leadership development … by attempting to change the mindset of leaders to regard the processes of teaching and learning as central to their role”. However, they stress that the “how” of educational leadership is more important.

1.2 Research Aim

The primary aim of the research is to understand the role that primary school principals play in instructional leadership and how instructional leadership can lead to effective teaching and learning. I will explore the different roles the school principals take in their schools and how their work influences classroom practice. This exploration can offer a reflection on the consequences of policies and practices for primary schools and the role of primary school principals in managing instructional improvement.

1.3 Research Questions

The main question driving my research is: How does the work of the school principal influence classroom practice of teachers? This will be examined via these critical sub-questions:

1. How do three Gauteng primary school principals lead and influence classroom practice to encourage improved academic achievement?
2. How do the principal and other senior management team member’s work together to communicate with, monitor and evaluate teachers?

3. How do teachers perceive and interpret the actions of the school leadership around their own classroom practice?

1.4 Conceptual Framework

Despite the numerous challenges facing South African schools, there are primary schools achieving above expectation in terms of student achievement. The conceptual frame in which I am working would indicate that the leadership in these schools is reshaping the kind of instruction in these schools and their ultimate success. This research will attempt to demonstrate what successful primary school principals are doing to make teaching and learning effective in their schools. This involves ensuring that the principals recognize, implement and bring about changes that make a real difference to the academic achievement and education of students. This must translate into fundamental and relevant changes that the department envisages and which makes a difference to the overall student and school success. According to Spillane et al (2000 p 2) “it involves ensuring that the changes district officials and teachers undertake in response to instruction involve a transformation of the **core** rather than the **margins** of practice” (2000 p 2). The school, and school leadership in particular, is crucial in addressing the challenge of instructional changes. Elmore (2010) states:

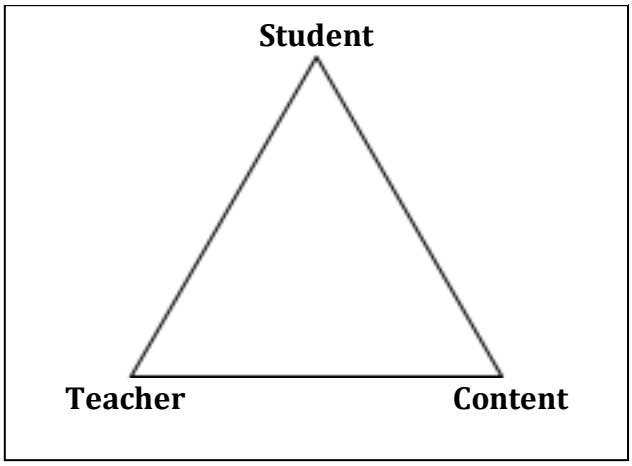
> "You don't change performance without changing the instructional core,…The relationship of the teacher and the student in the presence of content must be at the center of efforts to improve performance**"** (City et al, 2010 p 14).

Instructional change for improvement of student learning must take place within the instructional core according to City, Elmore, Friarman & Teitel (2010). The instructional core is composed “of the teacher and the student in the presence of content” (2010 p 14). The “how” of leadership should therefore focus on these three components of the primary school and how they interrelate.

Elmore’s (2010) theory of The Instructional Core (IC) contends that the only way to improve schools is to focus on the components present in the instructional core, these being the content of the curriculum, the teacher’s knowledge of content and pedagogy and the engagement of the student. When a school undertakes a change to one component of the three, it must take into cognisance how that

change affects the other components of the instructional core. In order to develop strong instructional leadership, school leaders will need to ensure that the actual practice will “lead to improvements in content, knowledge, skills and student engagement” (City et al, 2010 p 14).

Figure 1: The Instructional Core



Source 1:Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning (City, Elmore, Friarman & Teitel, 2010 p. 22)

The theory of IC is closely related to a particular approach to changing classroom practice known as Instructional Rounds (IR). I their book, City et al describe seven principles for the practice of IR that undergird how this theory of the IC explains what works in schools. The first states “Increases in student learning occur only as a consequence of improvements in the level of content, teachers’ knowledge and skill, and student engagement” (*City et al, 2010 p 24).*

As an example of how a particular school change decision could have an impact on the instructional core consider how the decision to start a vegetable patch could play out in a school. For this decision to have an impact on the improvement of teaching and learning, the leadership would need to pursue a path that understands the new garden into the context of the instructional core. For example, the teachers could first increase their knowledge about how to grow healthy vegetables, the value of the vegetables, how to prepare these vegetables into a wholesome meal and how they connect to a balanced diet. They would next examine the curriculum and consider how this expanded knowledge can be integrated into as many subjects as possible (such as life orientation, science, mathematics).

One of the main ways to engage students is through the creation of a task that seeks both to advance their learning and open their curiosity for learning more. Students could be engaged in designing the layout (mathematics skills of measuring), planning the garden (life orientation – nutrition and food), planting using correct measurements of soil and compost, and then growing and harvesting the vegetables (life sciences). The students' role will change as they work in groups to get their own patches growing as quickly as possible. Every opportunity should be used as a learning opportunity and ensure that the students integrate the knowledge into their understanding of their school.

The second principle state that if you change one part of the core then changes will occur in all three parts of the instructional core. As evidenced above the power of the IC comes when one sees the connectedness between the components of the core once any one change has been made. Changing one provides the necessity to consider corresponding changes in the other two elements.

The third principle of if you "cant see it in the core, it is not there" suggests that when we think of change in schools, if you cannot see it the change in what the students are actually doing, it will not effect the instructional core. Although tasks may be similar based on the content and teacher pedagogy it cannot be guaranteed that the task will fulfill the exact outcome as intended and that every student will achieve the desire result. Delivery of content and the results are based on two important variables of teacher intention and ability and on students' actual engagement. This may therefore produce significant differences in the actual learning.

The fourth principle, underlying the IC, state that "tasks predict performance". Thinking of the garden and the various ways students could engage with it demonstrates how this complex set of tasks could allow students to do higher order complex thinking. Rather than just memorizing measurement content, the task of preparing the garden allows students to learn measurement in a tacit way.

The fifth principle of "accountability is in the tasks" portrays the significance of the accountability of he educator. If the educator expects to develop independent critical thinking skills then assessing the content is not enough but may have to test

the students ability to measure the garden (in the above example) if the objective was to learn about measurement. Accountability is about the teacher not taking this into account.

The sixth principle states that “we learn to do the work by doing the work, not by telling other people to do the work, not by having done the work at some time in the past, and not by hiring experts who can act as proxies for our knowledge about how to do the work*”(City et al, 2010: 33).* This principle applies to the principal being fully involved in tasks himself/herself and then setting dimensions of practice and school improvement based on His/her fully knowing what the job entails. Leadership is by modeling the behavior you expect from others.

Asking teachers to learn new content, integrate it into subjects and fashion tasks for students with different levels of complexity illustrates how a decision by school leadership to undertake a project like the school garden can provide a vehicle for school improvement.

While developed principally to advance the Instructional Rounds practice the seventh principle of, “description before analysis/analysis before prediction and prediction before evaluation”, is considered as an important underlying process of defining and then analyzing the ideas about school change. Educators are taught a great deal about evaluating and assessing students. Often what they are in the process of leading school change they take those assessment skills to the forefront. What they need to do first is be able to describe what is happening, before they analyze and certainly before they judge. The stance of a researcher is important in any change effort because if you KNOW in advance the expected answer, you will not learn something new. A common language with common shared understanding should be use in describing what is happening in the classroom and then being able to classify the learning according to previously agreed upon criteria. Elmore urges participants to engage in the process by going in with an open mind devoid of any preconceived ideas and then to create a powerful, shared culture of instructional experience. Then only one can give an honest, reliable, unbiased analysis, valued prediction and careful evaluation.

According to Louis and Kruse (1995) and Newman and Wehlage (1995) cited in Spillane (2000 p 2) “schools that cultivate certain in-school conditions including shared visions for instruction, norms of collaboration, and collective responsibility for students' academic success, create incentives and opportunities for teachers to improve, and thereby aid the implementation process. School leadership is recognized as important in promoting these conditions” (2000 p 2).
The concentration/emphasis on the seven principles of the instructional core, principles that are linked more closely to schools in the United States than South Africa, is tantamount to receive much criticism in South African education system. Elmore’s principles assumes a state of readiness in schools which are practically impossible given the state of South Africa’s schools, teacher readiness to teach and student capabilities. Most schools are riddled with lack of resources, poor training in the use of these, issues of multiple and severe poverty, parents inadequate educational and economic capital, a teaching force who are faced with a multitude of challenges, poor infrastructure exacerbated by vandalism, safety and other sticky problems such as drug dealing and drug related problems, staff bullying, poor attendance by students and teachers, dire socio economic conditions, general apathy and a demoralized workforce.

While this maybe so the primary objective of getting the children of South Africa educated in the most focused and proficient way is to get the maximum out of schools and this means looking at instruction and the instructional core where transformation and change is envisaged to improve the status quo. The only way that change can be instituted is by focusing on the central activity of a school that being teaching and learning and the seven principles address the core issues that lead to quality learning and improved outcomes.

1.5 Rationale

With the introduction of recent standards of educational leadership (The South African Standards for School Leadership or SASSL, DoE, 2007) and the increasing complexity of a principal's job, there is a dire need for principals in primary schools in South Africa to lead instruction in clearly defined and consistent ways to improve teaching and learning.

Several initiatives have been instituted to address the challenge of leadership in primary schools. However, very little research has been done in South Africa with regards to instructional leadership in primary schools, creating a huge gap in essential knowledge to assist principals who are struggling to improve the instructional core in their schools. Firstly, this study intends to address this gap in the literature by researching what school principals need to achieve success.

But the principal does not act alone. In order for a school principal to become optimally effective and efficient, so as to ensure quality teaching and learning, it is important that s/he is able to understand and articulate the transformation processes that have occurred since 1994. The Constitution and subsequent education policies that are built on democratic practice, equity and redress, are essential foundation documents for principals to understand and implement.

The specific aim of new policies should be to intensify student learning and academic achievement by improving teaching and learning in classrooms. Since the needs and contexts of schools in the country are so different new policies present paradoxes and challenges for the different types of schools. Firstly, it is imperative that principals begin to understand their schools and context well and be aware that s/he is accountable, and responsible for positive change to take place and to adopt an analytic approach to their individual situations. The second issue that is central to the implementation of policies and change is the principal's own disposition and attitude towards teaching and learning and the improvements thereof. It may require a rethinking of his/her own values, beliefs, temperaments and leadership styles to accept that the principal's critical role is to develop quality teaching and learning opportunities for all students. This, therefore, should translate into developing

1.6 Research Methodology

In this research, I sought to understand how the actors in three primary schools understand and make sense of the actions of the school leadership with reference to teacher's practice and student's success in the school. I identified principals' statements, talk, arguments and reasoning for proposed actions and decisions, to explore where the principals use their educational competences and perhaps trace

their decisions. I identified the qualities, characteristics and competencies of school leadership in primary schools in three different circumstances. Because the aim and nature of my project deals with complexity and relations between all the various actors in the school, I use a qualitative approach and consider three case studies as illustrations of these ideas.

1.7 Limitations

There was the possibility of challenges to this research, or constraints if schools did not act to improve teaching and learning as indicated in their selection. The research also uncovered other barriers that educators acknowledge as factors that prevent them from improving.

1.8 Summary

Doing research in primary schools was aimed at challenging communities' social beliefs and mindset that education success is measurable at the final year of learner schooling. South Africa must begin to take an interest in, and understand, the implications of effective instructional leadership that begins from the early years of the learners' school life.

1.9 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis is reported in eight chapters. The following is the outline of the chapters:

Chapter one is the introductory chapter which contains a background to the study; motivation; analysis of the problem; statement of the problem; aims and objectives of the study; an outline of the research methodology, the local, national, international and theoretical context of the study.

Chapter two is the literature review that locates the study in a body of theory and conceptual underpinning and research.

Chapter three of the thesis explored the research methodology. This includes specifying the target group, sample, sampling methods, the research instruments and research paradigms.

Chapters four through to six revolved around presentation and discussion of data obtained through the use of semi structured interviews, observations, focused group interviews and document examination on the instructional leadership role of the primary school principal in each of the three case study schools.

Chapter seven included a discussion of the case study data and cross-case analysis.

Chapter eight provided the summary, conclusions and implications for the meaningful instructional leadership role of the primary school principal.

The next chapter provides an overview of the literature on instructional leadership of primary school principals.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A literature review summarizes and analyzes the work done by others and raises questions that need to be answered through research. The purpose of a literature review is to gives a bird's eye view of the amount and nature of work already contributed to by other researchers in the field or discipline to be researched.

The idea of a literature review is to give some background and context to ones work. This literature will show how my research fits into the big picture, relating it to what has been done before and get an overview of the key ideas and theories, who developed them, and when.

Conducting a literature review is a means of demonstrating an author's knowledge about a particular field of study, including vocabulary, theories, key variables and phenomena, and its methods and history. Conducting a literature review also informs one of the influential researchers and research groups in the field.

Apart from the above reasons for writing a review, the scientific reasons for conducting a literature review are many. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) argue that the literature review plays a role in:

- delimiting the research problem,
- seeking new lines of inquiry,
- avoiding fruitless approaches,
- gaining methodological insights,
- identifying recommendations for further research.

Another purpose for writing a literature review not mentioned above is that it provides a framework for relating new findings to previous findings in the discussion section of a dissertation. Without establishing the state of the previous research, it is impossible to establish how the new research advances the previous research.

Hart (1998) contributes additional reasons for reviewing the literature, including:

- distinguishing what has been done from what needs to be done,
- discovering important variables relevant to the topic,
- synthesizing and gaining a new perspective,
- identifying relationships between ideas and practices,
- establishing the context of the topic or problem,
- rationalizing the significance of the problem,
- enhancing and acquiring the subject vocabulary,
- understanding the structure of the subject,
- relating ideas and theory to applications.

This chapter provides an overview of the literature on instructional leadership of primary school principals. It comprises a review of local and international research on instructional leadership in schools highlighting the importance of teaching and learning. The chapter includes a local content based on what is happening in South Africa, roles and responsibilities of the principal including literature on principal's work as an instructional leadership in influences teaching, learning, improvement and academic achievement.

In this section I explore instructional leadership and the theoretical perspectives underpinning specific aspects of instructional leadership, in particular technical and substantive aspects of teaching and learning. I include a literature study of different frameworks and models of instructional leadership and how some of the assumptions made influence and assist with specific practice in primary schools.

Much of the literature being consulted has an international focus. One of the reasons for this study is the lack of South African literature on key issues that face schools. Little research has been done on the roles and responsibilities of principals with regard to instructional leadership of schools South Africa.

Hoadley (2009) found that much of the research into South Africa leadership focuses on policy rather than actual practice. The literature on instructional leadership focused on the conceptually knowledge of the value of instructional leadership that is based on improving teaching and learning. The study also aimed to extend the existing body of knowledge in developing the capacity of principals

and the understanding of leadership practices especially being an instructional leader in a primary school.

From my experience as an instructor in an executive leadership programme for school leaders, it became apparent that many school principals struggle to make the link between the challenges in their schools and those addressed in international literature. We need more studies that contextualize these ideas from international discussions of school leadership into the South African context and that focus on the challenges principals confront in these schools. This gap in research compounds the challenges in South Africa, as they do not understand the exact nature of instructional leadership in successful primary schools to draw from. South African contextual examples may help principals to understand how instructional leadership is being practiced in local schools.

Persistent power struggles may arise when principals overplay or underplay their roles as instructional leaders. What is it that successful primary school principals do on a daily basis to be able to achieve the level of success they attain? How do they negotiate the different demands made on them and support available to them from provincial and district levels and from unions? External and internal factors affect the school and these may hinder or assist the principal in his/her duty.

Elmore (1995) states that school reform efforts have been most successful in those schools that need them the least. These are schools with already well-established processes and capacities in place. Leithwood et al. (2006) define school leadership as a generic definition of “direction and influence”. Stability is the goal of what is often called “management” and improvement is the goal of leadership (Leithwood et al., 2006, p 11).

2.2 The South African Context

A systematic review of the literature on school leadership and work of the principals in South Africa reveal, according to Christie (2008), found that “the research and theory on school leadership and management that has burgeoned in western countries such as the United Kingdom, USA and Australia has informed leadership studies in South Africa and the complex framework of post-apartheid policies

introduced to reform the schooling system, including its leadership, management and governance". According to Christie (2008) "in terms of the latter, the new policies are underpinned by a tangled network of regulations on governance, labour relations and performance management, which bring complexity to the task of running schools. In addition, the enormous inequalities that continue to exist between schools mean that the work of principals is very different in different contexts".

Since the introduction of the new constitution in South Africa in 1996, a number of new policies were formulated and introduced to bring about much needed changes to our education system. Included amongst these is the South African Schools Act (SASA, RSA, 1996); Report of the Task Team (1996); the Draft Policy Framework (2004) Education Management and Leadership Development; the South African National Professional Qualification for Principalship (SANPQP, 2004); the South African Standard for Principalship (SASP, 2005) and The South African Standards for School Leadership (SASSL, DoE, 2007). The SASA set policy for the democratic management and governance of South African school while SASP stipulated standards for Principalship and set out to provide information to all school stakeholders about the role of the principal; notify about better selection and requirement procedures, improved performance management practice and processes applicable to principals and identify the professional development needs of principals and aspiring principals. (Van der Westhuizen & van vuuren, 2007 p 439)

The SASP only recognises the generic areas of principal's work. It does not provide suitable guiding principles and policies which explain why a principal makes certain decisions, follows certain course of action and how these effects teaching and learning and the school as a whole.

According to The South African Standards for School Leadership (SASSL, DoE, 2007), "the principal working with the School Management Team[5] (SMT) and others has a primary responsibility to promote a successful learning culture within the school." This demands that any school principal think about the impact of his or her

[5] SMT refers to the School Management Team comprising of the Principal, Deputy Principals, Head of Departments and teachers.

decision on teaching and learning. The explicit and implicit delivery of the curriculum using the best pedagogical input from every teacher should be at the forefront of every principal's leadership instruction. The principal's mission together with the school should be to promote quality education without compromise. Quality education should include rigorous teaching, high expectations from students, clinical supervision, expert feedback, continuing monitoring and evaluation of teachers and students, high achievement and unceasing improvements.

What remains problematic is that several of these documents were drafted, actively discussed and promoted, but never fully adopted. They, therefore, remain in draft form without the imprimatur of official policy. Given that these statements are aspirational in nature and continue to be discussed in the school leadership community, how the ideas represented in them are discussed and/or used by the principals whom I studied formed one strand of analysis in my work.

2.3 School improvement

The role of school principals has changed drastically in the past twenty years of attaining democracy in South Africa and in other parts of the world (Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, Foleno, & Foley, 2001; Murphy, 2002). Where principals previously needed to have a deep knowledge of management functions of finances, personnel and resources in some schools, in the majority of schools in South Africa, the principal had a role of chief or head of school and played a traditional role of an authoritarian in control. Many principals were visible sometimes in the school but had many other activities other than that of being a school principal. These roles did not support deep sustained school improvement. Looking at how students are performing in schools presently, it is imperative in order for schools to improve the principal has to play a key role in instructional leadership.

Effective school leaders today must, at minimum, foster rich learning environments for students and adults in their buildings (Barth, 2001); open avenues for sharing expertise (Elmore, 2004); facilitate democratic dialogue that values all voices (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003); build trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002); and promote shared understandings and a sense of shared responsibility across classrooms and with parents (Elmore, 2004; Epstein, 2001; Porter & Soper, 2003). Goals such as

improving the school environment making it conducive to learning, improving the social condition of learners by providing the basic needs noted in Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, and improving the pedagogic skills of leaders and teachers in the schools and then looking at the current battery of annual standardized assessments, such as the Annual National Assessment (ANA), the continental Southern and eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) and international Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) testing, are crucial factors in improving student achievement and are factors which are within the ambit of the school principal to work on.

The statistics provided by the tests, according to Spaull (2012) give an interesting perspective on where the SA schooling system currently is in comparison to other African countries and clearly signals where improvements are needed. Spaull (2012) illustrates that "South Africa still faces the reality of two different education systems, a dysfunctional schooling system (75%) and a functional schooling system (25%), which are miles apart in their respective performance". He goes on to demonstrate that "despite the high spending and many interventions which were made by the government over the past twenty years the system remains virtually unchanged". It goes on to show that although the government spends 20% of total government expenditure on education, of which 78% goes to teacher salaries that South African is in a state of "crisis" and improvements have to be made to schools to turn the state of education around.

When principals begin to show a concerted effort in these areas and achieve these kinds of leadership goals, they become crucial positive factors in students' development (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Educational Research Service, 2000). In fact, research now demonstrates that the principal's role is second only to the classroom teacher's role in student achievement (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). In addition Duke (2004) iterates schools that face significant obstacles to improvement have been unable to turn around without a strong leader present to guide in the difficult work of changing the school's culture.

Disparate achievement patterns are clearly evident along ethnicity, race, income and school categories (Ex Model C[6] which were previously white public schools, other public schools and private schools). In order for schools to improve the educational leadership of the school has to make the necessary change and be prepared to continuously develop their school sites, be culturally responsive in pedagogy and human interactions (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Nieto, 1999); commit to social justice and ethical decision making as foundational principles (Marshall & Oliva, 2006); use data to understand and improve both processes and outcomes in the building (Marzano, 2005); provide appropriate curricular programming that maximizes student learning (Newmann, Smith, & Allensworth, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 2002); use effective content-specific pedagogic approaches (Hiebert & Stigler; Shulman, 1987); and provide access to high-quality learning experiences for all populations (Picucci, Brownson, Kahlert, & Sobel, 2002; Villa & Thousand, 2000). These are among the critical elements leaders must know, be developed in and be committed to developing for school improvement in schools.

There are a number of school improvement projects in South Africa although most of these projects are not evaluated properly. Taylor (2007; 2008) has done extensive work in identifying elements of successful programmes but none of the studies looked at the role of the principal in terms of instructional leadership that lead to school improvement.

A study by Heneveld (2007) of three African countries, Tanzania, Uganda, Madagascar found that “schools with better results tended to have heads (principals) who pay more attention to the teacher’s preparation for teaching and the regular assessment of students than heads in schools with lower results” (p 14).

Bush et al (2006) in their review argue that “there is very limited material on the management of teaching and learning in South African schools” and most importantly “there is no accounts of how school principals and other school managers exercise ‘instructional leadership’ in their schools and seek to develop an effective culture of teaching and learning” (p 14) and of school improvements.

[6] Ex Model C schools are previously white only public schools that now serve an integrated school population.

2.4 Roles and responsibilities of principals

As noted above, the roles and responsibilities of South African principals have been in a state of change since 1994. The authority of the principal to manage teaching and learning was fast tracked through the formation of the School Management Teams (SMT) in the 1996 South African Schools Act. The principal is an accounting officer for the school, accountable mainly for learner achievement irrespective of her/him teaching the curriculum or not. This might imply that the principal has as his/her explicit and implicit duty, together with the SMT, to influence learner achievement and to lead instruction in the school. Of importance is that the principal be informed, highly skilled and knowledgeable.

The SASSL document sent to all schools stated that principal need to know about the following:

- The National Curriculum Statement
- Practices of effective teaching and learning
- Support curriculum delivery
- Effective monitoring and evaluation of performance
- Collecting and analysing data
- Using research to inform and improve practice.

(SASSL, DoE, 2007)

SASSL (DoE, 2005) makes sure that the teaching and learning process is lead effectively by principals by identifying six key areas of principalship:

- 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.

(SASSL, DoE, 2007

Although SASSL (2007) promotes effective teaching and learning principals do not place enough emphasise on them because effective teaching and learning is and elusive and complex concept to define. The curriculum and assessment statement policy stipulates what has to be taught in every grade but does not state how to do it. Although, the key areas are identified the explicit explanation and implementation of these areas are not expounded upon and is left to the interpretation of individuals. In South Africa principals do not share a common understanding of teaching, learning, leading and managing because of their context, history, prior training and experiences.

Christie (2008, p 156) states that “the policy process may appear rational and sequential, but in practice it is contested and sometimes confused”.

Hallinger (2005) accentuates that the roles and responsibilities of a primary school leader are informed by a theory of learning that starts with an assumption “that the principal should be an instructional leader” (Hallinger, 2005). This should be the stipulated and legislated role of the school principal. While documents state this quite categorically they fail to say what an instructional leader should look like, what characteristics should be embodied and displayed and how the principal should act as an instructional leader. Thus principals lead schools according to their own notions of what is expected of them.

The notion of the principal being responsible for everything that is done in the school, which eventually effects learner achievement, is well captured by Bush and Glover (2004). They assert that, “the core purpose of principalship is to provide leadership and management in all areas of the school to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning takes place and which promotes the highest possible standards of learner achievement,” (Bush & Glover, 2004, p 7). The principal must create an enabling environment and organizational structure so that all stakeholders work with a common understanding of providing quality teaching and above all quality learning.

Bush and Glover (2009) propose that a principal who focused strongly on managing teaching and learning would undertake the following activities to influence learner achievement:

- Oversee the curriculum across the school,
- Ensure that the lesson takes place,
- Evaluate the learners' performance through scrutiny of examination results and internal assessment,
- Monitor the work of the HOD's through scrutiny of their work plans and portfolios,
- Ensure that the HODs monitor the work of educators within their learning areas,
- Arrange a programme of class visits followed up by feedback to educators; and
- Ensure the availability of appropriate learning and teaching support material.

These activities assign core duties for principals to undertake in managing teaching and learning. They highlight the importance of the principal to be the foremost driver of each of these tasks. While this may be so it is a challenging portfolio and given the size and conditions of majority of schools in South Africa it is an enormous task for any individual to undertake and accomplish adequately. Another crucial factor is that the aspect of leading teaching and learning does not feature in these activities.

2.5 Curriculum and Content

In addition to SASA and SASSL many other documents and circulars with new policies were sent to schools to democratise education, bring about equity in education and provide one education for all its citizens after the apartheid era (Jansen, 1999). Many of these policy documents tried to bring about change to the roles and responsibilities set out for principals. The Principals were sent for minimal training around the various changes and then were expected to implement these policies. One of the main policy changes was the introduction of the new curriculum called 'Curriculum 2005', "the most ambitious curriculum" according to Jansen (1998). The new approach to education became known as outcomes based education (OBE). This curriculum required a paradigm shift from the traditional practices of teacher-dominated education to a learner-centred education, which meant major changes in pedagogy and teaching.

What seemed to be a dynamic new curriculum that envisaged huge changes to the content, teaching and student engagement required to overhaul the education system in South Africa became a mammoth challenge for the Department of Education. What was especially intricate was the training needed for principals and teachers to implement the curriculum. It required amongst other things specialists, curriculum advisors and intelligent professionals to make sense of the training provided by DoE, cascading the information to teachers and then expecting them to implement the changes to the desktop of learners. Thus the new curriculum became a new responsibility for principals.

The management of curriculum change in South Africa as reported in a research article by Hoadley et al. (2009) states that it has been a continuing challenge despite “the South African Schools Act” (1996 pp 42-43) introducing “a system of school based management” (1996 pp 42-43). This type of management meant that principals were given more autonomy and power to make decisions on the interpretation of the complex new curriculum and implement the changes to “improve the quality of teaching and learning” (SASA, 1996 p. 43).

In terms of curriculum, the new outcomes based curriculum was introduced in post-apartheid education and became a continuing challenge for many schools; majority of the teachers did not understand it; the content was unclear and training in the new pedagogy was lacking. Persistent poor performance of South African students in national tests (Reddy 2006; Christie 2008) indicates that effective implementation of the curriculum was lacking. In view of these changes in the curriculum, leaders were tasked to lead instructional practice in the classroom, make sure that all teachers understood the new curriculum and assessment policy and implement these successfully.

However, according to Chisholm (2008), there is a well-known body of South African literature that has drawn attention to the impact of post-apartheid curriculum, assessment and policy change on teachers’ working lives but very little on what leaders do to get the greatest benefit. Other researchers have expressed similar concerns (Jansen (1997, 1998a, 1998b), the Department of Education (2000), Booyse and Swanepoel (2004) and Stoffels (2004)). In fact, a Ministerial Committee reporting on the readiness to implement the Revised National Curriculum (Dada et

al, 2005) noted that the uncertainty around what the new assessment policy entails 'is generating significant uncertainty in the system' (2005 p 18).This study will determine how some principals managed to attain good results despite major curriculum changes and challenges in the schools.

The delivery of content and the new curriculum called CAPS need specialised experts to deliver in the classroom and for successful learning to take place. A review of research by Brophy (1986) found that certain behaivours of teachers, such as understanding the curriculum, using academic objectives of differentiated pacing of instruction based on content and curriculum were helpful to improve student learning. In more recent research Brophy (1986) found that effective instruction thrived in supportive environments and when the teacher spent most of the teaching time on curriculum related activities and the time be spent maintaining students engagement in these activities. Elmore (2010) in his instructional core model agrees with this as he regards the three components of teacher, curriculum and student engagement as the core aspects for change and improvement.

Leithwood et al (2010) survey results of schools indicate that "focused instruction" showed variation in student achievements and "this approach to instruction was most sensitive to school leader influence". "Focused instruction" to them is an approach which may be considered a "meta instructional strategy" which involves" goal oriented" whole class and individual teaching. The teachers in South African school have struggled with the numerous changes in curriculum that require deep analysis of new methodologies and new thinking around their pedagogies. The instructional leader has an invidious function to bring about the much-required change in instruction to provide quality teaching and quality learning. Given the deprived context of majority of our learners, the poor conditions of many of our schools and the training, conditions of service and developmental needs of our educators the principal needs to have a concerted, sustained effort in influencing instruction.

2.6 Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership has a long history and has been studied quite intensively in international studies. The term "instructional leadership" was derived from North

America and it has been superseded in England with “learning centred leadership” (Bush, 2011 p.17). In the USA instructional leadership focused on classroom teaching and was primarily concerned with teaching not learning. In the UK leadership for learning focused on classroom learning.

Instructional leadership is a complex concept and is often confused with other leadership concepts and school management concepts. The instructional leadership concept has extracted multiple interpretations as to what an instructional leadership does. In South Africa the concept is rarely used and even less understood. There are just a few researches in South Africa that speak about instructional leadership and these have been included in the Principal’s Handbook. Christie (2010) noted the “discursive absence of trends such as ‘instructional leadership’ in South Africa which are prominent in broader international literature”.

Instructional leadership is one of the fundamental concepts in this study. Different scholars and researchers conceptualize it differently and some call it “curriculum leadership”. Mullan (2007) conceptualizes it as the “jurisdiction of the principal” and one “who knows curriculum management and the change processes for the whole school” (Mullan, 2007 p. 23).

Instructional leaders are intensely involved in curricular and instructional issues that directly affect student achievement (Cotton, 2003). Research conducted by King (2002), Elmore (2000), and Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2000) confirms that this important role extends beyond the scope of the school principal to involve other leaders as well. The key players in instructional leadership in a school include the following:

1) Principals and Deputy Principals
2) Head of Departments,
3) Curriculum coordinators, grade leaders and teacher leaders
4) Central office personnel
5) Instructional coaches

The key elements of instructional leadership include the prioritization of teaching and learning on a consistent basis. While leadership is a balance of management

and vision (NAESP, 2001) with an intuitive sense of growth, change and aspirations, instructional leadership includes developing a common vision of good instruction, building relationships, exhibiting the necessary behaviour, developing and empowering staff to innovate in instruction, give one another feedback and share best practices. While leaders cannot neglect other duties, teaching and learning should be the area where most of the leaders' scheduled time is allocated.

Hallinger et al (2012) assesses three dimensions of instructional leadership: Defining the School's Mission, Managing the Instructional Program, and Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) as seen in the PIMRS Framework below.

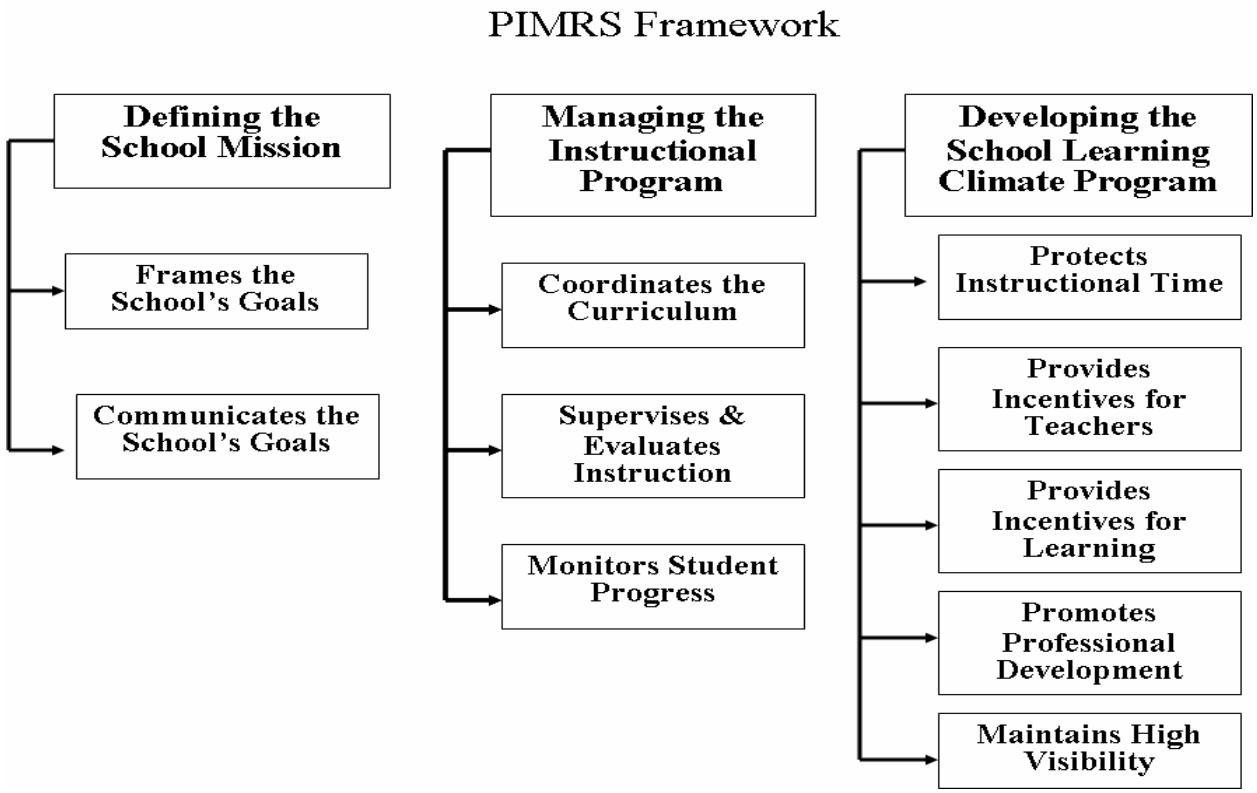


Figure 2 : PIMRS Conceptual Framework

This Principals Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) framework of Hallinger's captures the essential components around which instructional leadership should occur. The increasing focus on teaching and learning using a learner-centred approach should be the core activity of the school led to instructional leadership being coined as a leadership paradigm. I argue that leadership is a paradigm and an all-consuming embodiment of thinking and

decision making on the part of the person in charge. A major shift in thinking must occur and subvert the type of leadership that is currently in practice in most schools.

Although the key role-player of instructional leadership is the principal of a school it cannot be done on his own. It requires the leadership of all stakeholders of education in the school to achieve optimum results. Therefore instructional leadership should centre on a distributive leadership paradigm. Distributive leadership overlaps with shared, collaborative and participative leadership practices. A distributed leadership perspective recognises that there are multiple leaders (Spillane et al., 2004) and that leadership activities are widely shared within and between organisations (Harris, 2007). It assumes a set of practices that are, “enacted by people at all levels rather than at a set of personal characteristics and attributes located in people at the top” (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003, as cited in Leithwood et.al., 2004, p. 28). This feature is common to schools in the South African context, as the management and leadership of curriculum usually sits with the SMT of the school. According to Lambert (2002 p 37) “the days of the lone instructional leader are over”.

A distributed model of leadership focuses upon the interactions, rather than the actions, of those in formal and informal leadership roles. It is primarily concerned with leadership practice and how leadership influences organisational and instructional improvement (Spillane, 2006). While recent research findings agree with this notion and have shown that effective leadership need not be located in one leader and can be distributed within the school (MacBeath,1998; Harris et al., 2000; Harris and Mujis, 2002) this study positions that the entrenchment of this practice lies squarely on the leadership of the principal.

Contemporary literature about distributed leadership, according to Leithwood et al. (2010) associates it to great many positive outcomes, such as having control and influence and supports the idea of teacher participation with peers in planning and decision making (Talbert & .McLaughlin, 1993). The values of distributed leadership practices, some studies have found, contribute to both organizational turn around processes (Murphy, 2007) and leaders succession processes(Goodson, Moore, & Hargreaves, 2006) as cited in Leithwood et al. (2010, p 615).

Current studies indicate six distinct contributions of distributive leadership. These are:

- That some forms of leadership distribution have greater impact on student learning
- Principals were rated as having highest influence in schools at all levels of performance
- The promotion of focused intention
- A greater clarity about the about the relationship between patterns of distributed leadership and student achievement
- That principals are part of almost all leadership initiatives in schools
- The main distributed functions are “developing people” and “managing the instructional program”.

The principal can share the responsibility of managing teaching and learning together with the deputy principals, HODs, and the educators.

Another less formalized form of leadership, dispersed leadership, proposed by Bolden et al (2003) as an ‘informal’, ‘emergent’ leadership approach argues a less formalised model of leadership where the leaders’ role is dissociated from the organisational hierarchy. According to Bolden et al (2003) individuals at all levels in the organisation and in all roles can exert leadership influence over their colleagues and thus influence the overall leadership of the organisation. This leadership thought arises from important social relations that occur in organisations where there is a need for a leader to be accepted by followers and the realisation that leadership cannot be vested in an individual but can be obtained from various people according to their strengths.

2.7 Teacher Leaders

The literature cannot be complete without the important aspect of teacher leaders. The research on teacher leadership has become more and more nuanced in the past two decades (Smylie, 1995; York Barr & Duke, 2004). Although there are a few studies conducted in South Africa, the literature indicates that teacher leadership is following trends that are found in international studies.

Teacher leaders emerge because of their desire to work in a community of practice to confront normative and pedagogical challenges faced by the majority of teachers in their classrooms. As they seek solutions to these challenges and experiment with their teaching and learning teachers begin to take leadership roles. Principals can play a supporting and encouraging role to help them deepen their knowledge and their capacity of leadership.

Lieberman et al (2010) state “teacher leaders gain credibility with their peers through their classroom practice” (2010, p. 665). Teachers bring their skills and knowledge from their classrooms to both formal and informal leadership roles. Their current experiences in the classrooms situates teacher-leaders well to take on a variety of instructional roles, such as providing valuable, informed inputs in SMT meetings, professional development of teachers and instructional advice to teachers. The SMTs of schools offer teachers an opportunity to explore and build teacher’s leadership capacity and discover ongoing problems of practice.

There are hundreds of studies of “individual teacher leadership roles. (Lieberman et al, 2010). They say that the groundwork to legitimize teacher leadership roles were laid internationally through school based management teams and was first introduced by the idea of a “lead teacher”. South Africa seems to be following a similar pattern by constructing SMTs and then selecting “master teachers” and “lead teachers”.

Grant et al (n.d.) states that teacher leadership is located within the international traditions of distributed leadership theory and the more informal leadership style of dispersed leadership. However, Grant et al (n.d) in their paper looked at this important debate in South Africa and found that teacher leadership was generally supported across the schools but the extent to which it operated in practice was limited. They argue that this may be so because schools are, historically, organisations that are conservative and which attempt to maintain the status quo of a patriarchal society but that South African schools require leadership that will challenge the existing status quo.

However, an informed leader will not relinquish his/her duties but will distribute leadership and power to capable people within the organisation and work in a collaborative team for the common good of the school. While this may be so the

researcher argues that the principal's role as an instructional leader is paramount to any other instructional leader that may be involved in and with teaching and learning. From the finding of these studies it can be deduced that the principal remains the key role player in the distributive leadership framework and cannot be excluded from the various functions of instructional leadership and the instructional programme of the school.

One of the first models of instructional leadership revolved around five forces these being technical, human, educational, symbolic, and cultural. The technical forces of instructional leadership was based on the traditional management practices such as planning, time management and organisational aspects that principal were more prone to work with. The human component encompassed all of the interpersonal aspects of instructional leadership essential to the communicating, motivating, and facilitating roles of the principal. The education force involves all of the instructional aspects of the principal's role—teaching, learning, and implementing the curricula. (McEwan, 2000)

Seyfarth (1999, p. 7) sees instructional leadership as an "electric merging of instructional supervision, curriculum development and staff development." The view is endorsed by Blasé and Blasé (1999) who argue that instructional leadership is a blend of tasks, such as shaping and communicating goals, supervising and evaluating instructional practices, developing and co-ordinating the curriculum, developing staff and evaluating progress in learner achievement.

In 1985 Rutherford came up with a list of four leadership behaviours that differentiate effective principals from less effective ones. Effective principals

- Have "clear, informed visions of what they want their schools to become—visions that focus on students and their needs"
- "Translate these visions into goals for their schools and expectations for their teachers, students, and administrators"
- Do not stand back and wait for things to happen, but "continuously monitor progress"
- "Intervene in a supportive or corrective manner when this seems necessary"

Leithwood (1994) reinforces this idea of instructional leadership being a series of behaivours that is designed to affect classroom instruction. Various researchers have best defined instructional leadership in terms of observable critical behaviour of the principal and other leaders in the school. The instructional leadership behaviour is fundamental to achieving and forging relationships which promote student growth and achievements.

A research conducted by Blasé and Blasé' of 800 principals, as cited in Bush (2011) highlights three effective instructional leadership components those of talking with teachers, promoting teachers professional growth and fostering teacher reflections.

Behaviour is an essential factor in instructional leadership. How a principal behaves and his ability to persuade subordinates in his interactions influences the kind of relationship s/he forges with them and the type of behaviour they reciprocate. The principal's actions also induce a particular reaction in each individual and these can impact on the delivery of instruction. Daresh (1989, p. 216) identified participation in leadership, provision of support for instruction, the promotion of a sense of vision and resourcefulness as behavioural instances where the principal exercises huge influences and forms relationships with people to enlist positive actions or responses. For the researcher it is these critical events which impact on the learning environment. Through his/her leadership behaviour, the principal can improve the instructional climate of the school by creating a humane environment for both teachers and learners. The demands for instructional leadership behaviour in education are such that the principal's time in the office should be limited. S/he should be seen walking around the school, interacting with teachers and giving instructional advice.

In line with this thinking, Dean (1991, p. 110) believes that ideally the principal needs to be a person who makes good relationships easily, is tactful and diplomatic, sympathetic with colleagues but clear sighted about their needs. She further points out that enthusiasm is needed with a considerable capacity for hard work. Having interacted with principals on a regular basis, the researcher has noted that principals consistently report that their training in human relationships is limited and that they display dispositions which may not help in the growth of their

relationships. This can be easily gauged by the instructional leadership behaviour of the principal which is best displayed in their interactions with each individual and the performance tasks that fall within his/her power. These tasks relate to the principal's ability to solve problems in the areas of curriculum, staff development, the use of facilities and organization of the instructional programme. It does not mean that principal must teach in every class but it does mean that the leader is aware of the instructional programme and how it is being implemented. These factors have an impact on the performance of each staff members primary job that of facilitating the education of children.

In the South African primary school context with principals from a diverse cultural setting, value and belief systems and from little or no leadership training it is difficult to ascertain how principals behave in different contexts and why they behave in the way they do. Since there is very little literature on the principals' behavioural relationships in South African schools it is imperative that all principals become familiar with the discourse and literature around enactment of instructional leadership. This is even more difficult to attain for primary schools as most of the researches are done in high schools were the dynamics of leading a school is different.

Research shows that the instructional leader, who is effective, is likely to influence learner achievement. Van der Grift (1993, p 41), states that principals who encompasses those actions of instructional leadership "will promote growth in student learning". Hallinger and Heck (1998) found that 31 of 41 studies which they analysed, conceptualised the principal's in terms of instructional leadership. Walters, Marzana and Nutty (2004) also analysed 70 principal leadership studies and found that direct leadership practices improve student achievement. These roles included visiting classrooms, frequently interacting with students, publically celebrating accomplishments of students and maintaining visibility around the school.

One of the skills of leadership is to influence others. May and Supovitz (2011) argue that the scope of the principal's leadership activities vary from school to school depending on the culture of the school and type of leadership. Although I agree with this I would argue that the context and nature of interaction by the people in the

school is equally important. However, each leadership should consciously keep in the forefront the core business of the school as their prime focus.

Instructional leadership is a discourse that is complex to understand but if the principal realises that all his/her actions contribute towards the improvement of instruction at all levels and makes decisions accordingly then s/he becomes a learner in the right direction.

As a leader a principal needs to possess certain leadership skills in order to be able to carry out his instructional leadership duties satisfactorily. Mansers (1978 p.17) suggested the following school leadership skills: “instructional skills, management skills, human relations ability, leadership skills and self understanding”. Instructional skills should be the first and foremost. Each principal who is appointed to a school should acknowledge that the school is a place of learning and the main purpose of schooling is to educate. Therefore the main function of a principal is that of an instructional leader. The principal may not have an in-depth knowledge of all learning areas, but he should have according to Mansers (1978) three basic sets of instructional competencies.

These are:

- “Ability to monitor classroom instruction.
- Ability to work with educators to plan instructional programme and
- Ability to identify, acquire and coordinate resources necessary for instructional improvement including staff development” (Mansers, 1978).

The instructional leader's priority is to get the job done. Principals should be able to share management tasks using distributive leadership practices and be available to work with any challenge that may arise in the instructional programme of the school. Problems arising from the work place may disturb the functioning of that institution, thus the principal must have solving skills to be able to deal with any challenges. Good human relations in a school are a precondition for improvement. It is part of the instructional leadership quality every principal must possess. A skilful principal should be totally familiar with all the policies of the school and how the system operates. Principals should also understand how the consequences of all his/her actions if leadership is to be exerted. Principals need to be introspective, to understand their own values and be able to assess their strengths and

weaknesses. They need to reflect on their practices as often as possible to assess their own success as an instructional leader.

The South African situation is such that principals are appointed for various reasons other than their capacity to lead a school. This indicates that after assumption of duty, the new principal should undergo an induction programme and training in school leadership. Ongoing motivation of educators is an important element in the principal's success as an instructional leader. It is therefore surprising if principals neglect this aspect in their leadership behaviour.

My view as a researcher is that every school principal should be an instructional leader in their school. Becoming an instructional leader for a principal seems critical in improving and developing schools. The principal may not know the contents of the every subject offered at his/her school, but can be an expert of curriculum planning, and leading instruction.

The popular assertion in the instructional leadership literature is that principals are the instructional leaders and should enact such tasks to promote the performance of learners in their schools. Although Sergiovanni and Starratt (1998), Mitchell and Castle (2005) assert that the educational role of the principal is more appropriately configured as a facilitator of the teaching and learning process than as the one solely in-charge in deciding whatever goes on in the school environment, the principal must be the driver of the process. Blasé and Blasé (1999) share this view, arguing that the primary instructional responsibility of school principals should be to promote professional dialogue among their instructional staff. My view in this study is that instructional functions should be the core responsibility of the principal and should make a significant difference to the quality of teaching and the effects on learning to make the school successful, especially with the various policy changes. If the function of instructional leadership is a collaborative function of the principal and the other members of SMT, the principal must be the central figure in making changes. This approach must encourage active participation and collaboration among the SMT members in the school improvement process.

Various instructional leadership practices that are engaged in by school leadership, and which have the potential to influence student performance have been identified.

The effective school movement has argued that instructional leadership is the prerogative of the school principal. Thus the principal's instructional leadership in schools has been consistently alluded to as the most significant factor in the success and quality of the school's improvement process (Petersen, 2001 p 159). In this light, Petersen describes instructional leadership as a professional relationship involving school leaders and teachers – an alliance where the leaders assume a supportive role and think of others as constituents. Alternatively, Spillane et al. (2005) postulate that school instructional leadership "should best be understood as distributed practices stretched over the school's social and situational contexts". In this perspective, instructional leadership is not simply a function of what a school principal or any other individual leader does, it is regarded as a function of all the stakeholders in the school and community. The principal's role as instructional leader is thus exercised 'with' others and not 'over' others. Leithwood (2004) state that leadership as "instructional leadership," encourages a focus on improving the classroom practices of teachers as the direction for the school.

Weihrich and Koontzis conclude (1993) that leadership is the art or process of influencing other people's activities in the organisation toward goal setting and goal achievement. This definition seems to give the view that, through effective leadership skills, the principal will be able to influence achievement.

Whereas all these definitions are very useful and outline some of the key actions of the leadership, the practices instructional leadership requires the leader to be an intelligent astute thinker, a deep analyst, an innovator and be able to influence a number of staff members on a continual basis. In South African schools a principal cannot be given a list of ideas. While still focusing on teaching and learning the principal must be allowed to grow and develop ion that position and take ownership of it by trial and error and learning from his/her experience, reflecting on one's values, developing new attitudes and values, become accustomed to the staff, learn to relate to each individual and the collective and become knowledgeable about the curriculum and the context in which s/he operates in.

There seems to be unanimity between the international literature and South African research that the principal plays a crucial role in creating the conditions for

improved instruction, which will result in high learner achievement (Marsh, 2002; Spillane, 2004; Taylor, 2007. What is less understood, according to Hoadley et al (2009) is how the principal directly contributes to this process.

2.8 The instructional core framework.

The conceptual frame in which I am working with would indicate that the leadership in the three schools is reshaping the kind of instruction in these schools and their ultimate success. According to Spillane et al (2000 p 2) "it involves ensuring that the changes district officials and teachers undertake in response to instruction involve a transformation of the **core** rather than the **margins** of practice" (2000 p 2). The school, and school leadership in particular, is crucial in addressing the challenge of instructional changes. Elmore, states:

> *"You don't change performance without changing the instructional core, … The relationship of the teacher and the student in the presence of content must be at the center of efforts to improve performance".(City et al, 2010 p 14).*

Instructional change for improvement of student learning must take place within the instructional core according to City, Elmore, Friarman & Teitel (2010). The instructional core is composed "of the teacher and the student in the presence of content" (2010 p 14). The "how" of leadership should therefore focus on these three components of the primary school and how they interrelate.

Elmore's (2010) theory contends that the only way to improve schools is to focus on the components present in the instructional core, these being the content of the curriculum, the teacher's knowledge of content and pedagogy and the engagement of the student. When a school undertakes an instructional change to one component of the three, it must take into cognizance how that change affects the other components of the instructional core. In order to develop strong instructional leadership, school leaders will need to ensure that the actual practice will "lead to improvements in content, knowledge, skills and student engagement" (City et al., 2010 p 14).

The instructional core theory underpins a coherent set of actions for change which would "deliberately undertake to strengthen the instructional core with the objective

of raising student performance". Gaining coherence among actions in the school is vital to introduce the change necessary at the classroom level.

There are seven principles that undergird how this theory has an impact on schools (see Figure 1, page 8 for figure). These are:

1. Increases in student learning occur only as a consequence of improvements in the level of content, teachers' knowledge and skill, and student engagement
2. If you change any single element of the instructional core, you have to change the other two
3. If you can't see it in the core, it's not there
4. Task predicts performance
5. The real accountability is in the tasks that students are asked to do.
6. We learn to do the work by doing the work, *not* by telling other people to do the work, *not* by having done the work at some time in the past, and *not* by hiring experts who can act as proxies for our knowledge about how to do the work.
7. Description before analysis, analysis before prediction/prediction before evaluation.

(City et al, 2010 p 23)

The instructional core is a theory of how a school leader can effect change in their school. It frames one's actions in the service of improving outcomes for students. If the school leadership understands the dynamic interaction between elements of the IC they can use this knowledge to make clearer, more focused decisions in their quest to improve learning in the school. To illustrate how this theory might be seen to work in schools, I will unpack the authors principles of the IC and how they could be understood in a decision making progress. How would the focus on improving their students' learning be seen in a decision such as whether to create a vegetable patch in the school? (Stiles, 2014)

The first principle states that "Increases in student learning occur only as a consequence of improvements in the level of content, teachers' knowledge and skill, and student engagement" *(*City et al, 2010 p 24*).*

For this decision to have an impact on the improvement of teaching and learning, the leadership would need to have a theory of change that would say "Creating a

vegetable patch will create richer curriculum content, increases to teachers' content knowledge or pedagogic skills and/or higher levels of engagement in their own learning."

For example, the teachers could first need to understand how the garden can be integrated into as many subjects as possible (lessons in life orientation on how to cook or eat healthfully, in science about how plants grow, and in social studies of the price of food and poverty etc.). These decisions might require them to increase their content knowledge about how to grow healthy vegetables, the value of the vegetables, how to prepare these vegetables into a wholesome meal or how they connect to a balanced diet. The teachers would also have to consider what new written content they might have to bring to the students and what pedagogical devices they would require to teach using the actual garden. As a real experience used for pedagogic purposes, the new garden would engage the students in their life orientation, science or social studies classes differently. Teachers would need to be prepared for how these different levels of engagement would be managed.

Students might be engaged in designing the layout, planning and planting the garden, using correct measurements of soil and compost, and then growing and harvesting the vegetables. The students' role will change as they work in groups to get their own patches growing as quickly as possible. Every opportunity should be used as a learning opportunity.

The decision to invest in a garden only connects back to improved learning through this dynamic engagement of content, teacher knowledge and skill and student.

While arguments around leadership show that there are two sides to the debate there are a number of international "case studies; large scale quantitative studies which report large leadership effects not only on pupil learning but on an array of school conditions" (Leithwood et al 2006 p 11). Fredricks, Blumenfield, & Paris (2004) suggest that school engagement is a strong predictor of pupil achievement and studies by Leithwood et al (2002) have assessed the effects of transformational school leadership on pupil engagement and all have reported these to be significantly positive. While this may be so, "engagement" with learning is an elusive term and can mean different things to different people. Engagement can be seen as

a learner grasping a concept and working individually by applying the knowledge or it could mean interacting with the educator/fellow pupil or with a textbook and the application thereof. How does a principal cultivate this and how does a principal engage with his staff to understand “engagement” and build their capacity to achieve these desired outcomes?

In order for this to take place the Department of Education should have initiated an intensive campaign to develop school leader’s capacity as an instructional leadership. The efforts to increase and maintain professional training programmes is still lacking and require an increased sense of urgency. The programmes are hampered because of a lack of adequate funding and resources. School leaders are already in these positions, some appointed newly and others for many years and most do not have the knowledge of how to act, when to act, what to act upon and if they act what response it will illicit. This leaves them bewildered with very little support.

The second principle states that “if you change any single element of the instructional core, you have to change the other two”. The example above demonstrates the advantages of this principle, but what is important in the second principle is the necessity of the cause and effect relationship of the three elements. It is not the decision to create a garden that makes this cause and effect a necessity; it is the decision to create the vegetable garden as a means of improving the learning of the students that makes it a necessity. Without that understanding and the interaction, the introduction of a vegetable garden may just lead to the production of vegetables.

The third principle appropriately says that “if you can’t see it in the core, it’s not there”. School leaders make decisions every day and often these decisions are meant to “improve the school.” This principle requires that if the leader wants to make the “improvement” case for a particular decision, he or she must connect the decision to its potential impact on the desk of a student. Connecting the big decisions to the impact on a learner allows leaders to tune their decisions and see the full ramifications of a seemingly unconnected decision to create a vegetable garden or introduce balance between boys and girls sporting requirements. Our

efforts in schools should have be targeted and connected to improving the learning for the students.

The fourth principle underlying the theory states, “tasks predict performance”. Our schools often talk about higher order thinking skills, but too often schools in South Africa continue to teach in a sequential, teacher centered approach. How can the students learn higher order thinking skills in this way? Thinking of the garden and the various ways students could engage with it demonstrates how this complex set of tasks could be used to help students’ master higher order complex thinking.

The fifth principle asserts that “the real accountability is in the tasks that students are asked to do”. While tests such as the ANA or end of year assessments are important benchmarks for understanding student progress, this principle would assert that the tasks we ask students to perform each day are their real assessments. If we are giving students complex tasks, then they will be able to perform complex tasks on examinations. If we give students tasks that require them to make connections, they will learn how to make connections between relatively disparate pieces of information.

The sixth principle states that “we learn to do the work by doing the work, not by telling other people to do the work, not by having done the work at some time in the past, and not by hiring experts who can act as proxies for our knowledge about how to do the work” (City et al, 2010 p 33). Teaching is a complex task. There are no short cuts and while a scripted lesson can serve as a crutch, the complex task of helping students to learn requires that we engage fully in the process. School leaders have to be engaged with their teachers if improvement is going to occur. Merely asking teachers on their own to learn new content, integrate it into subjects and fashion tasks for students with different levels of complexity are insufficient to change the school. The SMT must work with the teachers to ensure that any new project connects deeply to increases in learning.

The seventh principle of “description before analysis, analysis before prediction/prediction before evaluation” considers that in an improvement process the leaders and the teachers must always look at what is actually happening before they can understand the results of the process and its eventual impact on the

learners. The mark of a good school leader comes in their ability to really describe the teaching and learning that is happening in their school. If one cannot describe what is happening, how can the leader judge it to be either good or bad? Seeing what is really happening in the classroom is the only way to know whether the improvement process is having its desired effect. (Stiles, 2014)

This view is supported by to Louis and Kruse (1995) and Newman and Wehlage(1995) cited in Spillane (2000, p 2) who argue that "schools that cultivate certain in-school conditions including shared visions for instruction, norms of collaboration, and collective responsibility for students' academic success, create incentives and opportunities for teachers to improve, and thereby aid the implementation process. School leadership is recognized as important in promoting these conditions" (2002, p 2).

2.9 How do leaders lead and influence learning?

Leithwood et al. (2004) in their"review of how leadership influences learning suggests that successful leadership can play a highly significant – and frequently underestimated – role in improving student learning in two important ways". They regard firstly that "classroom instruction" is the most important factor that contributes to effective learning and high achievement and that leadership is the next. Fundamentally the most important purpose of a school is for learning to occur and if the leadership does not focus on this core purpose then the leadership has failed in its responsibility. Much of the failure in schools may be as a result of the principal's lack of understanding and knowledge of how to implement their powerful leadership role. Therefore there is an urgent need to provide professional training to principals to understand and fulfil their roles. In the current environment of change this assertion may be true for South African principals as well.

Leithwood et al. (2004 p 7) also argues "that leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed most, especially when we think of leaders in formal administrative roles. The greater the challenge, the greater the impact of their actions on learning. While the evidence shows small, but significant, effects of leadership actions on student learning across the spectrum of schools, existing

research also shows that demonstrated effects of successful leadership are considerably greater in schools" (2004 p 7).

2.10 How does leadership encourage academic achievement?

Instructional leadership can be defined as "those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning" (Flath, 1989).In practice, the principal must make the promotion of growth in learning as the priority in the school and every effort made should be to enhance the level of instruction. This should be the vision of every school and stakeholders should make sure that every effort is made to promote this vision. A committed instructional leader not only leads in a meaningful way but also becomes a learner to enhance his or her own capacity as a leader. Together with the principal, striving for excellence in all aspects of education becomes a cornerstone for the academic staff and every child in the school. The principal's role is to provide the necessary motivation and inspiration, set targets with teachers, provide the necessary resources and "create new learning opportunities for students and staff" (Flath, 1989).

According to Lambert (2007) the principal and other SMT[7] members may insist on attention to results, convening conversations, solving miasmic problems, challenging assumptions, confronting incompetence, focusing work, establishing structures and processes that engage others, new teaching practices and articulating beliefs that may find their way into the fabric of the school. Lambert's study looks at debates around the principal's display of such "strengths" in building capacity in their schools.

2.11 Instructional practice of teachers

The principal is expected to fulfill the school's instructional activities in conjunction with the members of the SMT, creating an instructional leadership team (DoE, 2000). The framework (instructional leadership) proposed here suggests certain conditions in which the principal can collaborate and 'jointly work together' (Harper, 2001) with teachers to enhance effective teaching and learning. This requires a principal to collaborate in the conditions that create effective instructional leadership

[7] In the context of this study, the School Management Team (SMT) includes the school principal, the deputy-principal and the head(s) of department(s) or senior teachers.

practices: promoting professional growth of teachers; creating a positive learning environment; creating a professional learning community; monitoring the teaching and learning processes; facilitating parental involvement in school work; and building effective teams to successfully carry out instructional functions in the school.

Krajewski (1996) argues that instructional supervision is not entirely collaborative but is moving from control to collaboration because power differentials still exist between instructional leaders and teachers given the hierarchical nature of the South African school as an organisation and the SMT's role of evaluation responsibilities. In this relationship exist a strong element of power and judgment.

Lambert's study (2003) found that teachers performing at a high level of personal and professional capacity tended to become involved in external opportunities, networks and graduate programmes. It is important for the professional development of teachers that the principal should encourage them and through their own initiative engage in strategies that will augment their professional growth. This proposed study will locate whether professional growth is part of the schools strategy/plan/approach and how it translates into the classroom and student achievements.

Stein and Nelson (2003 p 446) argue that "without knowledge that connects subject matter, learning and teaching to acts of leadership, leadership floats disconnected from the very processes it is designed to govern". The importance of leaders' understanding of learning is emphasised by both Southworth (2002) and Hill (2001). According to Hoadley (2009: 46) "in the South African context a study by Roberts and Roach (2006) on five effective schools found that principals in these schools maintained what they termed as a 'connection to the classroom". Therefore in this study of instructional leadership it is important to consider the principal's own pedagogic expertise and how this is transferred to teachers in a primary school to improve pedagogy.

2.12 Professional development and Performance management

It is the task of the principal and the SMT to communicate what is expected of the respective role players during the implementation of the curriculum/content and to

monitor and evaluate performance. Tomlinson (2004 pp 133-134) regards the setting of performance targets as one of the core roles of the management team. Subsequent performance of these various role players needs to be managed and their work progress monitored. And this progress needs to be evaluated against agreed-upon criteria. Performance management thus also involves provision of feedback to the monitored people and the determination of the needed improvements where and when possible. Coleman, *et al.* (2003 p 84) claim that such monitoring can promote people's accountability for their work, provided that it is conducted in a structured and well-managed manner. They recommend the drafting of monitoring policies that clarify aspects such as quality teaching, effective learning, assessment and recordkeeping.

Earley and Bubb (2004 pp 77-82) agree, recommending that data collection instruments, such as questionnaires, observations, participants' portfolios and interviews be used for progress monitoring purposes. Rhodes, *et al.* (2004 pp 25-31) promotes classroom observation as a form of performance management.

However, these authors strongly believe that this should be done by trained mentors who are able to provide support regarding teaching, learning and classroom management to the observed teachers before, during and after the observation session. In this regard, Earley and Bubb (2004 pp 77-82) stress the importance of regular and constructive feedback to the monitored and evaluated parties.

The purpose of the feedback should be to reflect on practice in order to identify strengths and weaknesses with the aim of improving implementation.

It is assumed that these processes occur in primary schools that have high student achievement. The management of curriculum implementation is a specialised task and managers need to be adequately equipped to perform this duty efficiently. This proposed study will provide an opportunity to investigate how important the process of communication, monitoring and evaluation are and what impact they have on student achievement. This is particularly important for this study, which will be conducted within three primary schools.

2.13 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the views articulated by different educationists, scholars and researchers, both internationally and locally, regarding the roles and responsibilities of school principals, instructional leadership, leadership of SMT members, teacher leaders, leadership styles, leading curriculum and contexts and the influence of leadership on student achievement and professional development. The findings support the view that the principal's core responsibility is teaching and learning and that effective instructional leadership by the principal impacts on student learning and student performance. The strongly over-riding theory emerging from the literature was that the principal's instructional leadership was key to learner achievement and the education of each individual learner. The literature raises several issues for consideration in research. More rigorous and thorough research into primary school leadership is required in South Africa. Questions that arise in the context of primary schools are:

- How do principal imbue their roles and responsibilities as instructional leaders and how their action influences teaching and learning
- How do teachers perceive and interpret the actions of school leadership?
- What is their classroom practice?
- How do they make changes?
- How do they improve classroom practice?

It is clear that the schools in South Africa and more especially that principals as instructional leaders do not realize the crucial role they play in cultivating the learning paradigm of each individual learner and that these questions become more relevant in a developing country and a country that is going through transition not only in politics but also in an entire the education domain.

To improve the quality of education in primary schools in South Africa, literature indicates that school leaders need to have vision and clear goals in order to attend to structure, culture, continuity and change. In addition, school leaders need to exceed the implementation of government legislation, curricular change and assessment culture, to support and create an environment where the school leadership and teachers will work together. Research shows that schools with

strong leadership and a supportive culture within schools improve teaching and learning. I will investigate if strong school leadership with knowledge about, and commitment to building a strong vision help to build a successful school.

The next chapter will provide a detailed discussion on the research methodology used.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this research, I sought to understand how the actors in three primary schools understand and made sense of the actions of the school leadership with reference to teacher's practice and student's success in the school. I identified principals' statements, talk, arguments and reasoning for proposed actions and decisions, to explore where the principals used their educational competences and perhaps traced their decisions. I identified the qualities, characteristics and competencies of school leadership in primary schools in three different circumstances. Because the aim and nature of my project dealt with complexity and relations between all the various actors in the school, I used a qualitative approach and considered three case studies as illustrations of these ideas.

3.2 Research design

My research design for this study employed an intensive qualitative interpretative methodology that included a constructivist perspective (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). This method allowed for great insights into the principals work as an instructional leader. A qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth look at a few cases and enabled the researcher to gain understanding of the principal's own relation to her/his context with the aim of understanding how successful principals helped to enhance teaching and learning at their schools.

A qualitative approach was appropriate for collection and analysis of data to provide meaningful insight into the instructional leadership of the principal in order to improve learning and teaching. Responses from qualitative research are according to Miles and Huberman (1984, p 24) "an investigative process where the researcher makes sense of social phenomena". Qualitative research is also regarded as scientific because it is "characterised by the suspension of belief" (Mouton and Marais, 1990, p 153). McMillan and Schumacher (2006) stated that the researcher

“becomes immersed in the situation and the phenomenon studied” and that the researcher “assume(s) an interactive social role in which to record observations and interactions with participants’. It is also regarded as “a field of inquiry in its own right” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000 p 2) and as one of the milestones in the fields of interpersonal perception.

The theoretical aspect drew on Elmore’s work on the instructional core and related literature, while the empirical research drew upon principals and educators serving in three primary schools in Gauteng. Parallels between the three case studies were drawn and links made with the definitions of instructional leadership.

Since "qualitative research involves broadly stated questions about human experiences and realties, studied through sustained contact with people in their natural environments, generating rich, descriptive data that helps us to understand their experiences and attitudes" (Rees, 1996, p 375 & Dingwall et al, 1998) it is therefore the type of research that is suitable for this study. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to utilize the respondents own words and actions to describe a view of the world their respondents inhabit. For the purposes of this study the aim was to explore and capture the feelings and experiences of three primary school principals and their staff members from their own point of view.

The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to explore and find information using a variety of methods allowing a deeper search for meaning. The research design of conducting three case studies allowed for collecting data through interviews, observations, and the review of documents at the school site. Case study research enabled the researcher to learn “how or why” something occurs, when the research focuses on contemporary events, and when no controls of behavioral events are necessary.

Yin acknowledges that the results of case studies are not generalisable to populations and that their purpose is to expand and generalize theories” (2003, p. 10). The research will be of illuminative value rather than seeking to be generalisable to some larger population. I have adopted the stance, in accordance with Dimmock and Lee (1999) and Yin (2003), “as generalisation in educational research is difficult enough without conflating leadership, or indiscriminately

extrapolating findings from a sample of leaders in one type of school to all schools" (Yin, 2003 p 10).

Yin (2003) states that the case study is "an all-encompassing method" (2003 p 14), that includes design, data collection, and data analysis techniques. He differentiates "between the case study strategy and other qualitative research methods, writing that, while case studies may be based on detailed observation and attempts to 'avoid prior commitment to any theoretical model', they may include both qualitative and quantitative research, and actually need not include 'direct, detailed observations as a source of evidence'" (2003 p 15).

Each case study has to be treated as an isolated entity and not as representative of other schools in the same area or category. The schools were chosen because they were deemed to be successful, and that the school leadership had in-depth knowledge about their schools, a vision for effective instructional leadership and commitment to building a strong belief in using this leadership to improve teaching and learning.

The case study method presented findings to inform whether effective instructional leadership could have influence on instructional change and to improve learner achievement. In addition, Cohen and Manion (1997) consider case study methods best when the interpretative subjective dimensions of educational phenomenon are explored. Through interaction with participants it was also possible to ascertain a range of educators' knowledge of educational processes of using instructional leadership to improve the process of learning.

Case study was preferred because it lends itself to a variety of conceptual lenses and is more flexible in approach in collecting data (Conrad and Serlin, 2006). The advantage of the case study approach for this research involved the researcher eliciting extensive data from the people being questioned or observed, trying to extract meaning that is not apparent or has not previously been substantiated and then trying to express this in a cogent form to an audience (Bassey, 1999). As mentioned in the literature, questions and observations used for this study will illuminate the importance of instructional leadership in primary schools or expose the factors that act as barriers to effective instructional leadership.

3.3 The context of the study

Although the context of the study supports the issue being researched, an interpretive perspective deems it important to engage with participants in their natural settings. Babbie and Mouton (2001, p 282) also point out that in order for researchers to interpret case studies, the context needs to be understood. According to Adelman et al. (1996, p 4) the various cases are embedded in their contexts, which means that context does have a role to play. For this reason, details of the context are relevant and of particular importance.

3.4 Selection of participants

The research problem, the purpose and the design of the research have served to guide the researcher in the selection of the sample for this study. The researcher sought information-rich key participants in order to obtain the relevant data for the research process. From this source meaningful conclusions would eventually be drawn. Schumacher and McMillan (1993, p 382) suggest that the sample size is directly related to the purpose of the study, the research problem, the major data collection technique and the availability of information-rich participants. Purposeful sampling was used for the selection of respondents in this study. According to Patton (1990, p 169) purposeful sampling is the process of selecting information-rich cases for in- depth study. The researcher therefore selected participants who are knowledgeable and well informed regarding the phenomena, which the researcher was investigating (Schumacher and McMillan, 1993, p 378). They were selected on the grounds of the rich information the researcher would be able to garner from them.

Through purposive sampling the researcher could handpick the cases that were to be included in the sample. In this way the researcher was able to obtain samples that would assist in providing suitable information around the research questions. Neuman (1997, 206) is of the opinion that purposeful sampling is appropriate if the researcher wants to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomena under research.

The sample of this study consisted of three school principals who were representative of the three types of schools selected from the province of Gauteng

in South Africa. The principals were from public schools so as to ensure representivity of South African public schools. Participation in the research was voluntary and the following criteria were used to select the volunteer group to include principals from an ex-Model C school, an inner city school and a township school. Female and male principals of primary and intermediate schools were selected

3.5 Sampling Frame

The purpose of sampling in qualitative research was to increase the utility of the information obtained from small samples (Patton, 2002). In addition, the purpose of sampling is about "selecting information-rich cases for study in-depth" (Patton, 2002, p 242) "when one wants to understand something about those cases without needing or desiring to generalise to all cases" (MacMillan and Schumacher 2006 p 216). Sampling needed to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena the researcher was investigating. In order to obtain information about the phenomenon under study, the following criteria were considered most appropriate for the purposes of this study.

The main criteria for selection of the schools for this study were:

- Three top performing primary schools in Gauteng in terms of the most recent Systemic evaluation[8]. Schools were selected from the upper 10% of schools on this evaluation.
- Schools that scored high in the 2011 Annual National Assessments

Table 1: Literacy and Numeracy Percentile Scores from 2011 Annual National Assessments for three Case Study Schools.

	Grade 1		Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 6	
SCHOOL	LIT	NUM	LIT	NUM	LIT	NUM	LIT	NUM
A	76.0	71.3	75.9	58.5	71.2	68.5	65.8	73.5
B	84.0	83.0	75.0	49.0	60.0	47.0	56.0	48.0
C	68.0	74.0	79.0	61.0	46.0	54.0	44.0	26.0

[8]Systemic evaluation carried out with Grade 3 learners in 2001/2: mission was to set out to accomplish, namely, taking stock of the education system at the end of the Foundation Phase. The scene was set in 1998 when through wide consultation, intensive collaboration and cordial consensus a set of indicators of quality education was identified that were considered appropriate in measuring the performance of the S.A. education system.

- Of these top performing schools, one school was chosen from each of the major categories of Gauteng schools: Township, Inner-city and Ex-Model C.
- The principal must have been a principal at the school for at least five years.
- Additional criteria that were utilized included:
    - Geography;
    - History of improvement;
    - And prior knowledge of, or relationship with, the University of Witwatersrand.

The limitation of this kind of selection of sampling is that the findings derived from it will not be generalisable to the larger population of primary schools in Gauteng. However, as a baseline study, this study will provide information for further studies following completion of this project.

3.5.1 Venue for interviews and atmosphere

The interviews were conducted in the respective school principals' offices to allow for privacy and the semi structured interviews of Deputy Principals and Heads of Departments were conducted in their office area to allow for their privacy. This could be regarded as a comfortable environment, allowing principals, Deputy principals and Heads of Departments to operate in their natural setting which formed part of their daily lives and work context.

The focus group interview of three Foundation Phase teachers and three Senior Primary teachers of each school was conducted in a classroom away from other staff members to allow them privacy and complete confidentiality of given information. The interviews were conducted after school hours to minimize the disruption of teaching and learning in the school. The interviewer tried to put every interviewee at ease. To create a relaxed atmosphere, a general topic was discussed before turning to the specifics of the interview.

3.6 Data Collection

The main methods I used to collect data were the following:

- Individual semi-structured interviews with the principal (two interviews each), deputy principal, heads of departments and three teachers from each school;
- Observation of the work of the school principals
- Observation of aspects instructional leadership that existed in the three schools;
- Collection and scrutiny of documents that related to improved results and use of specific data to implement measures of remediation and improving the quality of education.

Fieldwork was carried out over a two-week period at each school to gauge how instructional leadership took place.

In the light of the interpretive paradigm that outlines this study, the researcher chose to make use of the term “data generation” rather that “data collection”. Data was generated because a single reality does not exist but is constructed according to one’s own unique perceptions and experiences. As a researcher, my own subjective reality framed my own individual life experiences that eventually shaped the way in which I generated the data.

In keeping with this approach to data generation, the researcher chose to use a qualitative data production technique, namely interviews. This consisted of obtaining data through semi- structured interviews of individuals and focus groups including a biographical section.

3.7 Interviews

3.7.1 Interviews as research method

A qualitative research methodology consisting of semi-structured interviews was used as a means of generating the data. Interviews were conducted in natural settings that reflected the interviewees’ reality to a large extent. Qualitative interviewing is usually intended to refer to in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing (Mason and Bramble, 1989, p 38). It is characterized by a relatively informal style and a thematic, topic-centred, biographical or narrative approach. The assumption that data are generated via the interaction, because either the interviewee(s) or the interactions themselves

function as the data sources, may involve one interaction or larger groups (Mason and Bramble 1989, p 38).

3.7.2 Individual interviews

In this study individual semi-structured interviews were initially used to generate data. Babbie and Mouton (2001, p 289) claim that the individual interview is one of the most common qualitative techniques of data generation. The interview relies on the fact that people are able to give information regarding their practices, actions or experiences to those who ask questions. As Babbie and Mouton (2001, p 289) suggest, the qualitative interview is therefore essentially a conversation between the interviewer and the participants.

This study allowed for the subjective interpretation of personal experience. I was on two weeks observation at the schools and was well known to the interviewees who made up the case and had already established a relationship of trust with them before conducting the interview. Since I have been a schoolteacher and school leader previously, I was able to generate data about a setting I was familiar with. However, it must be seen within the context of a study that is subjective in nature. I was interpreting the experiences of others, and was doing so from my subjective point of reference.

3.7.3 Focus group interviews

A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people is asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about phenomena. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members. A focus group is an interview, conducted by the researcher among a small group of respondents. The interview is conducted in an informal and natural way where respondents are free to give views from any aspect.

3.7.4 The interview process

Appointments were made with each individual participant at a time that was convenient for both parties, as I interviewed each individual participant and focus groups separately. I anticipated each interview to take approximately one hour and

a half and recorded the interviews for the purposes of transcription, because the content of the interviews would need to be analysed. The interviews were conducted from July 2012 to November 2012.

3.7.5 Semi-structured interviews

For this study, the researcher made use of semi-structured interviews as the primary means of data generation. Babbie and Mouton (2001, 289) claim that in the interview, the interviewer has a general plan of investigation but allows the conversation to progress in no specific order, although specific areas of interest are raised. However (Merriam, 1989, p 74) claims that the largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions can be determined ahead of time.

3.7.6 Managing the interview situation

Managing the interview situation is of equal importance to setting up the interviews and asking the appropriate questions. Merriam (1998, p 23) states that certain important points should be considered, e.g. to set the tone for the atmosphere that would be conducive to achieving the goals. The interviewer created an atmosphere of trust in which the participants felt comfortable to express their feelings and experiences. The interview was held in a relaxed and conversational spirit. The conversation was understood to be private and confidential to put the interviewees at ease. Other points that Merriam (1998, p 23) highlighted and that the researcher tried to implement were good communication skills, empathy with the respondents, establishing rapport, asking relevant questions, being a good listener and refraining from making negative judgements. In following this procedure, Robson and Foster (1989, p 51) acknowledge that in interviews there is a tendency for questions to follow too quickly. The interviewer was aware of this and allowed enough time for unhurried thinking on the part of the interviewee.

3.7.7 Advantages of interviews in this study

According to Borg and Gall (1989, p 67) the advantages of interviews include adaptability. By using responses to the topic under discussion the interviewer can change the interviewing situation. In this study adaptability will ensure an in-depth

understanding of questions posed. The interview situation allows the researcher to follow up on clues, thereby generating more data. This technique was also applied in this specific study. Under favourable circumstances the interview can provide more data with respect to aspects that need to be investigated further. The interviewer made every effort to let the participants feel comfortable and also ensured their anonymity. Creating such an environment provided more rich and useful data for the study. These advantages made the interview as a research method suitable for the study.

3.7.8 Audio taping the interviews

By recording the interviews on audiotape, the interviewer captured more data than would have been the case if she had to rely on memory only. When using the recorder, the interviewer ensured that the equipment was functioning properly before the start of each interview. This was done to ensure an even flow of the interview. A small recorder was used and placed out of sight. The microphone was unobtrusive and sensitive enough to pick up voices without the participants having to speak into it. Each cassette had been clearly labeled to identify each participant's interview.

3.8 Data analysis

The data was analysed using appropriate qualitative research techniques to identify patterns of behaviour. The data was categorised into themes that emerged from the data collection which were shaped by questions and answers given by participants in this research. McMillan and Schumacher (2006 p 462) conclude that data analysis is largely about organising data into categories and identifying patterns.

Coding schemes were designed for each category and patterns using grounded theory methods (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) and interpretational analysis (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2007). Grounded theory analysis was used to inductively analyse the participants' interview responses. These were compared to the conceptual frame of the Instructional Core to ascertain its applicability to the South African context. It was possible to use the same codes across different probes and where the coding of the responses was identical they will be compared for consistency and similarity.

The use of integrative diagrams and other graphics were created to synthesize and summarise the relationships between the collected data and the themes that emerge.

3.9 Limitations

There were challenges to this research, or constraints when schools did not act to improve teaching and learning as indicated in their selection. The research also uncovered other barriers that educators acknowledge as factors, which prevent them from improving.

One of these is that my study is a relatively small based only on three primary schools, one from an inner city school, one from an fairly affluent middle class suburb and one township school in the province of Gauteng, South Africa. Hence, my findings are directly relevant to the three schools where the study was conducted.

In addition, certain unaccounted for factors could have influenced the findings of the study. Firstly, with regard to the questionnaires, one cannot be overly confident that respondents answered 'honestly' as they were requested to, or whether they unconsciously provided responses in a way that presented them in what they perceived to be a favourable light, for example, by providing politically correct answers or what they thought I, as a researcher, approved of.

Secondly, since the questions were in English and some of the respondents were non-native language speakers of English; one may not assume that every respondent understood every question although every effort was made to create a clear interview process. Although every effort was made at ensuring a miscommunication-free interview, making the interviewee as comfortable as possible, and keeping the interviewee ignorant of my own views on the subject, there was no guarantee that my use of only English did not influence interviewees' responses.

In addition, since the researcher was from a higher academic education institution she could have intimidated some respondents who may have not answered questions fully because of their own feelings of inferiority or lack of self-confidence.

Furthermore the presence of the tape recorder during interviews would have, in varying degrees, affected the responses of the interviewees. For example, being conscious that they were being taped (especially those for whom being interviewed and/or tape-recording their voices was a first time experience), interviewees might have been more careful about how they framed their responses and their choice of words, than they would otherwise have done had they been asked the same questions without their knowledge that they were being interviewed or that the interview was being recorded.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

The production of valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner is at the heart of all research (Merriam, 1992, p163). Multiple research methods to confirm the emerging findings were used and triangulated to ensure that findings were grounded in multiple areas of the data (Merriam, 1992, p169). The interview protocols were tested out with education colleagues in an attempt to determine reliability.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Credibility in qualitative research is required to be established. Ethical considerations, in any research study, should be a fundamental part of the entire process. Qualitative methods promote a high degree of trust between the researcher and the participants. The researcher has the t therefore places a special responsibility not to abuse the trusting relationship. The following methods were used to ensure ethical conduct during the research process. The researcher tried to ensure that participants were treated with the utmost respect and that they were fully aware that their participation was voluntary. Consent was obtained well before the study started and letters of consent were signed. In line with the recommendation made by Babbie and Mouton (2001, p 521), their consent to

participate was freely obtained.

Following from this, is the issue of informed consent, Mertens (1998, p 24) points out that deception, by cloaking what is being investigated, is prohibited unless absolutely necessary. In this study no deception occurred, and when asked to participate, the participants were fully informed about the nature and aims of the study. Before each interview, they were once again informed of the nature and aims of the study and assured of the confidentiality surrounding the study.

3.11.1 Trustworthiness and ethical issues

The researcher conducted the interviews personally and was familiar with the settings, the participants and the topic under investigation. This understanding of the context and role of the researcher enhances awareness, knowledge and sensitivity to many challenges, decisions and issues that could have been encountered. The researcher established trust by indicating the purpose of the study and the planned use of the data. Participants had been chosen because of their key involvement in the school and because they possessed the competence to relate their feelings, experiences, concerns observations and whatever other feedback was expected of them. Participants were not subjected to any emotional stress, because their co-operation was obtained voluntarily. The tone of the interview was supportive and non-threatening.

3.11.2 Permission

Permission was obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the interviews with the principals and staff from the three schools. Permission was granted to the researcher in writing by the Ethics committee of the University of Witwatersrand, allowing her to proceed with the study in the schools. (See attached letters in Appendix A, B and C). Requests to conduct the interview with the respondents were also made in writing to the participating principals. Consent was obtained from the principals, Deputy Principals, Head of Departments and teachers stating that they were willing to participate in the study, and agreeing that the interviews could be recorded on audiotape. The undertaking was given that findings and recommendations of the study would be made available to respondents, and that they would be asked to verify whether the deductions were a true reflection.

Confidentiality of the data preserving the anonymity of informants and using the research to obtain certain information, were discussed. The researcher was aware of her experiences as well as those of the participants, and she was sensitive to the needs and rights of the respondents.

The researcher and the participants were all well versed with the process, vocabulary and concepts relating to OBE. The interviews were conducted in the respondents' language of preference to establish a common and understandable means of communication between participants and interviewer. At the end of each interview participants were provided with a summary of their responses to verify the accuracy of the information that was captured. The results were truthfully represented as the research attempts to capture perspectives accurately.

3.11.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Participants were assured that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time and there was no penalty for withdrawal.

Participants were assured that the names and identity of the interviewees and the school will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used in any documentation of the thesis or research articles. They were also sent the transcript of the interview to verify its accuracy. They were assured that all data would be kept secure and disposed of when the research was complete.

3.12 Data Verification

3.12.1 Ensuring credibility

It is vital that the study should be credible. Reliability and validity are important means of establishing credibility. However, as Babbie and Mouton (2001, p 276) point out, absolute validity, objectivity and reliability will never be obtained, and it therefore remains a goal and ideal towards which researchers must strive. Rubin and Rubin (1995, p 85) suggest that credibility is aided by transparency. This is achieved when the reader of a qualitative study is able to see the processes of data generation and analysis. Merriam (1989, p 201) claims that internal validity deals with the question of how the research findings match reality.

For conducting this study, multiple sources of data generation were used. Five school principals were selected to render a more representative image of their experiences of educational change and its impact on their leadership roles and responsibilities. Amongst the number of procedures that can be used to achieve credibility, I attempted to make use of a literature review, face validity and member checks.

3.12.2 Possible contributions of the study

This study may contribute towards identifying the needs of support mechanisms for principals whenever changes in education occur. It is envisaged that the outcomes of the research will lead to a clearer understanding of the roles and responsibilities with regard to curriculum management and instructional leadership, as well as to school principals' personal and professional development.

3.13 Summary

The interpretative paradigm was chosen to conduct this study in the belief that reality is individually constructed based on how the researcher views the world from his/her own perspective. The researcher attempted to make meaning of what participants said about their own understanding of instructional leadership in their environment. The interpretative perspective provided a framework for research that can be described by the three case studies. This paradigm contributed to the selected research methodology and data generation instruments. The qualitative techniques of semi structured and focus group interviews conducted with the participants were based on questions primarily to generate data around the research questions. Biographical and specific school context details were also requested, and a two weeks observation schedule was set to provide the researcher with background information for studying the principals' experience of their dual roles and responsibilities.

The data generated from the interview was analysed by comparing the data of the respective respondents in order to identify common codes, themes and trends. Member checks were conducted as the respondents were given an opportunity not only to validate their own interview transcripts and comment on the researcher's codes and emerging themes, but also on the correctness of the inferences. Once

this final process of data reduction was completed, the researcher set about arranging the data into themes.

The ethical issues had to be considered before the research process began and the researcher needed to be aware of these considerations throughout the entire process. This chapter focused on the methodology employed during the study. The qualitative research methodology was described and the reasons for adopting this methodology were given. Once the research design was implemented, the findings were produced. The data will be presented in the next chapters of Chapters four, five and six and the analysis and interpretation of the data in Chapter seven.

CHAPTER 4

SCHOOL A: APPLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction to the three case studies

The aim of the following three chapters is to provide a detailed description and analysis of each school by presenting the findings of the data collection process. This chapter first gives a broad description of management and leadership and then each chapter is presented by beginning with the background and context of the each school. The focus of the study was on the principal's instructional leadership and the working assumption was that I would see evidence of this in high performing schools. Therefore each case school was purposively selected on the basis of the evidence of maintaining high academic standard and thus high performing schools. This was obtained by looking at the 2011 Annual National Assessments (Table 1). The results were as follows:

Table 2: Literacy and Numeracy Percentile Scores from 2011 Annual National Assessments for three Case Study Schools.

	Grade 1		Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 6	
SCHOOL	LIT	NUM	LIT	NUM	LIT	NUM	LIT	NUM
A	76.0	71.3	75.9	58.5	71.2	68.5	65.8	73.5
B	84.0	83.0	75.0	49.0	60.0	47.0	56.0	48.0
C	68.0	74.0	79.0	61.0	46.0	54.0	44.0	26.0

These schools had performed highly according to the school categories of suburban, inner city and township schools that were selected to research. The study was based on the assumption that since learners were performing higher than expectation compared to other schools in Gauteng that these schools had an impression of good educational management and instructional leadership.

Kotter (1999) "proposes that management and leadership are different but complementary, and that in a changing world, one cannot function without the other. He then enumerates and contrasts the primary tasks of the manager and the leader. His key point bears repeating: Managers promote stability while leaders press for change, and only organizations that embrace both sides of that contradiction can thrive in turbulent times".

Educational management encompasses those aspects that cover education. It is the process of planning, organizing, directing, controlling and running the school to achieve the objectives of education through the resources provided, i.e. human and material resources. It is driven by the various policies, rules, roles and legislations to help steer the institution in achieving these objectives.

The actions pertaining to managing the school is portrayed in the job descriptions of the various staff members and the way each one executes his/her responsibilities. The processes are the various actions that each member takes to fulfill these responsibilities and educational management is how each of these is administered and supervised. Some of these are planning, meetings and inputs in design and implementation, school functionality, timetabling, order, operating procedures and routines and funding/finance/donors.

Management is the art of getting work done with the help of the resources within the budget and timeframes in order to produce results. It is those essentials which have to be put in place for the institution to function.

Education has to be managed efficiently and lead effectively to reach greater heights. Kotter (1999) stated “leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary systems of action”. While improving their ability to lead, it should be remembered “that strong leadership with weak management is no better, and is sometimes actually worse, than the reverse. The real challenge is to combine strong leadership and strong management and use each to balance the other” (Kotter 1999). Not every principal in a school can be good at both leading and managing. It’s a self-reflective person who can realise this and chart a way forward to work with his/her strengths and weaknesses to compensate for the challenges.

Leadership is about leading people to greater heights, inspiring them, being positive even when faced with adversity, influencing them and being visionary towards a higher goal and sense of purpose. All the actions of the leader will point towards the attainment and achievement of success and in this case the overall and ongoing improvement and enhancement of the core business of the school, which is one of quality teaching and quality learning for enhanced student achievement.

The leader must either be directly instrumental in changing behaviour or guide others to perform the same function in the changing and challenging environment that they find themselves in. The leader must be motivational and contribute to the constructive, action-orientated ethos of the school.

SCHOOL A: APPLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Principal: The classroom is the teacher's kingdom…
Don't invade it…barriers go up.

Apple Primary school is an Ex-Model C[9] school situated in the Jacaranda tree-lined streets of a well known suburb in Johannesburg, South Africa. Given that the school had produced very good ANA results in 2011 this school was an obvious choice for my research of successful primary schools. This is a Quintile 5 school[10] with approximately five hundred learners coming from an affluent mixed suburb, which caters for a racially diverse mix of people and offers easy access to top schools. The school comprises of White, Indian (mainly coming from the Muslim community), and Black learners. It caters to learners from Grade R to Grade 7. It has one principal, two Heads of Department (HOD) and fifteen educators with a few support staff. Apple Primary School is well resourced, collects school fees, and has well maintained grounds to cater for the needs of the learners. The school has an open, friendly ethos and did not hesitate to participate in the research.

I was welcomed by the principal and introduced in the staffroom to the Foundation Phase staff who occupied the staffroom. I made note of the fact that none of the Senior Primary teachers were in the staffroom. The Foundation Phase teachers were friendly and warm and did not hesitate to engage in conversation with me. All the staff that I selected for my research was willing to give their time to talk, be interviewed and exchange honest, insightful revelations of the school. Ironically, I

[9] Ex-model C schools are those schools that were reserved for the white population under apartheid in South Africa. These schools received the most funding from the Department of Education, had the best curriculum and were fully resourced.

[10] Schools are in five groups, and receive funding based on the group they are in. The funding model is progressive, with poorer quintiles receiving more than wealthier quintiles. The quintiles are ranked from 1 to 5 with Quintile 1(Q1) being the poorest schools.

was told by the HOD and some of the educators that this research rather than being a burden, helped to give the staff an avenue to express suppressed thoughts and feelings around instruction and curriculum that needed to be out in the open.

Table 2: Role and Pseudonyms of Respondents

Principal	Mr John
SP HoD	Jane
FP HoD	Cathy
Focus Group: FP	A - Rani
	B - Shirley
	C – Mary
Focus Group: SP	A - Janice
	B - Bob
	C – Precious

When Mr. John, principal of Apple Primary School spoke, he conveyed a sense of a school that had good organization and was managed well. There were plans and procedures in place, a well-articulated timetable operating and educators were with their learners in the classroom. The school seemed functional, quite well performing and indeed embodied the idea of a successful school scenario and the 2011 ANA results were indicative of this.

Mr. John spoke easily about his roles and responsibilities as the school principal. He described his typical day as being very busy and gave some examples of what he considers as “priority in my life” for himself as the principal.

> It’s often difficult for me to achieve what I plan to do because there are very often things that happen in the course of the day that simply have to be dealt with. There are things like parents coming in, phone calls, the Department phoning, teachers having queries, and obviously that’s got to be a priority in my life.

In a school where management and organisation was vital, the principal projected it as being “difficult” to “achieve what he plan(s)”. In his description of his “priorities” he did not mention anything about instruction. It seemed that he was in the school to deal with the organisational issues around the periphery of teaching and learning. He continued to expand on these thoughts and said:

> So very often I, you know, I might plan to do x, y and z and I end up finishing the day not even having done x simply because there have been so many things that have… cropped up.

Mr. John was matter of fact about the work he was doing at Apple Primary School. He mostly sat in his office and ran the school from there. He attended to unplanned proceedings readily and ended up not accomplishing many of the planned tasks for the day. He gave the impression that he sat on the "balcony" observing the action but did not become a part of the "dance" (Heifetz, R et al, 2002). His office was situated at a strategic point so that he could observe a major part of the school when it was in session. This was opportune for him, as it meant that he could observe a lot from his office, if he chose to, but it also meant to him that he did not have to walk around the school to observe and supervise.

A successful school such as Apple Primary School required strong well-articulated decisions, but Mr. John, as a decision maker, in a well-managed school, says that

> I'm not a keen ad hoc decision maker…Because my experience is that decisions that are made on the corridor often end up being bad decisions because one hasn't thought of the consequences, you haven't thought of the repercussions of that, of that decision.

He emphasised that he liked to think through things before making a decision. His colleagues, on the other hand, did not agree with this and stated clearly that they are frustrated by his inability to act and take appropriate action when he is faced with a challenge. As a result the educators discussed turning to other School Management Team (SMT) members to make decisions. The SMT is made up of the principal and two HODs. The Senior Primary HOD (Jane) stated, "I think in any school the SMT's made up of different personalities". The educators agreed by saying the principal will "never confront you and tell you things, he'll go via the HOD".

In contrast to Mr. John's personality is different the personality of the two HODs who complement and support each other. Jane continued to explain this behaviour as:

> And because of that we (the two HODs) work well together in a lot of instances, but sometimes it can be difficult. I'm not scared of conflict at all, I'll confront it, I'll confront the person…Whereas, the principal believes, 'Well let's rather just wait and see what happens.' So our management style's are quite different.

Both HODs declared that their management and leadership styles are very different.

The educators agreed with the HODs of Mr. John's management by stating that they were "indirect" and "non-committal" style by saying:

> Janice: I think indirect. He will never confront you and tell you things, he'll go via the HOD.
> Bob: I do know a little bit about it, like well he'll kind of say, 'Well this is what we've got to do, you're the Heads of Department, you must sort it out.'
> Bob: Ja
> Janice: Yes he does. He likes delegating.
> Bob: He… Ok, it's again this whole thing of not getting that involved. And keeping a distance, which is a pity. It really is a pity.
> Janice: That's a bit of a downfall if you find in our school because delegation seems to be the thing, you know.
> Bob: Yes
> Janice: And it shouldn't be. It should be a case where 'get my hands dirty now and again' I believe that.

In this conversation Janice perceived the principal's leadership and management style to be "indirect" and "non-confrontational" and working "via the HODs". Bob, who is regarded by the principal as one of the "best teachers", agreed with Janice about this non-committal attitude. He talked about the principal "keeping a distance" and regarded it as a real "pity".

The educator's understanding of "delegation" was denoted as an avoidance tactic so that the principal was not "cornered" into making rash decisions. The educators did not regard this lightly as they talked about an incident were the principal lacked involvement. According to them the incident had serious implications and repercussions for educators, learners and parents. While the educators didn't want to discuss this incident they said that it resulted in educators seeking transfer and leaving the school. The SP HOD, Jane, agreed with the educators from the focus group interviews and stated: "Ok, say for instance, say we've got like, we had a problem parent last year, and we had a huge problem parent". Bob talks about the same incident and says:

> It was a parent that gave us a problem from grade 3 – well, in fact from grade 2 – and this is where you see the different management styles… it wasn't dealt with effectively. This child came through into the intermediate phase and there was this constant battle with the parent. I mean eventually this went all the way to district, this problem.

A problem of this nature never merited a discussion with all concerned led by the principal because according to the educators meetings do not take place. The educator, Janice, in the focus group says:

> those kinds of things. I mean, if something happened then…You know, then we talk about it when it happens, we don't wait for the SMT, because we have the SMT once a week. Sometimes, I mean, I've known that we've missed SMT (meetings) for 4 or 5 weeks.

It is clear from this quote that the SMT does not have regular meetings. They had made a decision to meet once a week but this did not happen as there was no meeting for the last "4 to 5 weeks". The HODs meet regularly, on their own, but feel a lack of engagement with the principal.

Janice stressed that the principal should get his "hands dirty now and again". In this particular incident Mr. John's attention and presence were missing and contributed much disharmony and acrimony amongst the staff, from which, according to the educators, they "are still recovering" (Janice). The educators perceive that the principal is not in full control of instruction in the school.

> The principal agrees about his own attitude by saying: but the way I organize the school is, is that the, the two departments are the kings. That's where the action happens under the leadership of the Head of Department.

Apple Primary School has two powerful and influential HODs who do not rely on the principal to lead teaching and learning at the school. Both Cathy (Foundation Phase HOD) and Jane (Senior Primary HOD) have a nurturing, supportive and caring nature which helps to sustain an instructional program conducive to learning and staff professional growth according to the principal, HODs and educators. Jane describes Cathy as "she's a little bit of a mixture. She's not as disciplinarian as I am, or organized, but she's more so than (Mr. John) and she still has those qualities of his where she can talk to people."

The management function of dealing with educator absenteeism was well controlled by organised arrangements to bring in substitute educators. Mr. John was aware of the arrangements, which kept the school running smoothly. He spoke about these arrangements by saying

> we then bring a substitute person in and we've got 2 or 3 people on our books that we can phone and they, you know, one of them we'll find who will be able to come in... If their substitute teacher is the teacher who's absent, they go to the media centre. So, so that's the system and it seems to be as good a system.

The school has a semblance of functionality. The structure is in place and Mr. John is good at ensuring the smooth running of the school. In our conversations he did not speak about the actual teaching and pedagogy of substitute teachers or the time lost by learners who were being added to other classes. One of the downfalls is that Mr. John does not hold regular staff meetings or SMT meetings. Jane states that "because we have the SMT once a week. Sometimes, I mean, I've known that we've missed SMT meetings for 4 or 5 weeks".

I witnessed this to be true for the school because I asked the principal and he agreed to my request to sit in on one of their SMT meetings and yet none occurred during my time with the school. On the question of meetings and whether the staff met regularly Jane stated emphatically "No...No...No... No. If my staff has got a problem they come to me. They find me very approachable (funnily enough) even though I'm so 'down the line' they will come to me with a problem because they know I'll take it further."

Another issue that concerns the educators is the absence of regular assemblies for learners which rarely occur.

4.1 Leadership dispositions

Strong educational leaders believe in, value and are committed to standards in education such as the vision, teaching and learning, management, and ethics. These allow the principal of the school to support a well-articulated vision that sets a clear direction providing a dual focus on the quality of learning and the quality of teaching. Mr. John as head of school, in his daily activities, seemed to pay the least attention to teaching and learning.

The HODs and teachers described what they saw as a lack of leadership characteristics in the principal that is quite exasperating for the staff. Mr. John was discussed as reticent, non-committal, indecisive, lacks personality and uncommunicative. He describes himself as "not a keen corridor decision maker"

and in “long term decisions” he would like to ponder and think about them so that he could “mull them over and think of consequences and think of better ways of doing it. And invariably one then ends up making a good decision.”

In a primary school many challenges arise during the course of the day, which invariably link to instruction in the classroom. Hoadley’s and Christie’s (2007) research found the importance of parental support and engagement as well as the instructional focus of the school in achieving student gains over time. These issues, according to them, may be important points for school management development of improved student learning outcomes. Leadership dispositions such as passion for the core business of the school are imperative for ongoing improvement and enhanced student achievement. Teachers require much guidance for their many subjects allocated to them and are not always proficient with every topic or task allotted to them. The leadership of a school plays a crucial role in providing the necessary assistance when required.

According to the educators, the leadership of the HODs in Apple Primary School is “straight forward” and “too direct”. Although “too direct” can sometime imply that they do not like it, in this case the educators say that they feel that they get the direction that they desire so they usually find it “inspirational”. The principal says that he encourages the teachers to experiment and take risks in their teaching and tasks. He further reiterates that he has empathy for the teachers, since he was a teacher before and he knows the responsibilities that they face. Coming from this experience, he feels strongly that it is not the principal’s place to visit an educator’s classroom. Mr. John regards this action positively as he sees himself as “respecting” the educator’s space as he does it very gently:

> [what] I’ve also learnt, and I’m the same, I’m also a teacher, I feel exactly the same way…You know, that the classroom is a teacher’s kingdom and don’t invade it… You know, don’t you know, that’s their territory, that’s their place and yes, I might be the principal, but I mustn’t invade it…

He believes that when an educator’s class is “invaded” then “barriers... go up.”

> You know, I must get permission to enter it, I must enter it with their knowledge and with their approval and only then can something happen. If I'm invading it, just the barriers are going to go up.

The principal's stance is that he should not impose his presence in the classroom and would do this very discreetly. He says that he finds excuses, for example, taking a piece of paper to the teacher, to do a quick observation and leave the class. This type of surreptitious action is not transparent enough to allow him to comment on the educator on his or her instructional practice and action. With the result it is not possible to inspire transformation in behaviour that could come with open, honest dialogue about the process of supervision. Educators say that they are frustrated that they do not get in-depth analysis of their teaching, the curriculum and their learners. They do not talk about "barriers" at all, as seen during the Senior Phase discussion.

> Janice: I think that to a certain extent it depends on whether… Like I go to him quite often and tell him what I've been doing because he's a Science person as well so he understands what I'm talking about. So I mean he doesn't actually come in and do anything or evaluate.
> Bob: He has come to watch my lessons
> Janice: But I've requested that he's done that…[and according to Janice he has not come to her class].

On whether Mr. John comes on his own accord, the educators say:

> Bob: I wouldn't…Ja, no, I wouldn't say that, um… No, I don't think he's that
> Precious: No, he doesn't come
> Janice: Not at all. He comes if he has to come, you know, like for you IQMS, maybe if he's asked to come, but our HOD does all of it.
> Precious: Or maybe if there's a message, you know, then he will come to your class then and he's, 'Oh what are you doing?'And 'We're doing this.' And then maybe he'll be with us for 2 minutes and then he'll walk out…The only time he gets involved is if he's obviously got a complaint maybe from a parent, but otherwise he leaves you on your own.

This sequence in the focus group interview reveals and concurs with the principal was saying about supervision of educators. It is evident that the principal avoids visiting the educators in the classroom with a result they receive very little or no guidance from him in teaching and learning. The principal thinks that these short

visits allow him to assess and supervise the teacher. The teachers perceive his lack of visiting the classroom as an avoidance tactic or an inability to guide them. There were other signs of promise and success. Instructional leadership was provided strongly by the two Heads of Department of the school, Cathy the Foundation Phase HOD and Jane the Senior Primary HOD.

In the absence of leadership from the principal the HODs leadership is more pronounced. Cathy says:

> Because in my position I teach a full time grade 1 class. So obviously I have all the aspects of teaching a full time grade 1 class as well as all the aspects involved in being head of department – teacher development, and managing curriculum… management, dealing with parents both in the pre-primary and in the foundation phase, dealing with the department and all the red tape that they generally require. So it's a hectic full day.

On a question on how she copes with having a Grade 1 class and being able to deal with all the other duties she replied:

> it's very difficult. It's very difficult and I have requested one or two extra admin periods (we call them) then my class would go to the library with Mrs (X) and then she would take them for Life Skills. So I'm trying to get those… And it's very difficult.

As I walked around the school I could verify this as Cathy was a very busy person who saw to all the needs of the Foundation Phase educators and also taught her class with all the concentration it deserved. She was in her class teaching her learners during contact time and did not find excuses to leave her class unattended and thereby losing contact time.

4.2 Leadership relationships

Authoritarian leadership was the dominant mode of relationship in school during the apartheid era. According to Levin (1939) "authoritarian leaders, also known as autocratic leaders, provide clear expectations for what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done". There is also a clear division between the leader, who is the person in charge and the followers, who are the subordinates. Authoritarian leaders make decisions independently with little or no input from the rest of the group thus decision-making was less creative. Lewin (1939) also found that abuse of this style is usually viewed as controlling, bossy, and dictatorial.

As we move from an authoritarian regime from apartheid to a more democratic environment there is an ever-increasing need to develop positive relationships for schools if they are to accomplish their multi-faceted goals and succeed. Strong relationships based upon trust and cooperation amongst teachers, principals, parents, and community residents can and do play an important role in improving schools and student performance.

There is a good relationship between the two HODs in the school for example when Cathy calls Jane when Mr. John does not respond to a problem she encounters. Although the HODs have a good relationship with Mr. John they are usually frustrated with his indecisive manner.

From my observation Apple Primary School thrives with positive relationships amongst various stakeholders and learners. The district gets help from the HODs and some teachers who assist in training other teachers. The leadership relationship plays out well with the staff in their own phases and the department works well within. There is a breakdown in the relationship between the teachers of the Foundation Phase and the Senior Phase. The teachers do not speak to each other. There is a strong work ethic throughout but not enough to fix the phase division because the principal will not confront the problem.

Apple Primary School is a well-resourced school and has a wealth of knowledge and experience in the staff but one wonders if this is harnessed and used to its full capacity.

Human resources and the ethical relationships that exist between people are vital for improvement. But good relationships in an organisation have to be fostered and when problems develop they have to be addressed. This vital aspect is missing in the relationship between the principal and educators.

Strong partnerships strengthen relationships among people in the entire institution. Building the collective capacity for schools to thrive in this way has a direct impact on student achievement. So, if the relationship between the various stakeholders in a school is fractured then it breaks down the foundation of the institution bit by bit.

As I walked around the school, sat in the staffroom during breaks and spoke to a number of educators I noticed that a crucial relationship between the FP educators

and SP educators was fractured. It is deep rooted and affected the staff to such an extent that they were not meeting in the same environment. The Foundation Phase educators met in the staffroom during breaks and the Senior Primary Phase educators met under a tree or spoke to each other on the corridors. The principal usually joined the Foundation Phase educators in the staffroom. Not only was it affecting the staff morale but it impacted on learners as the specific learning challenges experienced especially by the Grade 4 children were not discussed by the educators from both phases.

The educators declared that the many challenges with regards to the relationships between the FP and SP educators were not being addressed. Educators noted that this affected the working ethos of the school and posed many problems for the transition of learners from Grade 3 to Grade 4 with a result that teaching and learning was suffering in the school. At a time when positive relationships are needed more than ever, they said that the principal does not find out how these relationships fell apart and what could be done to repair it. According to the educators it was allowed to fester and continue.

Learners need convincing role models, committed, industrious educators who have their interest at heart all the time and credible authority to enjoy quality interaction in the classroom. The educator body needs to be aware that as a group and influencing force they have a common responsibility for maintaining a cordial atmosphere, not only among themselves but also towards the learners. The educators need to question themselves continuously as to what they do consciously and unconsciously to meet the needs of the learners and how the learners perceive their lack of communication with colleagues and whether it is serving as a detrimental force in other relationships in the school.

A positive relationship exists within the two Departments between the two HODs. Jane says when Mr. John does not respond or fails to make a decision Cathy seeks counsel “and called me out of my class one day because she had conflict with them (caretakers), and they were ignoring her!” to decide what to do and this did not happen “ when the last principal was here it didn’t happen. Now it’s only happened since this principal. And what’s actually happened”. There was a problem in the school yard and Cathy called the caretaker to her class to ask him to sort the

problem out but he ignored her. There seems to be a problem in relationship between Cathy and the caretaker and Cathy spoke to Jane to address the problem with the caretaker. Cathy will not go to Mr. John because she knows that he will not do anything about it.

Strong teamwork is evident between HODs and their educators in the phases and between educators in the phases themselves. One of the Senior Primary educators said that ("anyone applying for a job at this school must not think that "Ag, I'll do whatever as I please") "we work as a **team**, and we work hard."

From my observation I noticed that the work ethos of the educators of Apple Primary School is that educators do "work hard" and love their learners. Bob confirmed this:

> we have different personalities and different skills and abilities and we deal with things in different ways and although there are differences sometimes, I think we all definitely want this school to be the best school. We believe in this school, we love our learners – every one of us". We believe in this school, we love our learners – every one of us.

From the interview of the educators it seemed clear that there was much anxiety around certain relationships that the principal chose to ignore that affected the "emotional" state of the educators although there was "concern" for it.

Bob hesitatingly said, "since this is about management and leadership, you know, the leadership of this school I think is very… They're very concerned about the welfare of the staff and their emotional well-being". He was referring to the HODs leadership and not the principal's. Jane agrees that the educators:

> shouldn't be coming to me, they should be going to the principal… But it's because I'll make a decision…Or I'll see it through…I'll take it up…Which doesn't hold me in good stead sometimes…Because I can be quite disliked by the parents, hey. And some of the teachers…But I believe, that when they come to me, if something is right and truthful, you must fight for it…And that's our biggest problem in education…My personal thing (her personal opinion about the state of education). And it deflates the teachers. You know, they try so hard, they work so hard…And there's no real recognition, it's all what they've done wrong instead of what they've done right.

According to her problems remain unresolved and that affects the emotional state of the staff and also affects relationships between the educators

themselves and also with the parents. She is caught in the middle because she is the more decisive and action oriented person.

4.3 Instructional leadership behaviours

The behaviour of leadership in a school determines whether the school is conducive for effective instruction and whether it focuses on change and improvement. If the behaviour is based on goal emphasis, work facilitation, support and development then those behaviour promote teaching and learning. Spillane et al. (2004) says that you study leadership by seeing action and if that "action" is not evident then it can be questioned whether leadership is at its optimum.

Instructional leadership behaviour revolves around the instructional core components that are interdependent, viz., teachers' knowledge and skill, students' engagement in their learning and academically challenging content. The behaviour around these components reveals whether Apple Primary School is concerned about their specific actions, their desired outcomes of instruction and strategies to increase performance and ongoing improvement. The principal stated that the business of teaching and learning is left in the hands of the HODs.

Jane spoke about how she managed curriculum and about her instructional behaivours that helped her deal with a problem. She had to make adjustments because they are a small school with a small management team of three members.

> There's only three of us so at the beginning of the year we know what we're teaching from the year before and, we try and keep it consistent – you know, if they enjoy a subject I try and keep my staff to keep that subject. I don't like them to change too much. At the beginning of the year we have meetings, we discuss problems that we had in the previous year, like last year we had a teacher and she didn't comply. It had a ripple effect in that subject – it was English…and then we had a few more meetings during the year over and over again.

The principal of Apple Primary School merely wants to play a supportive role "Well my main job as, as I see it, is a supportive role. My job is to support what goes on in the classroom and to encourage, obviously, what goes on in the classroom".

> My wish is that every teacher needs to have the resources and the environment whereby they can give of their best, whatever their best

> happens to be". And he "ensure(ed) that they have a decent environment, which is why we pay such good attention to maintenance, e.g., You know, if something gets broken in a classroom, if the blackboard falls off the wall or something like that, we get it repaired as soon as we can...an environment where the teachers can give of their best and of course to equip them. So if they need a, if they need a book, if they need a DVD, if they need textbooks, if they need workbooks, whatever it is that they might need to, to, to try and resource them. And I wouldn't call ourselves a rich school but we're also not a poor school. (Mr. Johns)

So if Mr. John sees his role as one to provide the necessary resources, a role he can easily delegate to another leader in the school, then this is problematic and it is doubtful that he is providing the kind of leadership that instructional leadership requires. This limited presence in leading teaching and learning means the instructional leadership role must shift to the HODs who have developed strategies to assist the educators. Mr. John's thinks guidance is based on:

> "giving advice" to one teacher in the subject. Oh yes [I give guidance]….Yes, indeed. We've got an excellent senior Science teacher in Mr. Bob he is probably amongst the best primary school Science teachers that you are going to find in Johannesburg...I do assist him. He writes his own books, his own, his own manuals, so he's busy going through that process for the new CAPS document.

Mr. John says that "I've given him some advice and things like that. And he quite often will come, because I do have a Science background". The educator that the principal mentions, Mr. Bob sees things differently (see earlier quote) when he admits in the focus group interview that although he has had some discussions with Mr. John he is still waiting for Mr. John to come back to him with the help. In this way Mr. John feels that he is of assistance to educators. This is just one educator in the school and Mr. John continues to add that "he (Bob) quite often comes and, and …chats with me about things." This is the sum total of what the principal describes as his contribution to all the teachers knowledge in the school.

The two HODs discussed their focus on supervision and the curriculum as it happens. Cathy spoke about CAPS and said that "CAPS has been a very big focus this term and the end of last, I mean in this year and the end of last year… just issues around that - timetabling, sorting out time, getting enough teachers best suited to do the job in terms of the subjects that are offered and just concerns that we've had about the curriculum in general".

> In the foundation phase we work on like there's a grade leader, so there's someone in charge of the grade, so she oversees the functioning of that grade. Um and the person chosen for that obviously we try and choose someone who's got experience or someone who's got leadership skills in a way. (Cathy)

The foundation phase is a well-functioning phase that selects teacher leaders who help lead the curriculum in grades and meet regularly for discussions.

> [She selects] someone who can get on with other people… and then they oversee the grade. And then I… instead of meeting with everyone all the time I generally meet with them. And then the person in charge… What we've done this year is we've had a person in charge of the learning area. So for example, say Mrs (M) in grade 3, she does Maths so she'll check the Maths in grade 1, 2 and 3 so she can see the progression that goes up.

Progression in the grades and curriculum planning is taken care of in an organised, collaborative manner. Cathy has two leaders, one for each grade as a "grade leader and one for each subject as a "learning area head".

> The learning area head is very much more involved in the curriculum… the actual curriculum that's been taught in each of the grades…Whereas a grade leader deals with the admin of the grade, for example making sure that the homework goes out, making sure that she deals with parents if parents have complaints or concerns that goes to the teacher then to the grade, to the grade leader.

4.4 Classroom interactions

Quality learning is derived from the direct interactions that take place in the classroom. It is here that student's achievement and output is maximized by the type and quality of input, the individualized tasks being used and the change in pedagogic style. It is evident that curriculum planning is prominent in this school. Apple Primary School has some highly experienced, well-trained, dynamic educators who support and help each other in their respective phases. Instructional leadership provided by the HODs guarantees that teaching and learning do not suffer. One example of this is when Jane spoke about a conversation she had with one of the educators:

> Last term my Afrikaans teacher came to me, she said, 'Just look at my marks, they're too low.' Then we sit down and analyse what's the problem. Then we went through the whole term's work – the cycle tests, this, that – to see where it was and how we can create that balance so it was a proper reflection of the children.

The type of classroom interaction that takes place is firstly based on what the principal says about his own teaching:

> So it's certainly not the bulk of my day, so I do teach a little bit… and you know, (a) to help out…because, you know, that provides the teachers with a few more admin periods to spread around…And secondly I believe that it's a good thing to just keep your hand in. You know, one can lose touch with the classroom very, very quickly. Currently I'm taking a class of grade 4 Phys Ed…And I'm taking the grade 7s for Technology. So those are the two that I teach currently.

Although Mr. John's reasons for teaching do not emphasize the importance of expert knowledge in a specific subject or the importance of good interaction with his learners, it is commendable that he as a leader of the school still finds the time to teach. Mr. John understands the situation at a school, the need for strategic allocation of subjects and to be able to provide some free time for the educators. He says, "So we do try and support it (teaching) because the one thing that I do know is that, you know everybody says that it depends on the principal, the quality of school". Mr. John underplays the importance of his role:

> I think to an extent that is correct… But my view actually is it depends on the teachers...and on the quality of teaching...What really happens, what really affects the learners is not so much what happens here (in the office).You know, if anybody is absent because they're sick, me being absent actually makes the least impact in the day. I'm probably the least noticed person because I'm not here, you know.

He seems to be in accord with the educators in agreeing that he is does not see himself as being beneficial to anyone and thus to the school. He portrays himself as being invisible to the instructional process.

While he is not overly concerned about the transition from foundation phase to senior primary phase, Cathy, the HOD spoke about this and emphasised that it is a "big jump" for learners. She emphasised that " I mean they see to the progression from one grade to the next grade, what happens with grade 3 and grade 4?...Grade 3 to grade 4, um it is a big jump, it's a concern in all schools...I read an article recently where they said it's a universal problem across the world.

> You can't help it, you're going from 3 learning areas to lots of learning areas...And it's a big jump and I've taught grade 4 so I understand.

She added that she was a Grade 4 educator:

> What they do here (Apple Primary School) is in the last term or like the last, not quite the whole term but like most of the 4th term, we then start doing a bit of subject teaching, so the Maths teacher will do the Maths in all three of the classes, the English teacher will then go and do English and then the children don't move, the teachers move. And then towards the end the children actually have to pack their bags, pack their belongings and move from class to class because that's what they do in grade 4.

The learners are introduced into the new environment with practice runs and "that's one of the things we do. They also get exposed to different teachers 'because that's what happens in grade 4 and they get exposed to packing up their bags, looking after their belongings and moving around". Learners learn a different set of responsibilities, a different school culture and get used to a number of different educators. Although they are immersed into new ways of operating and interacting very little is done about discussion of curriculum and progression into different subjects. This shows that the HODs work to strengthen strategies to make it work. When asked about "what happens with the communication between Grade 3 teachers and Grade 4 teachers" Cathy said:

> You know, it is difficult 'cause the Grade 3 teachers, I mean I understand, I mean Grade 4 teachers will say that the Grade 3 teachers aren't maybe doing enough...You know? They're not preparing them well enough. And then the grade 3 teachers will say, 'But it's developmental and we can only do what's developmentally appropriate in grade 3, you know'... and that it's a phase and that, you know, when they move up that they must deal with it...And the grade 3 teachers will feel when they move up, 'What are you doing to solve the problem instead of always criticizing what we've done previously?

The lack of communication between the Foundation Phase educators and the Senior Phase educators comes through very clearly in this exchange. Each one blames the other and leaves it year after year. This obstructs the approach to quality teaching and learning taking place. This practice is emphasised in this conversation. The FP HOD says:

> a typical example was a complaint I think two years ago about the children not knowing their times tables, which you know, I mean matrics don't even know some of their times tables. And was it probably about May, end of May, and they were saying that they didn't know their times tables and (the principal) said, 'But it's May now, what have <u>you</u> done to teach them their times tables?'

Cathy said that Mr. John told the Grade 4 not to “complain” but should rather take it upon them (Grade 4 teachers) to do something about what the learners do not know or have not grasped as yet. The lack of communication between the educators is makes it difficult to address instructional challenges that may occur. Instead of working collaboratively for the benefit of the learners and the learners engagement in their learning educators at Apple Primary resort to blaming each other.

4.5 Monitoring and supervision

Instructional leadership at Apple Primary School is an ongoing process and one of the ways that this is done is through monitoring and supervision. Jane explains how thoroughly this is done.

> We have book control, I see books from every single class, every single teacher, every single subject…I do that once a year…And I’ve done it already.
>
> I do it… I give them a term and then I do it in the beginning of the second term to see how they’re going. I think you’ve got to understand, all the teachers I know are producing
>
> I’m more worried about the younger teachers – I see them twice a year.
>
> I do that twice. Then the learning area head sees them the next time.
>
> I see them at the first time, the learning area head sees them the second time to, to really look at the content, you know. I can pick it up but they just check in the middle of the year again, so it’s going to happen again.

By doing this kind of monitoring and supervision she can identify challenges and assist specific educators who may be having challenges with teaching and learning.

4.6 Professional Development

At Apple Primary School some aspects of teacher development takes place. Mr. John talks about educators going to workshops, NAPTOSA courses and other development courses from the district. The principal and HODs were also involved in giving training and some educators and the Foundation Phase HOD was instrumental in CAPS training for other school staff. The principal also indicated in one of his conversations that he is the mentor of another principal. The staff of

Apple Primary is experienced and resourceful according to the SP HOD as she says “I think you’ve got to understand, all the teachers I know are producing”

4.7 School culture issues

The culture of the school is one of order and discipline that is strong in Apple Primary School. Mr. John has a strict policy in terms of teaching time and school was in session and orderly at all times. They have a well-structured bell system and learners are dutifully occupied with very little or no chaos and noise. The educators said that they love being in the class and find it fulfilling spending their time teaching their learners. They do not hesitate to come early to school and leave late. They have a strong culture of work and will go the extra mile to see the school and their learners perform well. The culture of teaching and learning is established and learners are focused on the core business of learning.

The Foundation Phase HOD speaks about the morals and ethics of the school. She alluded to a sense of discord with some of the decisions made at school. Some of the educators agreed with her and agreed that some rules applied to the Foundation Phase that did not apply to the Senior Phase and vice versa. Ethically this kind of behaviour causes discontentment amongst the professional community. The realization of a school ethic requires a lot of persuasive work.

Some challenges are apparent especially in articulating the vision of the school and holding assemblies. For the school, it is increasingly important to develop a clear profile and to find answers to questions like “Who are we at this school?” “How should we deal with each other?” “What are we aiming for?” The staff of Apple Primary school should develop a culture that attempts to formulate the ground rules for living and working together as students, educators, staff persons and parents on strong ethical grounds. A school ethic is a voluntary commitment in which all take part.

The principal believes that a teacher’s classroom should not be “invaded” but the educators would welcome the support and guidance coming from him. Precious a Senior Phase educator says:

> I think he is supportive though at times he’s very **laid back**, he’s expecting us to do some of his duties as a principal. Like for an example when it comes to discipline, his discipline is not good at all. That’s why we end up

> fighting with parents at times because you, Mrs (N), or Miss (K) or Miss (V) is one of the strictest teachers in the school and you have to **discipline** the child instead of him doing it. Even when you want to send a child to his office you can see from the child's face that, you know, 'Hello, I don't care. I'd rather you send me there than you screaming at me.'

She would prefer that Mr. John's discipline be "stronger" and he was not so "laid back" so that other educators do not have to do his duties and take over certain leadership roles.

Mr. John also believes in the holistic development of the child thus the learners are encouraged to involve themselves in charitable work, e.g. the Easter Egg Drive and donating to the poor.

Mr. John is also concerned a great deal about the physical environment of the school and this is depicted in his fervor for well-kept grounds and litter. He has ground staff to take care of the environment and considered it his duty to cultivate good habits in learners and make sure that litter is controlled.

The main downfall of this is that Mr. John is overly concerned about these issues than teaching and learning and these shows in the culture of supervision, evaluation and development of educators. He extricates himself from this and puts those in the hands of the HODs.

4.8 Summary

Effective leadership requires the leader to be in full control of everything all of the time. It necessitates consistent, forthright, upstanding, collaborative, supportive behaviour acting with integrity, fairness and empathy.

An effective instructional leader who believes in continuous evidence-based improvement and learning as a fundamental, dynamic purpose of the school will not leave critical observation opportunities to "chance" meetings once in a while. Enabling principals will draw up and follow a well-organised plan to develop and enhance the teaching and learning programme. Continuous development is a key factor to leadership in any organisation.

The next chapter provides the data for School B.

CHAPTER 5

SCHOOL B: BEE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

The strengths of BPS will continue to be our ability to keep abreast of change and to embrace people from all walks of life.

We will retain our ideas and strive for excellence in academic, sporting and cultural spheres.

This will be achieved in a Christian environment where all religions and cultures are respected and valued.

The school and community comprising of pupils, staff and parents will thrive in an atmosphere of open communication trust, participative management and teamwork, is ... work toward the attainment of our vision.

We will recognise and promote the benefit, uniqueness, self worth and self-discipline of everyone at this school.

BPS resources will be fully utilised to the benefit of parents, pupils and the local community.

The pupils who graduate from the school will have high moral values, self worth and confidence in their abilities.

Pupils will also be encouraged to think independently and will thus be in a position to contribute in a meaningful way to society among the pupils will be the learners of tomorrow.

(Vision: Bees Primary School, 2012)

Table 3 Role and Pseudonyms of Respondents

Principal	Mrs Alexander
Deputy Principal	Mrs Junaid
SP HoD	Betty
FP HoD	Mandy
Senior Teacher	Fatima
Focus Group: FP	A - Chantal
	B - Michelle
	C – Thelma
Focus Group: SP	A - Thembi
	B - Shawn
	C - Mary

Bees Primary School is a prime example of a school that tries to live out the vision that is proudly displayed on the front office wall for all to see as they enter the doors of this old historic school. It is a large school situated in the packed inner city of Johannesburg. This means that the primary school is suitably positioned for the city dwellers in the heart of a metropolitan that serves as a place for the poor. While comprised of many buildings the site offers a significant locational advantage to the

local residents with proximity to social services, shops, parks and employment opportunities but is an environment that is riddled with rats, loiterers and litter. It is to seek a living by obtaining employment and accommodation that people from the whole of the African continent flock to this densely populated urban area.

Bees Primary has around1200 learners coming from this surrounding neighbourhood. The school has a full enrollment and over 500 learners sought admission for the160 new available places in the previous year. Classrooms are filled to capacity with approximately 40 learners per class. This is an all-girls school and the learners are mainly African children coming from all parts of the continent. There are about 30 teaching staff and a few support staff. There is one principal, one Deputy Principal, seven Heads of Department and seven Grade leaders. It is a fee paying school but fees are kept low (R450 per year) but even with this rate many parents do not have the capacity to pay the modest fee.

Despite these many drawbacks, Bees Primary School is a thriving community and performing beyond what might be the expectations for their student population. With a number of students who are second and third language it is expected that they will be struggling with their performance but many of the learners are achieving highly according to in their ANA results. Further to this most parents and caregivers are working but find the time to liaise with the school concerning educational matters. One of the main reasons for this high level of performance is the insightful vision that emphasises “our ability to keep abreast of change and to embrace people from all walks of life” and “strive for excellence in academic, sporting and cultural spheres”. The leadership is unstinting in their efforts to “strive for excellence”.

Excellence in academic performances is in the forefront as the principal, Mrs. Alexander, reiterates constantly “that’s always been my priority, what’s best for the children” and learners are her “priority”. I came to understand her concern for learners when I had my first conversation with her and she pointed to me that only that morning she was distressed that Grade 1 girls were walking alone to school and this could be unsafe.

In terms of pedagogy Mrs Alexander asserted:

> excellent is giving 100% of yourself every single day. For me excellent is marking the child's work that day and returning it the next day. For me excellent is going out there and bringing into your classroom things that are happening.

The HODs promoted teaching with understanding by using real life situations, for example, when Mandy speaks about teaching, she refers to the multiplicity of her interactions in a day.

> Ok, stand on top of the chair, stand behind the chair, show me 2 fingers, count the kids in the class, go to Mr. K and say to Mr. K he's looking smart today,' come back, tell Peter were they able to say that to you or did they give you a wrong message.

These are hallmarks of Mrs. Alexander she instills in the staff and learners who surround her. She is not afraid of immersing her school in anything that will enhance education. She mentions researchers wanting to use the school, visitors to her school and having students and staff participating in educational events out of school. She has a warm, welcoming personality and was flattered when I told her that the school was selected for this research because of the very good ANA results.

Mrs. Alexander has been the principal of the school for about 13 years and has been a teacher for 43 years. She has been at the helm of the school from a transition from a former all-white, ex model C school to a multi-racial school open to all girls. She has been through the good and bad times even in her personal life going through traumatic health issues and has stood steadfast with the support of a dedicated team in the School Management Team (SMT) and her teachers. Mandy the FP HOD comes early to school to "settle" herself in the morning. Tembi, an SP educator confirms this dedication of the staff at the school:

> I think it's an advantage to work with adults in teams because most of them have experience in the sense that like you meet children who are coming with problems from home, sometimes you don't know how to deal with it. And if there is somebody who is older than you, you can always go and ask them, 'What can I do in this kind of a situation?' And they often give you help.

Thembi admit that, "teaching here is a bit hectic, more especially that we're busy. It's a lot of work and you need to be somebody who's dedicated, somebody who

really wants to work". You have to be a committed teacher and "not be someone who will come and then drag their feet. You must be someone who knows the reason why you came to the school, because at the end of the day it will be you and your learners. So you must be someone who's a hard worker".
The educators assist each other and work in collaboration.

> Thembi: In, in my case, to be honest with you, I go to anyone. Anyone. The principal… not really, I try not to like, because I think she's got a lot to do, I go deputy principal, the HODs and my peers.

> Shawn: Well, we have a good team of educators at this school and the school is managed by a good principal. They focus mainly on the academic side of the school and you are always expected to be busy and working. So that, you know, lead to a bit of a negative point whereby teachers don't really get a lot of time to be social… not that we are here to social, but you know you hardly get time to talk to each other.

They regard Mrs. Alexander as a "good leader". She has faced her own adversity and is not afraid of anything that is thrown at her. She has grown much stronger as the years have gone by and she is now almost at retirement age with no significant intention of "slowing down". In terms of leadership she knows exactly the path the school should be heading towards and makes this amply clear to her team. This is how she goes about her day.

> I would expect the first hour, well the first… as I arrive I get 5 or 10minutes just to think about what's due for that day, then we have an SMT meeting till about twenty to 8, often very fruitful. I like to think I'm a democratic leader and I never make decisions without consulting my entire SMT. So we would have a meeting till twenty to 8 and then we would address the staff with whatever issues are pertinent for the day. From 8 o'clock the children go into class and generally the school is the busiest from 8 till 9 [when teaching starts], but it varies.

The school culture is one that embraces people and encourages large scale parental involvement and external help from ex- teachers and the community. Parents are made to be ever welcome, always present and involved in their children's education. Educators spoke about holding regular meetings with parents to educate them about the curriculum and what to expect from their children and how to help with homework. The educators go to the extent of "teaching" parents phonics if need be so that they can be of assistance to their

children. So she explains the complexity of this welcoming approach for her and her staff.

> So from 8 to 9 we could get parents, we could get issues, we could get phone calls from parents – I never really know. Um, and then most days are spent putting out a few fires, a few issues with parents, especially now with admissions, a lot of, we've had over 500 applications already.

The school culture boasts order and strict discipline that sometimes is portrayed as a regimented, military style with very little individual unfocussed interference. It can be argued that in a school that is situated in such an environment it is necessary to instill this type of ethos to protect the most important characteristic of the school, which is learning, and to preserve this the culture of strictness is required.

Two features that capture the principal's attention when she walks around the school is litter and the learners' uniform.

> That will be my first thing, let's clean up. Then I would notice, today I noticed one child wearing incorrect uniform – not one other teacher had picked her out about it the whole day. It was a black top but it had a hood and it was the wrong uniform. And I, she told, I asked her, 'Didn't anyone notice this?' 'No, only you, Miss.'

Thembi lightly refers to this focus on uniformity when she says:

> You can see the discipline. You will never see a child wearing something different from the others. When I'm looking for my daughter, the little one in grade 0, I don't go and look for her, I stand and then she will see me and come to me because I won't be able to find her. They look the same.

Mrs. Alexander, as a leader, hopes to instill "good habits". She sees the cultivation of these habits spreading around the school and infiltrating as a positive disposition at the school. Thus her broader goal is that these good habits will pass into the neighbourhood itself. On one of these walks she approached some men who were busy with eradicating the "rat problem" (rats attracted by food lying in the school yard after the learners have their lunch) and persisted that they find a solution to the infestation. She had written to the municipality about the problem and was following up on it. The schoolyard was to my view in impeccable condition with not even a tiny piece of paper lying around. When food is left behind during the school breaks Mrs. Alexander insists that the food is picked up as soon as the learners are inside

the classroom. She is concerned about litter and the cleanliness of the environment.

The school uniform is another integral source of pride and Mrs. Alexander loves to see children wear the “correct uniform”. She is very observant and quick to detect if children deviate from the norm. She confesses that “I will notice [an] incorrect uniform, I will notice if a child’s upset, um, and if they’re doing something different I might notice it. But the first thing will be the litter”. Children are always immaculately dressed, hair braided and shirts tucked in. Mrs. Alexander is very vigilant and expects the rest of the staff to be so. She gets perturbed if they ignore what she can see.

The next factor that is a highlight of the school is the regular school assembly, which is held every Friday. Each class is given an opportunity to lead the assembly. Learners, with the help of their class educator, plan, organize and conduct the assembly. Everyone including the principal is expected to attend the assembly that is held in the school hall. To me the assembly stood out as a quintessence of order, good practice, discipline and an education in itself. At one assembly learners were given the opportunity to participate on a platform in well-rehearsed activities; singing, poetry and reading. Following the rehearsed sections accolades were given to deserving students, praise and recognition to others and an overall highlighting of positive aspects and encouraging learners to give of their best and to try harder. As I observed the assembly, Mrs. Alexander joins in when required to and comes across as powerful and inspirational to learners and staff. There is a good balance of positive reinforcement for the many school achievements and encouragement for learners to produce their best work/potential and for implementing school rules to ensure the smooth running of the school. It was a truly awe inspiring time of the week which follows a strong Christian ethos that emphasize morals and values essential for life.

Other religions are embraced, as the vision of the school expresses, by allotting time for important celebration and festival days on the calendar for assemblies but the dominant ethos of the school is Christian.

In the smaller daily assembly of learners that sets the tone of the day, Mandy describes what gets discussed.

> Important issues such as parents' evening or remind them that they're going to see a show or, they have to bring money and inform them there's some girls that's wearing braids or we see that they're wearing braids, call them out, say, 'Are we allowed to wear braids?' – the whole thing again about the hair, the neatness, the cleanliness. So, just general information made in the morning there".

One of the outside events that the school participates strongly in is the choir, which is the pride of the school. Mandy directs the choir and it has won many accolades that are proudly displayed all around the entrance waiting room for all to see. The school culture extends to the practice of teaching time where no interruptions or interferences are acceptable. The school is absolutely quiet when in session. Mrs. Alexander asserts that:

> I'm not in favour of cancelling lessons or…Or even cancelling extra-murals. Or cancelling sporting fixtures. To me, like the one school phoned and cancelled the soccer game the day before last week. To me that's a very poor reflection…some excuse about writing exams. I don't let my teachers do it, and they know.

She is very strict when it comes to time on task whether it is in the classroom or extra-murals and sporting fixtures and tolerates no changes to the programme. The functional management behaviours displayed by the principal and SMT, made up of the Deputy Principal, HODs and grade leaders, illustrate a democratic consultative process. Daily regular early morning meetings are held in the office to allow for the entire SMT to work together as a team. Roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined and everyone is aware of their function and the daily programme. The agenda of the one meeting consisted of keys, Ivuma National Chair, Eistefford, fees, nutrition and resources. Two things were of particular concern for Mrs. Alexander and those were that educators should be alert to poverty and challenges learners face when asking for fees and also some problems associated with the feeding schemes. This agenda demonstrates that she keeps her finger on the pulse of varied aspects of the school. The SMT and teacher leaders contribute to all the decisions made and the industrious tone is set for the day. This behaviour is powered by a hierarchical structure with Mrs. Alexander at the helm and nurtured by the collaborative efforts of all those present at the meeting. Although from my observation Mrs. Alexander, is assertive in her manner towards the staff she is democratic with decision-making and her approach to staff meetings.

This leadership meeting is immediately followed by a full staff meeting in the staffroom, where members of the SMT report on all discussions and decisions made in the Principal's office. The school support staff is also made aware of decisions made and the major points from the meeting is captured in bullet-point form each day on the staff notice board and the minute's book. A very efficient educator is in control of these efforts at clear communication and this tight organisation and this practice alludes to the strong functional nature of the school where systems are in place and teaching and learning are prominently featured. All minutes are recorded and kept and the logbook is available for scrutiny by anyone. Staff members are also given important role to help them develop and take on leadership roles. Senior management meetings comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal and HODs, according to Mandy, are held at 9 o'clock and this is when assistants help in her classroom. Mandy says the SMT is "efficiently run" and "one of the best".

Educators say they focus less on the organisational side of the school and do not speak much about those aspects to Mrs. Alexander and Mrs. Junaid, the Deputy Principal. This allows them to concentrate more on the teaching and learning giving them more time plan, prepare and teach during contact time.

5.1 Leadership dispositions

Essentially Mrs. Alexander is a "teacher at heart" by her own admission. She says "When I am at my best as a principal I am a teacher because that's what I love". According to her few principals will give such a response yet majority of principals in our schools come from a teaching background as she reiterates "I bet you there'd be very few principals that will answer it like that".

Her leadership disposition stems from a deep desire to be the best teacher she can be at all times. Even as a leader she concentrates on improving instruction by assuming that she is the teacher of her subordinates and teachers say that she expects them to "work hard" at all times. In this way not only does pedagogy improve, but, educators try to emulate her best practices.

In a passionate tone she elaborates:

> [You] know what, that's what I love. When I was doing this poem with the children last week I was excited, I was stimulated, I loved it…I felt like it [training and teaching the learners].

Mandy says the principal is "strict", "forward, she tells you exactly where you did wrong and then you know where you stand…and then it's over". She "is open and direct".

Mrs. Alexander is very outspoken, assertive, and decisive. She spoke about getting rid of one educator who after much warning continued to come late to school and made many excuses to leave early. She is not afraid of confrontation and will engage in debate with anything that is awry according to her. She even had problems with the previous School Governing Body and decided to confront them and by her own admission the SGB was dissolved and a new body was elected.

Amidst her very busy schedule, Mrs. Alexander decided to train a group of learners to take part in a poetry festival called an Eisteddfod. Central to her notion of the role she plays at the school, the educator in her comes across clearly when she volunteered to do this poetry training with the students. She was enthusiastic about this and encouraged several educators to train a number of groups. She is a highly dramatic, theatrically astute, expressive leader who loves challenges and being at the centre of innovation, training and development. Her reasoning is "I don't know, I just felt like it" showing her inner passion and her desire to be part of teaching and interacting with the learners.

My observation of her interacting with educators shows that she has a very good sense of judgment and is able to identify struggling teachers. She describes the teaching practice in her school in this way "I think it's pretty good but I can't truthfully say to you – between you and me – that there are many excellent teachers in this school…Because I know what kind of teacher I was. Although her teachers are performing well she is not persuaded that they are "excellent" judging by her own standards.

The teachers see her as a strict but effective leader as Shawn describes:

> She's strict with teachers, strict with learners, well and that helps that she's a good manager, you know, she's leading the school well and there's

discipline. And we don't have a lot of problems in this school compared to, like you said also, the school is quiet, the school is clean. You know it's all because of the principal. The leadership of the principal you know it filters through to teachers and to learners.

Her "strict" character is seen in a favourable light by Thembi who brings her children to this school for the following reasons:

I think the same thing. I'm also a parent here. I have 3 girls – one is in high school now, now I've got two at this school and I think because of the fact that she's a strict manager, you know, things are done. Like teachers are doing their part, not like where you find children coming… Like I've got friends in other schools where you see that when you look at the children's books you say to yourself, 'Is this what you do?' and you're thinking, 'I've done so much already.' So I think she's leading us very well.

Mrs. Alexander says she has a democratic leadership style ["I like to think I'm a democratic leader and I never make decisions without consulting my entire SMT"] and this is obvious to see in the manner she interacts with people around her. In her daily work and in the execution of authority and tasks she displays an authoritarian behaviour. She instructs HODs and teacher leaders in an assertive manner and tries to be a role model to her subordinates to build their capacity.

Chantal: She is a mix… I think really a mix here.

Michelle: She is a mix. You know, both authoritarian and democratic.

Chantal: You cannot really put her in a category or place or somewhere…Because every day she's different. Ja, women… ah, men will say 'I don't understand women.' But she's like that, I have given up, trying to understand her. Well, she's like that, but what I can really say is that, with her in charge we really work. You know, she's a driving force.

Thelma: She definitely is.

Michelle: She's a good leader.

Michelle: She makes things happen.

Chantal: That's it. Ja, she makes it happen.

Michelle: People …and… you'll need to work. She just has that.

Chantal: She inspires one.

They describe her as a leader who is constant in her behaviour and fair in her interaction with people. They admire her disposition and accept her as a strong leader.

Mrs. Alexander's leadership relationships are based on motivation, encouragement, and continuous development. She is always encouraging educators to change their practice by offering them a "Reward. ..Not material reward. Reward – little thank you notes saying job well done. I often send a note: 'Gee, your assembly was fantastic – job well done'. Often. Little sticker reward".

And she constantly tries to elevate:

> them to a higher level by 'Do this now'. 'Or do that'. 'Or elevate and elevate and elevate' [*said passionately*]. And it's all communication really…I mean it's definitely not monetary…And the little notes and the thank you at assembly, and 'Give your teachers a clap' …and that's, it seems to be working.

She is also very empathetic and speaks of an educator who needed some understanding.

> Well the most recent one now is a teacher unfortunately who lost her daughter. She came back to school, she was not coping well at all, she was teaching the special class – very specialized class, we've got one special class in grade 4 to try and bridge the gap…" She suggested I thought she'd be back and then I got a letter from the psychiatrist saying she needs another 3 months off and in the meanwhile those children were floundering. I had to change, I had to make a plan" [by] "reshuffle[ing]– which I did recently and put the teacher that was in grade 3 who's got some remedial experience into grade 4. That was unexpected. I never knew she's going to be off, it's basically been the whole year.

Her inner strength emanates from her own experience of life and the leadership roles she has had and she demonstrates a genuine a concern for people and challenges around her. The school is her classroom and she is the teacher and her reactions are her pedagogy to everyone. A school is an institution designed for the teaching under the direction of teachers. From my observations and conversations with members of the staff, Mrs Alexander, in her every action uses the school environment as a source to teach, inspire, model good leadership for the staff members and to instil discipline, education and learning to the learners.

Thus she is quick to identify educators who are struggling and says:

> I've got a teacher in grade 2 who's now showing quite a lot of enthusiasm and a bit of initiative and I'm encouraging it. So we've got a new little project which I said we're doing at the end of the term…I

> said, ‘And you’re in charge.’ So she said, ‘I love you Miss.’ And I knew she’s responding…That’s the reward… The reward is you did a good job here.

Children are central to the school, their learning is crucial and given high importance. Attaining higher standards is the goal. She is always striving for higher achievements so that when it came to the ANA tests she was no satisfied with the results and together with the SMT came up with a plan to improve from the previous year’s results. She was a grade seven teacher and taught English and Mathematics. Her motto was that you have to come up with ideas “to try and raise the bar again”. She is adamant that she is not happy as she says:

> I’m not happy with results in the 40s and the 50s. The 60s…constant improvement and it often worries “that the children are satisfied with so little”. She does not want to hear “ ‘I passed, Miss.’ No don’t tell me you passed…Tell me that ‘I got an A Miss’ and then I’ll be happy. Not ‘I passed.’ So, it’s a constant all the time.

She is always striving for better as her mantra is “strive for better, strive for better”. Targets for the school are clear and there is much agency around teaching and learning.

Mary agrees with other teacher’s descriptions of the high standards in the school saying:

> that the hard work that they put into the school is so that the standard can be high and so that we do it for the children. And so I think that [you] have to be passionate about education and not just look at it as a job, but look at it as part of who you are because here you give up a lot of things to get the work out at the standard which is expected of you. This is no half-day job.

Mrs. Alexander sets incredibly high standards for the educators of the school. When she interacts with them she tells them that they are at an “8 or 9 level” although privately she confides that she does not consider them to be at that level. In her opinion and using her own standards she would put most of her educators below 8. She can see their potential and a need for development which should be varied, structured and focused. People are not where they need to be but her sense is that the teacher could do better but she tries to make the teachers feel that they are doing fantastically while she is aware that this is not the reality. She is not demeaning to her staff members who say they feel empowered by her. She spoke about the different ways she was trying to do that and she tried to draw out people

and help them grow. Her sense is that educators are not where they need to be and she talks about workshops and peer teaching which increases the stress levels of educators. Educators resort to helping each other out as Shawn, one of the SP educators, emphasises:

> there's actually a really great system of communication here, that if you need to talk to somebody you can go to absolutely anybody. I feel that communication is a skill almost that they [SMT members] try and foster in our meetings and our opinion's always asked for and our input. And even if it's going to be, you know, critical, it's welcomed. So I find that if you … personally I don't find that I'm afraid to, to speak my mind or to criticize something if I think it's not being done right because I think they appreciate the feedback because we are valued as teachers in the school as much as we value our principal and HODs.

Chantal, one of the Foundation Phase educators agrees with this educator and says:

> Well, my colleagues are very useful; I mean they're very capable. They're very helpful. We've got a very good relationship and we listen to each other and we really help each other. No, it, it really makes… it changes a lot if you are happy". They have a wonderful working relationship.

Good communication in a team always bodes well for working in collaboration with each other. Mary attests to this, agrees with Shawn, that Mrs. Alexander fosters effective. She is not afraid of criticism and considers the comments as learning opportunities.

> Personally I don't find that I'm afraid to speak my mind or to criticize something if I think it's not being done right because I think they appreciate the feedback because we are valued as teachers in the school as much as we value our principal and HODs.

Good relationships are built on effective communication. Bees Primary School thrives on communication in terms of conversations, meetings, messages and weekly informative newsletters. Staff may have healthy disagreements but all work towards the best interest of the learners. Chantal says, "my colleagues are very useful; I mean they're very capable and very helpful. We've got a very good relationship and we listen to each other and we really help each other. It really changes a lot if you are happy. Our working relationship is wonderful".

The educators are comfortable to go to the principal at anytime to discuss teaching and learning issues. The educators say that she has an “open door policy” and will accommodate any problem they encounter but the educators admit to going to her as a last resort as she is always busy. She is also always visible and available to talk to individual staff members, as I witnessed, and makes it her duty to share the breaks with the staff during every break. I observed that these kinds of relationship extend beyond the school personnel to stakeholders such as the district personnel, parents and the community members.

Mary says she:

> enjoys her style of her leadership. There are clear roles, everybody has their own roles and functions, and you know exactly what’s expected of you. And you know that she’s in charge and she’s the boss and her word is law, but at the same time when breaks come, she takes those 10 minutes and she comes and she sits with us in the staffroom and she’ll have a cup of coffee and a chat. It allows you to develop a relationship with her and you feel comfortable asking her things or discussing any weaknesses you feel you might have because she’s not this scary, aloof kind of principal which I think I’ve been used to for a long time.

Bees Primary School has significant pedagogic expertise within the staff cohort as I noticed when I sat in their SMT meetings. Mrs. Alexander regards her best educators as those who emulate her own teaching approach by transforming the educational environment to one that portrays the reality of the situation. She describes one of her educators in the following way “if there’s an earthquake [in the news] the next thing he’ll have this whole brilliant workshop on an earthquake…For me that’s important”.

She has a concern where although some educators may be “quite good” their background holds [them] back. As a perceptive leader, Mrs. Alexander is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the educators and analyses them according to how she sees them. She illustrates this with a description of a teacher.

> She teaches English but her English isn’t wonderful. She’s taught Maths but she, the one or two lessons I went into were not good, yet the children love her, she’s got wonderful rapport with them and I think that’s very important.

Mrs. Alexander understands that there is an importance in having educators who have a very good relationship with learners, but also sees that many of her teachers are not where they need to be in terms of skills, knowledge and pedagogic practice. However she has some educators that she considers are pedagogically incisive and she would involve these educators by making them appear as if they were "giving guidance. Like [Trevor] would often give lessons. His Afrikaans teaching's also quite good".

Mary often reflects on her teaching practice and often makes changes according to her learners needs. She says:

> In a way yes [she makes changes], because you've got to. I often give the children who are doing less, sort of easier sums to do to build up their confidence; and then you've got to give the children who are doing better enrichment work so that they don't get bored. So from that sense it creates even more work.

Thembi says:

> That making a difference in the learners' lives is her greatest passion. You know, you'll never know. Often, every day when I leave this school I feel fulfilled because I know I listened to a child who maybe at home she's got no one to listen to her. You know many things. You are a mother, you are almost everything, and you can name it – a social worker.

Teaching is hard work and the demands from this school require the hardest workers. Michelle the FP teacher agrees that it is "Very very hard work, I must say. However, Shawn voices disagreement in a voice full of disillusionment.

> For me teaching is a job. I don't really have a passion for teaching. I do my best at all times, though, my HOD's, principal, everybody's happy with my work, I do my best, I give more than 100% but, you know, if I compare the education system today with when we were children, there's a big difference…So I don't think you can really be so passionate about it. Even if you want to be, you get so discouraged sometimes.

The nature of teaching and learning as a rewarding career is not taken as such by all who are in this profession. Thelma says that she changed from high school to FP and says that she found that "this is where it all begins". She says she was flabbergasted with the change and the extent of work, which she did not expect.

She now needed more patience and the most important foundation in the education of an individual lies in the primary school.

Michelle said that she learnt much more in this school than her previous school. She was given expert instructional guidance in terms of teaching, “phonics” like “k is for kicking k” and “letter length”, for example.

Mrs. Alexander prefers it when the teachers “get the children interested, use a lot of apparatus and aids and [teach] things that the children can relate to. She regards the teachers as “great leaders and learning area leaders, [and also] as motivational” forces to other teachers and learners.

5.2 Instructional leadership behaviours

Instructional leadership is at the heart of the behaviours, which influence quality teaching and quality learning. Many sacrifices are made to ensure that the school is performing at its best. The staff is ambitious and love being at this school and this behaviour is encouraged. Mrs. Junaid is aspiring for Mrs. Alexander’s position and works “doubly hard” to try and achieve this.

In my observation it was evident to me that instructional leadership is very strong. Mrs. Alexander has a strong presence and personality and she believes in strong but democratic leadership as the model I use in Chapter 8 indicates. A larger SMT would also help to temper the contributions made by her and allow other educators to give feedback and input into the deliberations of the meetings. Another reason for a bigger SMT is because of the size of the school, which has approximately forty educators. The principal leads instruction with the help of the SMT. This organisation of the SMT has a strong teacher support, teacher development and teacher leader development thread implicitly running through it. There are more HODs than usual who help monitor and supervise the implementation of curriculum and assessment. Grade heads who are not HODs are also selected at the beginning of the year and they have meetings once a week to discuss with educators in that particular grade the challenges they are facing or broadly the upcoming curriculum.

Mrs. Junaid, the DP, emphasised the multiplicity of the positions of HODs and Grade Heads saying:

> You have to teach, and you have to do the administrative work. The administrative work would include the IQMS, the quality teaching – you've got to make sure that everybody's teaching and you've got to go into classrooms where there are problems. Like if anyone is absent you've got to make the contingency plan to take over and to put someone in that place. No class can go without a teacher, so you've got to run and you've got to be fast to put all your plans in place.

Her passion about quality teaching and making sure that every class has an educator fully engaged in teaching is reflected. Thembi confirms:

> [that supervision is done] twice a term. It is the HOD for the learning area and a peer like in my grade they will come to my class. It's like an informal visit, when she's free to come and see how I'm teaching to give me some advice on how to tackle some problems if maybe I do experience problems. And then the HOD also do the same thing, she checks the books and then the marked activities and then the mark book to see that I'm not behind with my assessment for the term because every term we issue reports.

Plans are made in the morning at the SMT meeting to cover every classroom before learners arrive as she states:

> In the morning when we, by the time we get to the staffroom…Then in the other grades we have grade heads, they'll say, 'My colleague is not here' or before the time they'll apply for leave and we'll know who to place where.

From observations and accounts by the educators their classrooms are used by trainee student teachers and other researchers because the educators are strong in pedagogy, methodologies, pedagogical content knowledge and quality of teaching. They are experienced and have a willingness to work hard and produce results; planning and preparation are done in detail.

Worthwhile tasks are set and systematic programmes are followed. Resources are available and educators keep strict control of books that go home and those used in the classroom. Accountability in terms of assessments, results, learning progression is given much importance and accurate records are kept. What was noticeable was that learning and teaching support material (LTSM) that was used in the past (pre-1994) is still being used although the student demographics had changed and the curriculum has been transformed and modified several times. One example of this was the reading series being used by the Foundation Phase educators and learners. While sitting in one of the classrooms, I noticed that these readers are based on the previously white dominated societies and Euro-centric

ideas while the learners are primarily black learners who were not able to identify with many of the stories that they were reading. The staff may have reasons, such as monetary constraints to replace these books and continue to use them.

5.3 Classroom interactions

Curriculum implementation is very high quality. Although some of the educators use differentiation in their classes other educators were averse to group teaching and could not see the benefits of using this strategy. Assistance is provided to educators and learners when required. Mrs. Junaid endorsed this by saying "Mam knows, Mam is an assistant…She assists the 4S educator, that's the mainly the ELSEN group, learners with special needs, who are given additional help.

> What we mean by ELSEN is in grade 3 they haven't reached all the concepts, so they need to get up to standard with grade 4…But some of the children in the class have reached grade 4, but emotionally they are not capable…So you still need to work with them…Because you need to be on the correct level in the correct grade.

Much support is offered to learners who are making a transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4 transition. She continues:

> Yes we do. And then you find children that's not in the ELSEN class that came from other schools like in your, um, the city colleges like where they've skipped – there's huge gaps in their learning…So we cannot just take it that because they come from another school it's not our problem.

Mandy adds that learners are monitored closely for reading and reading homework. Outcomes Based Education [OBE] was a concern and presented huge challenges of when it was being implemented. Educators found it very difficult to shift their mind set to include the OBE approach to their teaching and usually stuck to what they knew best.

The ANA results were good but Mrs. Alexander expresses dissatisfaction with the results and has considered ways to set another test for Grade 4 s and Grade 7s to improve their results and quality of teaching and get more practice. She asserts:

> Well for me I don't think that the school did well in the ANA because I even told my teachers on Friday, 'Set the bar here, the children will get there. Set the bar higher, the children will get there.' So for me the ANA was not great, and I was quite interested to hear you say that those were pretty good results. So I, I want to do better in the ANA. Now I've

> devised an idea which I told my SMT last week. The grade 4 teachers must set a test, I don't want them to see the last year ANA tests, I don't want them to have any preconceived idea.

Mrs. Alexander does not wait for the department or the district to tell her what to do. She is willing to take the initiative, diagnosis problems and devise programmes. She watches the performance of learners and progression of learning very carefully. One example of how the school works towards the benefit of the learners regardless of District policies is described by Mrs. Junaid/

> We try to bridge the gap. After consulting with parents for permission and the go-ahead we put them in the previous grade so that they can bridge the gap. [And if] some parents don't want their kids to repeat so we keep them in that grade and we offer the necessary remedial…And a lot of the kids are quite fast and with the assistance of the learners, some children don't just listen to the educator, they listen to the child that they're sitting next to…They learn better that way. So you explain, the child next to them explains and then we try to bridge the gap that way…And we offer remedial classes as part of our extra-mural programme.

Close monitoring of learners takes place and changes in pedagogy and learning are implemented. Learners are also persuaded to join. Mrs. Junaid says:

> learners are encouraged to join the knitting club, you get the computer club, you get extra research for your high flyers – they go to the media centre; there's extra reading in the library – we've got a fully resourced library so they go up and they go and read or they can go and do research.

The changes proposed by the department to the curriculum are looked at with a critical eye. While many schools waited for workbooks and the "new" CAPS documents, Bees Primary worked diligently with what they had been doing all along and continued to deliver the curriculum, teaching and learning. The educators did consider how the new curriculum documents fit into what they were doing. Mrs. Junaid, the Deputy Principal, says:

> that the only way they knew best was by looking at what is different. What can be better, what was bad, who's improved, what developments happened, sometimes the curriculum needs. The other day we talked about the training that two of them [the teachers] are doing to do the CAPS facilitation. It's different, but it's often about the educators or the curriculum. The good and the bad practice basically.

This school is following the curriculum but they start with what they know is working and go beyond the curriculum document to do more in their teaching.

The Foundation Phase HOD (Mandy) indicated that they have a Curriculum Implementation Plan for Foundation Phase.

> [They were] busy now with the CAPs… by trying to find our feet with the CAPS, we've got all the curriculum papers from the Department, what we should be doing…so this year's a little tough.

Although the training they received was not adequate they went "through the documents" and became familiar with the curriculum requirements. Although changes have been overwhelming for them when the SP HOD says "there have been so many changes" they did not give up but are trying hard to implement them.

5.4 Professional Development

The professional development of staff is important, varied, structured and focused. It tries to draw people out and help them to grow. Professional development is ongoing as they are all keen to give off their best in the classroom and show great interest in their learner's performance.

Mrs. Alexander sees that the teachers need growth as she describes in this statement "I said [many of] my teachers are 5 or 6, there's very few 8s or 9s in my opinion, but I would never tell them. Never! No, that would discourage them**".**

The teachers therefore are motivated to perform and are mentored thus showing a dedicated interest in all activities. Educators are resourceful, receive incentives and support from the SMT. They try different things some of which have not succeeded. Professional development takes place in the form of "lots of workshops. Mrs Alexander says I encourage them to go to NAPTOSA conferences and now the bullying [by learners] is becoming a bit of a problem so we're arranging a workshop next term on bullying. There was one on bereavement". She is trying to encourage them to go to those kinds of things. Thembi acknowledges going to workshops when she says "We've been going to training, like different types of training and then most of the things that they are like giving us are the things that we already know".

Mrs. Alexander describes the problem with many workshops.

> they [the district] bring people that are wasting our time…I did that for a while, it was actually extremely successful [initially], but then the teachers started getting too stressed about it".

The educators attended workshops but eventually found them unhelpful especially when they are poorly done or when educators are stressed [with other demands].

Mrs. Alexander then tried another approach by asking educators who had done a very good lesson to show it to the rest of the grade, of the foundation phase …but then they started to get too worked up about it…And it, I felt that it wasn't really achieving the objective.

"Her objective was to share good teaching practice…Give good ideas… But they were getting too stressed about performing and about the prep and so I left it. She felt that "the idea was good but they just got too worried about it." Mrs. Alexander continues her search for ways to help the educators develop themselves.

Mrs. Alexander describes how different educators experience professional development.

> Interesting that one because some take it as a positive learning, others take it as an insult and yet others don't realize that they're not doing a good job and they're not seeing that we're trying to develop them…And we've got all types in this, on this staff.

Despite these varying outlooks by educators she takes it upon herself to give those educators opportunities to keep developing themselves.

When it comes to leadership positions, along with an expanded SMT, the school also has a growth post that allows people who are aspiring for a higher teaching position to train, practice and grow into the post. Mrs. Junaid explains that she:

> resigned from [her] previous post as Head of Department…When I came here to this school I took the growth post. I took the growth post in 2008. It meant that she took "Like you, like to take cut in salary but I was prepared… I needed change and I needed growth and I wasn't going to grow at the previous school where I was because there were people in line already…And I took the growth post, a cut in salary and then I took a GDE post where you get back onto your salary. And that was 2009. 2010 I took the HOD post, 2011 I took the Deputy Principal post.

Induction is considered as important as they have now agreed on a policy. Mrs. Alexander explains that "The policies are in the staffroom and we've got an induction policy for new people [educators] know what to do".

The greatest joy for teachers is when learners grasp the conceptual knowledge to progress admitted by some of the teachers. Mary says:

> For me the greatest joy that I get out of teaching is that look on a child's face when they finally understand something that they didn't understand; when you've finally broken through and it doesn't happen like a classroom at a time. It happens in the corner there and one in the corner there that they haven't been able to get it and they've been struggling and trudging along and all of a sudden they're just like 'Eureka!' You know, those Eureka moments in education are just what I live for really.
>
> Especially with this many kids in a class…You know, 'Who got the answer?' every single hand goes up, meanwhile half of them haven't taken it off the board or are pages behind, but they just love to interact with you. So you can't trust their judgements, it's just that moment that you just see in their eyes that they've understood and they've got it and then they're proud of themselves

These make up the precious moments and were only achieved by the various changes, frustrations and risk that a dedicated teacher lead by a supporting leader takes in his/her daily activities in the classroom.

5.5 Summary

Mrs. Alexander does not make plans, she plans with everyone, she does not solve problems, she looks for solutions collaboratively, she does not organize people, she allows them space to organize themselves and she prepares the organisation for change and influences people into action. In my observations of her, she reflects the qualities of energy, synergy, optimism, and commitment that all leaders should emulate. She is first and foremost a teacher and is committed to the learners learning and believes as a school leader she is firstly an instructional leader and shares with her colleagues the important mission of quality learning and a shared capacity to learn and develop from and with each other. She and the other leaders are purposefully driven to embrace change and are not afraid to innovate and take the initiative in the forefront of knowledge, skills and improvement. Effective leadership builds an institution and the people in it and allows it to take its own form, shape and dynamic culture.

It is difficult to find anything that deviates from these ideals as the school has a tenacious culture that sets the school on a path to achieve whatever they strive for.

The next chapter provides the data of School C.

CHAPTER 6

SCHOOL C: CIYAFUNDISA PRIMARY SCHOOL

> I am a fly wheel. It's like I'm obsessed doing work.
>
> I do work as if there's a machine that is happening in me that is actually generating all that energy because quite a lot of people will probably ask and say, 'Where do you get all this energy for doing this?' So that's why I say I'm like a fly wheel, something that has been… sort of wind it and wind it and wind then it comes up that energy all of it…Like a spiral. I enjoy it [the work]. I think I am, I actually do. Especially with the achievements that I think I'm getting along the way. (Principal, Mr. Simelane)

Leaving behind the Johannesburg city centre as you take the impressively constructed N12 highway and drive for kilometres pass Soweto South, Eldorado Park, Lenasia and the famous over flowing Avalon cemetery you come to the deep end of the sprawling Black township of Soweto to a part that is called Ciyaphambile. Situated in this well-populated, expansive township extension is Ciyafundisa Primary School which surpassed the ANA achievements of most primary schools in the province of Gauteng (Table 1, School C) ANA results. This is what captured my attention to use this school for my research. As I wind my way through a sharp circular bend and through a small part of the township I turn into the school gate where I am met by a friendly gatekeeper and hoards of eager freshly washed, bright eyed, welcoming little faces.

Table 4 Role and Pseudonyms of Respondents

Principal	Mr Simelane
Deputy Principal	Mrs Lucia
SP HoD	Mandla
FP HoD	Neliswe
Focus Group: FP	A - Pinky B - Naledi C - Fikile
Focus Group: SP	A - Nqobile B - Elsie C - Thabile

The school, which has an enrolment of approximately 900 learners, has classes from Grade R to Grade 7 and “the school has been here for ages” according to Mr. Simelane. It started in 1973 and this is the fortieth year of existence and saw the likes of some eminent figures in the world of business and politics develop from its portals.

Mr. Simelane, as I observed, is the principal of Ciyafundisa Primary School. He is only the second principal, since the school started and has served for the past five years. He rose from being an educator, to HOD, to DP and then to principalship. The leadership, functionality and the foundational development of the school has been modeled and grown by the previous principal and is being maintained by the current principal, who is approximately 48 years old. Addicted to work with a significant amount of energy stored as “in a flywheel”, Mr. Simelane is on a pathway to use all his energies to lead and transform the school with great speed.

In the Senior Primary (SP) focus group interview Elsie acknowledges that Mr. Simelane is “not afraid of challenges and work” and that “he always encourages us (the teachers) to do our work. Nqobile, the other SP educator agrees and emphatically states, “he most definitely is” (encouraging and hard working himself). Elsie continues to describe Mr. Simelane’s work and his ability to assist when she says, “if we experience any problem we can call him and he’ll come and assist in class” although he does not have his own class.

> Elsie: But when I have a problem he will come and help me.
> Thabile: He is a good principal because he leads by example. He always encourages his teachers to help one another and so encourages his teachers to respect one another and he does not look down upon his teachers.

There are 20 educators and Mr. Simelane confirms that 90% of them have University degrees and the Department employs all of them. There are two classes of each Grade and at least 40 to 45 learners per class with the two Grade 2 classes having 61 each as their enrolment. Neliswe who has been the Foundation Phase HOD for the past seventeen years says she has one of these form classes “For example this year I was teaching 61 in a class”.

Mr. Simelane is described a “democratic leader” by both the SP and FP teachers. They cite numerous positive attributes of his leadership style.

Nqobile: He’s democratic.
Elsie: He doesn’t give teachers orders.
Nqobile: He’s not an autocrat.
Elsie: He sits down and then he asks teachers to voice out their opinion
Nqobile: He asks for ideas and for suggestions. [Thabile agrees]
Thabile: He’s very active in leading teaching and learning and he’s a democratic leader.
Nqobile: Because he will listen to you and he never looks down on your opinion.

The Foundation Phase concurs with the SP teachers and sees him as a democratic leader as well.

All: Democratic
Naledi: Because he allows us to choose. He doesn’t say ‘You must Follow this.’ You are on your own; you can follow what your heart tells you to do.
Pinky: Basically
Naledi: He has patience for that.

The teachers all affirm Mr. Simelane’s disposition as a leader time and again in the interview. They regard him as a “pillar of strength” who will “go the extra mile”. They describe all his attributes, which make him the kind of leader that he is.

Pinky: The principal is a motivator. He is good, he has that love of uniting all of us to bring us together. And the other thing, because we are a team, we work together and we help each other, we remind each other – even the one who is lazy gets motivated by the other – we do help her to see what we want in this school. That’s what the principal does. He doesn’t usually just leave us. Even if he sees that you can’t get it, he tries by all means to get us all together.
Naledi: He accepts ideas, he doesn’t just reject what we say.

Although the principal is so much younger than some of the teachers, they ‘all voted for him to become the principal of the school” says Fikile.

6.1 Agency

If I have to sum up Ciyafundisa Primary School in one word it is agency because this school depicts an organisation that has people constantly working and finding

ways to improve teaching and learning. Leadership relationships are based on agency that is the strongest characteristic of this school especially on Mr. Simelane's side. He talks about:

> phoning the SGB chair just to greet him, to find out how he is, is there anything that he needs to know or he sometimes calls me to discuss issues and challenges of the school. For example just before you came in here I was talking to him because before we closed we were speaking about the issue of a photocopier machine.

He develops a kind of "working relationship" with stakeholders, which is a "friendship" as well and with this closeness it "becomes easier and better to work". Naledi speaks highly of Mr. Simelane and the relationship they share. He helped her grow personally and develop confidence. The educators say that he is a leader who inspires, motivates and help them grow. She says:

> The principal is a good person because before I came to this school I was shy to express myself or to say the problem I have with somebody. But now I can tell anyone in this school and I know that I will get a conclusion of what to do. I will decide what to do to that problem. I think if I was not in this school, if I was not working in this school, maybe I will, I will be losing many things because now I can stand and say I'm a teacher and a woman who can maybe tell my children that the good things and the bad things.

Agency promotes an effective organisation, group activity, action, and communal interest and this is the ethos of the school. It comes in the form of instructional support from the principal and SMT that is immense as I observed during my time spent at the school. Educators have great potential and as I observed of the school. They demonstrate a willingness to do their finest. Educators feel that it is "good to work with other adults at the school" as Nqobile says. Elsie agrees with her "it's all good, it's good. You meet different characters…and you have to mix with them. Thabile adds "it's good because you, as educators you are on good terms, you are doing the same job, you motivate each other too…so I think it's a good relationship".

They receive assistance at all levels and from each other. The school is people friendly with a comfortable camaraderie and confidence. The teachers help each other. There is an atmosphere of trust and support as described by the Foundation Phase teachers.

Pinky: There is much “co-operation of the teachers and the principals. It’s nice to be in this school…There is no problem.

Naledi: I’m enjoying the colleagues I’m working with, they are able to help. I feel free for everything in the school. Even to use a library or the kitchen or everywhere, elsewhere. In the principal’s office I can speak to the principal. Anything I want to tell the principal. And I can be able to get help from my colleagues.

Naledi: It is a very good environment to work in.

Fikile: There is guidance in our school, and then there is love in our school, there is motivation in our school. Teamwork is there. You won’t be there alone, they will try to help to get to the standard of what we want because we do advise each other. And then we do help each other even at home.

Agency at the school is seen as the relationship between one party, which is the principal at this school, who delegates work to another. It explains their differences in behavior or decisions by noting that the two parties often have different goals and, independent of their respective goals, may have different attitudes toward risk. Mr. Simelane often seeks help from different organisations to enhance the instructional programme and delegates his staff to work with projects even if there are risks that they can learn from.

One example of agency manifests itself in the school obtaining a new status of being a full service primary school which means as a school they are now going to cater for partially challenged learners as well. Mr. Simelane explains that:

> “this does not mean that it is for fully challenged learners”, [but also for] those who are actually partially challenged, like maybe if those children have a little bit of hearing problems, ADD slightly and so on and so forth. So we are going to be catering for those children as well. The reason being that this is an initiative by the government whereby everybody feels that if in the community we’ve got different types of children, or different types of people and we are able to live together, why can’t it happen during the education as well?

Mr. Simelane continued to explain that they had “partially challenged children” but they were not aware of this before. They have children who are “actually challenged in more ways than one” but they were “not fully trained to be able to deal with them in a special way”. Since the school has achieved “this particular set-up or status” they have been provided with training that has been introduced in a different form starting with the SMT.

In this way the school makes provision for learners with differing specific challenges and welcomes interventions and support from the district with their warm inviting atmosphere. The potential of all learners are taken into cognizance.

The main reason why the school was selected to become a “full service school” according to the principal was because the school was identified and realized as one of the schools, which is “managed very well, make submissions to the district timeously and use the money allotted to the school in a responsible and accountable manner”. The principal agrees that “the infrastructure – how the school looks from the outside, the inside as well…and realizing the school work, the work that is in the children’s workbook… the overall whole school evaluation which they (district) have made has given them the mandate to say this could be a better school that can do that” also works to the advantage of the school”.

To support these children Nqobile explains that “the school has just introduced this, pro-service school; there are coaches who are here to help learners”. Special consideration is given to those children that are challenged. It was a concern to Mr. Simelane that these learners who are an integral part of our society were not given the quality education that they have a right to. It was for this reason that they he says arrangements were made to begin the process of setting up the classes. He explains “the Department has actually sent two teachers whom they call coaches”. They will teach learners from Foundation Phase from grade R to 3. They’ve identified about 29 learners who are now into that programme”.

By catering separately for these learners’ needs they are going to work together with coaches, counselors and psychologists to find a solution to these challenges. Educators also have created an “Adopt a Child” programme, encouraged by the principal, and they help those learners who have no parents or who come from child-headed homes.

Thus at Ciyafundisa Primary school these motivations of agency are harnessed into a productive environment concerned with improvement and quality learning. There may be delegation but the delegation happens after consensus and has been reached by the various people.

6.2 Leadership Relationships

Neliswe (FP HOD) confirms that “we have a good relationship amongst teachers, even parents – everyone” and the relationship between the foundation phase and the senior phase and the intermediate phase is “very good. We respect each other”. The educators say that they have very good teamwork and consult with each other if there is a need. Mandla (SP HOD) concurs with this perspective by agreeing that:

> this school is a very good school, people are on very good terms in this school, we motivate each other because we all believe that no individual knows everything, so we learn from each other, we support each other because our intention, our hope and goal is to see to it that this school succeeds. So we learn everything, we learn every day, we teach one another things that my friend does not know, that is what we do.

Even Mr. Simelane works as a team member to assist when educators are struggling to solve discipline problems. He says, “I will let the child go and stand outside and so on”. The level of frustration is high for educators and is evident because “when they are by themselves you’ll find that they’re talking about that”. They talk about the conditions maybe in terms of salaries or the conditions of work or resources and maybe about social issues as well. There are many social issues in the townships which impact directly and indirectly on the school on a daily basis. They draw on each other for support and inspiration.

In a school that is functioning under very trying conditions, it is essential for the staff members co operate with each other and have a level of corroboration thus teamwork is important as Mandla reiterates that:

> since [he’s] been there on the SMT, (he) noticed something, that there is team work, they use different strategies now to appoint on how to talk with the educators, they assist the administrative staff with the administrative duties. They also inform the Principal about issues that are happening in school so far.

Neliswe says “we work hand in hand”. This teamwork is displayed in how the HODs find time in a negotiated way to work with educators. Neliswe works within the confines of her teaching time as an HOD to:

> check my diary as to whether there is something that should be going to the District. I also check as to whether there is a meeting needed for my phase. Then I will go to the classroom. If ever I have to meet my teachers I assign

> my time, especially after break because then that way we can meet for a few minutes. If I decided that what I wanted to do with a teacher would be too long, it would be after school from 2 to 3…Then we meet and we sort out the things.

Relationships are based on solid foundations. The educators believe in teamwork and work with each other even if they have their differences of opinion. Nqobile agree with this by saying that:

> teaching here is interesting and we do a lot of sharing. We support each other and also it's (differences) fierce. Like it might be personal, but we support each other; it may be educational, we still support each other. And, we are not afraid of each other. We don't feel like the challenge is too much because whenever there is a challenge, whenever one has a challenge, it's simple to get help because we are, like Elsie has said, different people, different personalities, different abilities and different levels of relationship.

However, there is some dissonance in the relationships when the Mandla reveals:

> older educators do not want to be challenged by the younger ones as they are not open to changes, suggestions and innovations. However, he has a very good relationship with the principal therefore he says that he will go to the principal for support and advice when this occurs.

Both in the interviews and my observations of SMT members and listening to teacher's interviews I heard staff members come up with ideas to solve a problem. Lucia, the Deputy Principal, of Ciyafundisa Primary School speaks passionately about the management functions of the school. She says:

> [her job] is to deputize when the Principal [and doing a good job] is not around… I'm also involved in the daily functionality of the school and to see to it that effective teaching is happening in the classroom. I also see to it that there is order around the school and the school is always kept clean. I also make it a point that educators report in their classrooms in time so that they can start in time and there will be no loss of time. What I do also, I help the Principal with the, with planning, with the timetabling and also help the Principal…allocating duties to the educators. I also help the Principal, or if um, counseling. I do counseling to the children, also the educators. If educators have problems I help them to sit in that we try to solve the problem.

Each staff member is aware of his/her responsibilities and carries them out diligently under the watchful eyes of the principal and deputy principal. Mandla says that at one of their SMT meetings they "discussed the duties of the teachers, what the teachers are supposed to be doing in class and about supporting the learners

who are in need". Teachers are clear about their job descriptions and are given the mandate to seek help and ask questions. Lucia describes how allocations are done.

> When I allocate the duties I must first of all determine what the educator's specialty is because you cannot just give a person Mathematics if they didn't specialize in Mathematics. So I must make sure the person is good in Mathematics and whatever subject that I'm going to allocate to him/her and they must have the knowledge to be able to deliver it correctly.
>
> We do it [allocations] democratically. So first we [principal and DP] let them write the subject that they would like to teach and also the classes that they are going to teach those subjects. After collecting the information from them then I sit down and try to compare what I have according to each individual teacher with what we have written. Then after comparing them then I call them individually, discuss with them and come to some consensus.

Mr. Simelane says that he keeps his "finger on the pulse". He is aware of everything in the school in terms of teaching and learning and also managing a school that requires much direction and expert leadership. The HODs and DP says that there are regular SMT and staff meetings where duties and responsibilities are discussed. The principal explains:

> [They] have a management plan. In the management plan we do have a meeting that we have to, conduct, obviously it will be something that we need to sit down and plan. So after break if she's not busy I will call her [DP] and we will sit down and think about what we will be talking about with regard to that particular meeting.

Lucia gets herself involved in all meetings. She explains:

> When there are School Governing Body meetings I am also present so that I can be able to know what is happening in the governance of the school. I also, I'm a tour organizer. I organize tours and I see to it that the tours that we organize are educational, not just tours that let children go and play, but we see to it that they are educational and they correlate with the different learning areas in the schools. I also go to the meetings, to the Principals' meetings if the Principal is not there. I attend also the Deputy Principals' meetings and courses. I am the curricula, the head curriculum of the school whereby I see to it that assessment is done in accordance with the assessment protocol.

The HOD confirms that the curriculum is discussed in subject meetings.

6.3 Organisational culture

Ciyafundisa Primary School has a tradition of having assemblies in the morning. These assemblies are held "every day…Every single day" because "it becomes

easier to control learners as they go to the class" according to Mr. Simelane. He says, "it's nicer to calm them down first. Assemblies are used to be motivating learners". The assembly is used to promote important morals and values which according to the principal "is going to be suitable for young children – a motivational talk or it could be maybe something from the Bible" as "historically a lot of us were of Christian background and you'll find that time and again you'll probably teach something from the Bible, which has a moral element in it". This helps to "calm" the children down to an extent.

> They leave from the assembly going to the class they realize that it is time to learn and it comes…And then it becomes easier for any teacher as he goes to the class he will realize that the class is ready for him or her.

The principal describes how the assembly is led by educators on a rotational basis.

> You see what actually happens is that as you see that tree that we have there? We, we've got what we call an assembly and devotion committee. Now they have tabled each and every teacher according to weeks. This particular week will be a week of a particular teacher – he's going to be the one to run the assembly every day in the morning.

All the educators go to the assembly but one educator is responsible for a week. They have a specialized programme with specialist pedagogy. This instructional practice was carefully planned to inspire those learners who were struggling with main stream education.

> [The coaches' use] a video or DVD, which sort of inspires them to learn in a different ways, and to understand why they have been chosen to learn differently from others because we also have a timetable that we drafted in which those coaches will go to class and fetch those kids so they can be able to deal with specific matter differently. We took into consideration that they mustn't lose time at the same time with the others as they do work.

One major concern for Simelane Primary was late coming. This practice of late-coming bothered Mr. Simelane so that he developed a strategy to overcome the problem. He decided to form a committee "which deals with late-coming" and he sat on this meeting. In order to deal with it Mr Simelane decided to model the behaviour he expected/

> So what I do, first thing I will come and sign my term book. Obviously I come much earlier than any other person in the school and then when the bell rings I will be standing at the main gate.

This is verified by Elsie, who confirms:

> he's a good leader because he leads by example…He is always early here at school because teachers are supposed to be earlier than learners… he's not afraid of challenges. [He] "stands at the main gate, when the kids are late" and they realize that he is standing there at the gate, chances are they will run. And for me it's good enough to show that there's an element of respect" and this resulted in even the parents who are bringing the kids as they see me standing outside that there is authority to an extent that you'd find that if they, for example, if they are being dropped by car, chances are that a parent will get out of the car and apologise that the child has come late.

Learners who are late are given a reprimand:

> a little bit of a tongue lashing that it mustn't happen again. And that in itself is actually helping because what I've realized is that even if we've got about 894 learners here at school, even if there can be latecomers, I would say we probably have roughly 20 to 25 learners who are late in the whole school.

The "gesture of standing outside the gate is working very well…So I'm in that community" making a big difference not only late-coming but to absenteeism as well. In a way he says "Absolutely. It does. It does". But a welcoming additional benefit is that it also affected the attendance of the teachers.

> Because if they see me standing outside there I can promise you, some teachers do run…if they see me standing outside…So I do not have a problem as far as late-coming is concerned because of that. So that is why I'm in that committee which deals with late-coming, both for teachers and for learners.

Mr. Simelane believes strongly in the culture of teaching and learning (COLT) as he states that he would stand outside vigilant to what is happening around the school "probably until all the kids are in class and the culture of teaching and learning is starting, I will still be standing around". Mandla, the SP HOD concur with Mr.Simelane on the COLT by adding that he assists and make it a point that the culture of learning and teaching is happening at this school so he "makes it a point that he must check teachers' registers, check the examination scripts, must moderate them and work hand in hand with the Deputy Principal".

His agency extends to others when he states that after assembly he:

> immediately will start walking around, I'll go greet all the non-teaching staff, depending on where they are and whatever they are busy doing,

> I'll go and greet them, how they are and so on, 'How's life? Is everything ok? What are your needs? Have you spoken to the people concerned?' and so on and so forth.

In this way he "gets an opportunity to move around the school" and gets an eye view "to see as to whether the school has become calm so that the culture of teaching and learning can take place. It will probably now be about 9 o'clock at that time." This is a daily routine that emulates what instructional rounds is all about.

Mr. Simelane checks in with the admin clerk on a daily basis. She gives him the necessary information, the newsletters that he has to go through. He requested the teacher that deals with the timetable to give him the periods [to teach] which are a bit later in the day so that he can go to class, even though "it's very difficult, if not impossible for (him) to go to class". He made a change from teaching Mathematics:

> so we [SMT] decided that because I don't go to class more often, perhaps I should get a subject which is not that much of a demand, like maybe an LO [Life Orientation] subject or anything of that sort.

Since the subject is later in the day and he does not have too many subjects to teach he is able to go to his assigned class. As a leader who "leads by example", as educators say, Mr. Simelane considers teaching and being in the classroom as important to be current with the educational field, pedagogy and keep abreast with familiar with new trends and educational changes and to know the student body of the school.

Mr. Simelane is always trying to bring about change for the betterment of the school. He is organized and plans his day to take care of each thing in a specific time. He also believes in compliance and does the:

> necessary paperwork which is necessary for the day, I will make sure that all the things that need to be sent to the district are done, and then thereafter, after doing all the things, it's then that I can go through maybe the mail in the internet, if the internet is working.
>
> [He also has] a bit of, maybe I'll say 5 to 10 minutes with my deputy who'll probably speak about all, some of the things that I might not be aware of that we need to deal with, or we would remind each other about anything that is in our diaries that we need to go through. And then thereafter she will go to class and then I will be dealing with whatever I'm dealing with.

Although resources are limited and pose another challenge, for example with technology, Ciyafundisa School does not give up on anything. Mr. Simelane concedes that the "internet (which is provided by the Department of Education) works sometimes. He helps with going through the mail and emails "and then I'll pass it over to the necessary teachers through the administrative clerk".

Agency manifests itself even when seeking resources and funding. Funding is obtained from many sources. Mr. Simelane strongly motivates and receives support based on the success of the school. He tries to get it from "various organisations that can be able to donate to us". They have good relationships with commercial and community services and together with the "SGB chairperson has indicated that he has got a very good relationship with Mr. X – the one that owns a lot of businesses in Limpopo" and "speaks to him and then he said I should write a letter of which I did before we closed, to request for a copier machine.

6.4 Communication

Communication is central to the school's success. Mr. Simelane says:

> These are the kind of communications that I always have with the Chairperson… we'll speak about, common things - the projects that we're doing if ever there's anything, need of some sort or anything that is a challenge to me which perhaps I will need help from him… But time and again I keep the communication going on.

As we walked around the school, I noticed that Mr. Simelane is outstanding in communication, discussions, corridor conversations, motivation, encouragement, bringing about change and the continuous upliftment of the school and teacher development.

In order to improve teachers practice Mandla adds:

> they [SMT members] sit down (individually) with teachers and we communicate, and they must be able to tell me where he or she is struggling, and I will also try and help where I felt it would be necessary for me to have. If I'm experiencing problems what I normally do, I just report it to some other SMT members before we go further to the Deputy and then to the Principal.

This line of communication is vital to start important interventions to support the teachers. Neliswe confirms that there is much communication between the SMT and the teachers. She says:

> Yes, after our meeting as SMT, if there is something that you need to be clarified by the teachers, we [HOD's] also meet with them.
>
> If we have individual problems we meet with that individual as SMT and then if we want to discuss something with all the teachers there, there will is a meeting called for all teachers.

Mr. Simelane is often concerned about interfering with the culture of teaching and learning.

> Meeting with the teachers depends upon the planning that we've got…Sometimes it becomes necessary. If it's an emergency probably I'll wait, maybe 5 minutes before break because I wouldn't like to interfere with the culture of teaching and learning…So 5 minutes before break or 5 minutes after break I might send out a memo to say I need to see all the teachers right now, there's something burning that you need to know".

He is not hesitant to address issues as they arise and confront problems but if "it's a normal meeting we actually schedule in our year plan ". That takes place "after school, yes and after 2 o'clock".

The leadership development and training continues for the educator who is leading assembly for that week.

> He's going to be the one to take our break, also to knock the school off during the day. So that's what he does for the whole week. Now, he will probably have other people, in other words the person who is next and the person previous will be the one who's helping, will be helping him along.

Mr Simelane has introduced a chain system of developing teacher leadership by using one of the opportunities that arises in a school to develop the educators. What [they] have decided to do in the assembly, is to use the time to motivate learners or teach them something with a moral element". The tone of the school is set after the assembly "and then it becomes easier for any teacher as he goes to the class he will realize that the class is ready for him or her". Discipline and good behaviour is instilled whenever the opportunity arises.

Mr. Simelane's "walk around the school" helps him focus on "the culture of teaching and learning". He can evaluate what is happening in the classroom when he:

> normally walks along the corridors. The main reason why I'm doing that, I want to see if ever teachers are actually doing their work, because you must remember these days we don't necessarily go and inspect teachers as they are busy teaching.

6.5 Classroom supervision and monitoring

Classroom supervision seems to be challenging in the school except when it comes to IQMS.

> People don't become comfortable with that as well. Well it's something that used to be done before, but you can't do it these days…Although my, our teachers here, our staff, they don't have a problem with it. That's why me and my deputy we sometimes do it

But it is done in an approachable manner after they "speak to the teacher concerned and say, 'We'll come to your class just to come and listen to you.'" The tone suggests that although they are welcome to go in the class supervision does not always and readily take place.

The new educators require guidance and development thus they are visited. They can be monitored in a more informed way so that the principal and DP "can see as to whether they are in our bandwagon, you know, they are travelling, they are with us". Nqobile validates Mr. Simelane's involvement by saying:

> He must make sure that he checks teachers' work…And support, there's support where support is needed… he assesses strategies and methods which are new…He's very much informed and he is informed as well. So he assesses, does research on certain things, then informs us or workshop us.

Thabile agrees that he arranges for staff development programmes "and he's willing to send teachers for any development programmes so they are always attending workshops".

Educators claim that language is a huge challenge at this school. Learners learn in English and are supposed to be taught in English. Although the language of teaching and learning is English all the teachers are second or third language English speakers. Mr. Simelane has noticed in his supervision that when you "listen to how he [an educator] delivers the lesson" he lacks in his ability to make concepts and ideas clear to the learners. Therefore this is the sort of advice he gets:

> 'You know what, perhaps if you want to give a lesson you need to have a teaching aid, you need to have this and that, you know. Perhaps you have to speak that way. Maybe you are using a lot of vernacular instead of speaking in English, as it's an English subject, you know.'

These and other experiences exhibit how the principal has made teaching and learning the focus at Ciyafundisa Primary School. The school demonstrates much agency around quality teaching and quality learning and setting targets that are clear. He says:

> so when I would walk around I listen to kids learning [by asking questions and responding to the educators' questions], for me it's a plus. It's something that really does make me happy. That is why in many a case you would find that perhaps - I'm not strict really - but if I'm busy walking around, if the teacher is seated down, the teacher will stand or you would stand. But it's not a rule that I have made. Because I will speak to them to tell them that I have never seen a person teaching sitting down…So, that is why you find that if I am passing and they are seated, they will stand.

Although Mr. Simelane has not made it a rule to stand and teach he expects teachers to do it. This says that he has certain expectations about the teachers but that does not enforce it.

If there is a problem then Mr. Simelane would have a word with the teacher "but I'll probably not disturb until the end of the lesson…then I'll probably call that teacher and say, 'Did you see me passing today?'" and he would approach the subject by saying, "'You know what, don't get me wrong, this is what I've noticed – am I wrong or right?'" and then "it will depend how much that person feels and then if I'm right, obviously that's where we are going to start to tackle the problem as it is". He uses a relaxed stance to achieve an objective.

Pinky, an educator, agrees with this and expounds on the qualities of teaching in this school.

> Teaching here is interesting and we do a lot of sharing. We support each other and also it's fierce. Like it might be personal, but we support each other; it may be educational, we still support each other. We are not afraid of each other. Like we don't feel like the challenge is too much because whenever there is a challenge it's simple to get help…because we are, like Neliswe has said, different people, different personalities, different abilities and different levels of relationship.

They will help each other with dealing with difficult learners and also if they are struggling to teach a concept to the learners.

Monitoring and supervision of educators work is very thorough and does not only involve the SMT but also engages the parents. Mr. Simelane does not visit classrooms often but when he does he:

> writes it down and then after writing it down I call upon the SMT. Towards the end of February of each and every year I make it a point that I see each and every child's book. It doesn't matter what grade. And then I put a stamp on it and I sign with my pen – each and every child's book – to see as to whether the culture of working, of teaching is happening.

However, Nqobile says that he "makes sure that he checks teachers' work". Mandla (SP HOD) like the DP and FP HOD is also involved with monitoring the teachers. He says:

> I have Grades 4, 5, and 6.
>
> I do go to the teachers; I check their files and see what is happening. I check the learners' books. But while I'm checking I'll be having the work schedule, trying to find out whether the teacher's deviating from what he or she is teaching.
>
> Teachers are given support through the School Based Support Team (SBST) whereby we can refer those teachers to the team where he will sit down; he will be able to explain what he or she is struggling with so that they can be able to come up with some strategies.

Mandla elaborates on marking and moderation of "quarterly tests that they have been writing, how they are we going to moderate the papers, how teachers are supposed to mark those scripts and to report and to send them back for moderation again. Each HOD is responsible for their learning area". He "monitors the teacher's progress, their files" and "after monitoring those things I report to the Deputy and the Deputy will call a meeting".

Mr. Simelane has an interesting approach to parent engagement when he explains:

> In March I have what we call a parents' involvement whereby parents are going to come and have a look at their books during the day, because we can't do it in the evening in Soweto…So we do it during the day from 9 o'clock. Unfortunately it disturbs the school, but it is worth it. Parents will come, I'll put the chairs outside for them to sit. Two parents will go inside the classroom with the kids, they go and sit next to their children, they have a look at the children's book and then they give comments wherever they want to give and the teacher is going to tell them about their child. And what strategies must be put in place. Thereafter the parents will leave. That's how we do it". That is parents' involvement in March".

The monitoring continues thereafter.

> Before June, before we start exams in June I request the HODs to take 6 books of each and every learning area. They check the worst, those who are in the middle and the best and then they give me what they think. We've got a template around which they will go through it and have a look at those books to tell me what the progress is. That template actually guides you as to, you are going to check as to is there enough work? The assessment strategies have been followed through and then how many tasks have been done in that template. And then thereafter they will give me a report to say the particular teacher is bad or is he repeating things or whatever, before we start exams.

They check for curriculum coverage and report on weak areas and learner challenges. When exams are set they moderate the papers thoroughly and:

> If the question papers are redundant, they are repeating things they should have done in March, they can't write that question paper, they have to go to, he has to go and redo that paper again…Now, because it's July I am going to have a meeting with the HODs to sit down and strategies on going to do what are called class visits and the class visits are going to be done by HODs.
>
> The Foundation Phase HOD [who teaches her own class] is going to make time to get into all these classes and come and give me a report of what she feels the mood is, of teaching, whether the teacher are on track or has got the children now to the their fingertips together with the SP HOD. They will then use a template for that as well, "which after visiting the class they will come back and we sit down around the table as SMTs and then we sit down and talk about if there are any things, interventions that we have to do, we'll talk about it and then start intervening.

Mr. Simelane reiterated on the quality of teaching when he expounded about an educator:

> There's one teacher, it's his second year now at school. I have noticed as I was moving along the corridors, when I listen to him I could feel that he doesn't have a serious command on learners because you'd find that he's busy in class but the children are not calm.

He decided to call him in and said 'I've noticed that when you are busy teaching the learners they don't seem to be listening to you. Can you kindly give me the books of the learners? I want to go through them with you.'

When the educator brought the book he "realised the children are doing a lot of scratching, dirty work in the school books…Then I realized there's a problem". He asked him:

> 'What is it? What's the problem?' He said, 'No, I'm fine (?), the kids don't want to listen to me.' …He says they don't want to listen to him. I said, 'But now who did you speak to? Did you go to your HOD?' He says he didn't. I

> said, 'What are you doing about it if they don't want to listen to you?' He said, 'No, but I was just hoping that eventually they would listen, but you know there's one child who does this and that.' I said, 'No under no circumstances must you start teaching if the children are not attentive.'…'If they refuse to be attentive, you don't start teaching.'…'You'll start teaching when every child is attending. Every child.' We started talking about the tactics.

Mr. Simelane then went into the class and demonstrated what he meant about getting their attention to the teacher.

6.6 Curriculum and content

Mandla says that they have "learner support educators."

> Learners get the support of educators so that they will be able to identify what they can see and they will come and report back to the school based support team". That "report [goes] to the Principal and we will come up with strategies on how to help those learners.

Mr. Simelane is knowledgeable about the current curriculum and the fundamentals of teaching, learning and assessments. When he spoke about the ANA tests he emphasized:

> the main purpose of the test was to improve the literacy levels of our learners… And to us when it came like that it came at the right time in the sense that previously we used to take the issue of reading very seriously, in the sense that we are also part and parcel of an organization which is called READ [verified by both HODs]. This organization used to motivate us into teaching learners how to read. And, because of that, we used to have Saturday schools in which we used to concentrate on teaching the intermediate phase – grade 4 to 7 - mathematics and literacy or languages…So as it [ANA] came at the right time because it's something that we have been doing before, and then we just got into it. That is where perhaps it was not difficult for us to do well.

They had the foresight to "already improve quality of teaching and learning with the improvement of reading" in their school.

He was concerned that the level of reading had actually gone down.

> but it's not us to blame – it's the system… because you must remember we are no longer allowed to teach – we facilitate[11] – of which I think it's a very big mistake what we are doing because if you look at yourself you are where you are because you've been taught."

[11] Facilitate involves the teacher overseeing tasks while learners are involved in their learning.

He is a strong proponent of teaching rather than facilitating. He sees facilitating as diminishing the teachers' role and considers teaching concepts as essential.

Mr. Simelane regards the "practice of teaching" more important and rigorous than the process of facilitating. He is dissatisfied with "the levels of literacy, they're ok, but they could have been better if we were teaching these learners in a proper way, you know, the sounding of the letters and words, like we used to do before, they will probably catch up much easier and faster (teaching reading) than what they are doing now. In terms of the new curriculum CAPS they do both. According to the instructional core (Elmore, 2010) you see the teacher, content and student engagement in the tasks. The task reflects the approach. Thus if the instructional leader thinks that the teaching of reading is problematic changes should be made to instruction in order to achieve the outcomes of literacy which is fundamental in the Foundation Phase classrooms.

The teaching of reading is tackled in a proactive way. Many intervention programmes are implemented. Ciyafundisa Primary School did not have library. The school realized the importance of a library and built a library and stocked it full of books. Learners now have a library time-tabled period and are encouraged to take books home. Their approach to learning of language is promoted by other innovations.

> One other thing which I could say has made the literacy level to be slightly higher than normal, we used to have a competition in which we would say to each and every learner, 'It will be a bonus for you, for everyone to see you speaking in English.' In other words we would reprimand any child that speaks differently. We would say everybody must speak in English…So that the kids can gain confidence, you know, and so on. And we usually let our children enter into these different competitions which have got to do with language and literacy like Spellathon. We are still part and parcel of READ as well, you know, so that we can. (Mr. Simelane)

The languages that are taught are English, Venda and Afrikaans especially for learners going to schools in Lenasia, a township close by, and there a number of learners who move to schools in Lenasia for a "better education". Because there many languages in the school teachers and learners use the language they prefer. The use of English begins to suffer because of this language conflict.

Educators are committed and dedicated. Mr. Simelane says that the educators in their practice have:

> an element of culture that does play a role because I would say all of them are Venda background... They've got one thing which nobody can take it away from them – it's respect…I do not battle to have respect from teachers because... You know, in, in my time as a principal I have not confronted anybody with regard to issues of respect... So once people respect you, obviously you respect them in return, and then it becomes easier to get along, you understand? If you're requesting something you expect to get it – you don't expect it any other way.

The focus on curriculum begins from when Lucia allocates the duties.

> I must first of all determine what the educator teaches, what the educator's specialty is because you cannot just give a person Mathematics, so I didn't specialize in Mathematics. So I must make sure the person is good in Mathematics and whatever subject that I'm going to allocate to him /her and they must be able to, to deliver it correctly"…allocation is done "democratically". "So we, first of all I give them, I let them write the subject that they would like to teach and also the classes that they are going to teach those subjects. And after collecting the information from them then I sit down and try to compare what I have according to each individual teacher with what we have written. Then after comparing them then I call them in.

Curriculum is managed well. The HODs and principal look at the teachers books and they discuss their instructional practice in subject meetings. They discuss their challenges and how to improve their practice in the classroom. The educators are experienced and professionally qualified.

> Because apart from the two or three teachers that we have who are new, the rest of the teachers have got BA, I have got university degrees and through correspondence, just to show that, you know, one person does this, the other one says, 'Oh, why are you doing this?' 'You know, I'm upgrading myself, why don't you do the same?' So they kind of sit down and motivate each other, you know, to gain knowledge, as much knowledge as they can.
>
> [Educators constantly talk] about the challenges that we are facing today, in today's education… because you'd find that time and again you'll hear somebody saying, 'We're so stressed about being, about the work load, paperwork ' and all about the profession…and the support that it is there around the profession itself". It concerns him and the many good educators that the profession " has deteriorated, how much valueless we have become in front of the public. Because if you look at obviously whatever happens, teachers are lazy, and teachers don't do their work - they forget the challenges that we have. I mean, for example, I don't know whether you have read the paper on Monday where they were saying the ANC should revisit the issue of corporal punishment. (Mr. Simelane)

The reputation of the profession is dwindling fast and much faith is lost in education and discipline at schools. Many policies are challenged and difficult to implement thus discipline becomes a huge problem, as alternatives to corporal punishment according to the principal "may not work".

Educators often talk says Mr. Simelane:

> about how difficult it was to, to teach a particular child or to make this particular child understand, or how frustrated they are when the child did not write his/her work and maybe that particular teacher has sent that child to me and I did nothing about it because what am I going to do?"

This poses a huge problem according to him as there's not much he can resort to but "phone and tell the parent, 'This child is refusing to hand over…' "and the parent says "'Oh, hit him.' How can I hit him? You know we are not allowed to do that".

6.7 Professional development

Educators are encouraged to change their practice by getting them to visit other institutions and networking. The principal establishes:

> a link with other institutions so that perhaps maybe they can be able to learn how others are doing things. For example we've got a link with a school in the UK which is called Kingsley St John…Now over the years from 2000 that link has been… Over the years this relationship has been going on very well. We used to exchange cultural elements and so on and so forth. Eventually we had to have reciprocal visits. Our teachers went that side; they came this side and so on and so forth. It's just most unfortunate because of the economic meltdown things have actually slowed down now". ..But now things like that, like links - sometimes we link with schools which are nearby. We've got a school which is in, next to Diepsloot …We play football with them, it's a school similar to ours, but it's modernized.
>
> When educators visit such [like the one in Diepsloot] schools and realize how much people are not doing well they become, when they come back they become very much motivated to say, 'You know what, some people are playing here at school, at schools.' And then it sort of gives them that status to say we must remain up there…And then when they get challenges on the other hand where they find that some other people are doing things in a much better way, they come up with ideas to say, 'Why don't we do things this way? We have noticed that some other people do things in that way, we are going to try and do that.'
>
> [Mr. Simelane] always allow people to come and, especially if it's service provider which I think is going to benefit the school, I allow them to come at school. For example we've got a company called Discovery Channel. They

> came in here to show us how to teach using their DVDs – Discovery Channel DVDs, the ones that you watch on TV…Now that lady gave us, um, that kind of a project for about 2 years and it motivated them that things can be done differently. You can use a DVD. They are no longer scared. Our teachers, you'll find them going to fetch a TV, DVD put it in front of the class – they teach – nicely, without any problem.

Technology, such lessons on DVDs, is also used to change their teaching methods and style and improve practice. They were "donated a plasma screen". The school does not have security guards in all the classrooms, therefore they had to "put it in the cottage (a burglar guarded room) because if you put it in class you won't see it tomorrow". These kinds of challenges exist in most schools but are common to township school. Principals have to think of novel ideas to keep resources intact and to teach.

Mr. Simelane feels that in terms "of professional development in service training is important…Only if it can be provided by people who are professional enough" and the issue of tenders and outsourcing causes major problems as most are professionals and do not understand teacher training and the "Department should put something into place here".

Neliswe regards professional development as an essential part of being a teacher. She emphasizes:

> sometimes the teacher will say 'If you can call such and a person, or even a peer in this area I think she can develop me' then we allow it. We have peer coaching and we have the SMT developing teachers or arranging for the teacher to go for workshops

Educators like Neliswe perceive:

> [that professional training] has actually shifted these days, it's more of paperwork than teaching itself…So because of the way in which people are perceiving it that is where you find that in many cases a lot of people might not be into that in-service because they feel, 'How can I pile myself with more paperwork while I've got so much to do at school now?' you see…And so because of that I think a lot of people are taking it negatively.

The Department's demands grow steadily because Mr. Simelane says:

> because we were actually meeting deadlines of almost everything that you can think of under the sun. Now I ask myself, there was a lady that came in to inspect from the GPLMS. Now she says she was surprised to realize that out of all the schools that she's been to in that week we were the only school (which was on Wednesday when she came) that the teachers had work in the children's book. I said to her, 'It's actually a miracle that you found that

> because the way there is so much paperwork that we have to deal with I was not going to be surprised if no teacher was teaching.'…So, going back to that question, I think if it wasn't for the paperwork that we are doing now today, in-service training, everybody will work on it.

The management is vigilant over teaching time and sees this outside interference as encroaching into protected time. The constant overflowing demand from the Department is affecting teaching and learning as educators and managers begin to concentrate on the compliance rather than focusing on the core business of the school. According to him:

> the system is sick …the one that is actually mandating things wrongly as… I mean if they're expecting some marks for whatever statistics how can we do it in the afternoon? We have to do it with kids in class, and then you stop teaching.

The principal demonstrates his frustration with the Department in these statements and in so doing his concern over teaching and learning.

When unexpected events arise Mr. Simelane is very discerning and does not tolerate disturbances in the learners schooling timetable. He makes informed decisions and does not allow events that may hamper with the learners' education and says to a parent seeking leave for a learner.

> But now I cannot sign consent to say it's correct, because I know it's not correct.'…'But I do agree there's nothing we can do. You are saying she's got to, she's in the competition, she's the top, she's a runner-up and she's got to go and represent that particular body. But we, the school itself, I cannot allow you to leave during school hours.

He is put in an invidious position at times but he will not "do things that will affect their teaching and learning".

Teacher absenteeism can become a nuisance when the concentration for quality teaching and learning is dependent that teaching time is sacred and honoured. With a result Mr. Simelane has:

> introduced the element of seriously leave forms. It used to be a bit of a problem – it is no longer. Since I've introduced being serious with a leave form they have noticed, they have realized that I'm always on the leave form, rather let me stay away and do my things after hours. So I don't have a problem at all

Mr. Simelane can be flexible when there is a genuine problem. He assesses the situation, is forthright and he does not have the problem anymore.

As a Mathematics educator for over 20 years Mr.Simelane taught Mathematics in grade 7 and 6 up until I got promoted to become an HOD. He has a love for the subject and still teaches it now and helps in the Mathematics division. “I’m always working with teachers. I attend their meetings as well. For example right now we are talking about the strategies of ANA. We hope the strategies of how we’re going to deal with issues of ANA will work and if we are behind” in terms of progression.

He initiates intervention programmes if need be as he had “just signed letter today in which one of the teachers has requested the grade 4s to come on Saturday.”

6.8 Relationship and conversations with SMT

Mr. Simelane shares a professional relationship with members of the SMT. He has open conversations about the teachers’ work and encourages the HODs to do some of the monitoring and support because he might intimidate them. He states:

> I might say to the HOD, ‘Why don’t you go and talk to that person?’ Just trying to see what is happening. She will come and report to me and tell me what is happening. And then I said, ‘Ok, can you call that person. Let’s sit with that person and find out what is happening.’ When the principal together with the HOD approaches the educator “he will first probably break the ice and then Maybe you might find that I usually, I’ve got a sense of humour because quite a lot of people, you’ll find that before I start anything they start laughing because they know I will be saying something very funny. Or maybe I will say, ‘Did you see something in the paper today?’…And then often I say, ‘Guys, we’ve got quite a lot of things to do…‘I was thinking, have you got something to write on?’”

The HODs say that he encourages them to write down whatever they discuss and also the intervention strategies to be implemented.

Mr. Simelane gets on the sociable side of the educator before discussing and negotiating any challenges. When a challenge is brought forward he tries to develop HODs’ own leadership by asking them to get involved in the solutions by saying “‘but why didn’t you speak to them? You are in management, why were you waiting for me?’ They [the teachers] must really feel you when you are around”.

He allows them:

> to buy into the whole thing to realize that s/he is also part and parcel of this institution. The decision that he’s coming up with, he’s able to implement it freely. So I’d say, ‘Go say to the kids. It’s a good idea – just go and say it’”. He constantly schools his personnel and tries to get them to take ownership to develop leadership qualities. [He believes in] collective management.

Funding for this school comes from various sources, as Mr. Simelane is very active in this area. Together with some staff members he got a sponsorship from a program called 'Adopt a School'. The sponsorship involved the "actually testing of the children's eyesight". He encouraged the educator who was involved:

> 'Mr you know what, I see you are very good in communicating with people who come from outside. You are a very good ambassador to the school. You know, the image that you sort of show anybody that comes to school I like it.'

Mr. Simelane's action indicates that he wants to constantly extend the development and education of the educators and leadership team. Neliswe agrees:

> in our management meetings we discuss firstly the progress of the children; secondly the progress of the teachers, how do we see teachers working; then to the curriculum. That's what we always discuss.

He is very accommodating to parents and has very little problems with parental involvement in the school. He has a deep respect for them and believes "that whatever the parent says is right. This is the reason "why parents are not even afraid to come in here". I my observations, I saw that parents offer the school help and come up with plans to work constructively with the school.

Mr Simelane was not happy with the ANA results.

> We, in fact everybody's saying the lowest we should get should be 60% - that's what everybody's saying at the moment. He now has extra classes "Of which I think everybody's working on it. That is why now others are feeling they should get kids to come on Saturday.

He was not happy with arrangements for this year because before the assessment could begin they were "given question papers to go through. They say it's a practice question paper. Have you ever heard of that in Maths? It's frightening." He feels that this is unfair practice as the test should be based on what the learners have been taught already and educators should not be teaching according to how a test is set.

He regards his educators to be "constantly evolving" as "They continue to learn. We have there's one teacher that has just passed ACE (Advanced Certificate in Educational Management) I think she's, he's going to graduate probably somewhere in a few months' time".

Mr. Simelane is a strong leader who was given the opportunity to train as a leader when he did the ACE training. He explains:

> as a consequence of obtaining distinction in all subjects and as a gesture of saying thank you, I believe, I was chosen and other 3 people were invited to come for coffee and told we should prepare ourselves to go to the USA.

With a result he went to the US in a place "called Blacksburg in West Virginia" and did his leadership training.

He broadened his horizons and met "with many people from all over the country and all over the world." He realized:

> as a person coming from a township in Soweto our culture is so diverse, yet there is something very common amongst ourselves when it comes to our perception towards issues of life. People are the same.

6.9 Leadership Disposition

The educators agree with his leadership dispositions by emphasizing his role as the principal of this school. He is regarded:

> as a pillar, a real leader. And the thing is, we started to work with him as a deputy principal… so he wasn't just a principal like that…So it's easy to approach and to see the man.

Elsie says "I also think that he's a good leader…Because he leads by example'.

The leadership training was an "eye opener" for him and he "learnt to realize that if you are a leader make sure that you out-root every single personnel's potential to use". He says that "you must use every person's potential" wherever you are and that is what he is "trying to do that" at Ciyafundisa Primary School.

This value extends to the children attending this school "each and everyone" and "also to his own children". This demonstrates that good leadership extends beyond the call of duty and into a leader's personal interactions and personal time but he "can be at school working for twenty four hours a day".

He regards the deputy principal as the best teacher in the school for various reasons.

> There's a balance between being strict and being knowledgeable. She knows the time for doing things correctly and the time for playing. And she's very, very precise when it comes to meeting deadlines. And her loyalty

> towards me [as Lucia expresses herself] I mean she's far older than me… but when we sit here doing work sometimes she feels I'm not doing enough especially when it comes to perhaps maybe when we have to reprimand some of the wrong things that our teachers are doing or our staff are doing…She will get into my boots and do it on my behalf and say, 'You know what, I'm sorry, but I had to do it, I can see you taking it easy.' She goes an extra mile for the school – she does, she really does.

He talks about the HOD who is following in the DP's footsteps who "stays just a few blocks away from here. He is here every weekend, he's here at school. He will come and monitor whatever's happening".

When it comes to staff induction there is a distinct process and protocol to be followed, the DP says:

> when the teacher comes to school for the first time she will probably ask to speak to the principal. I will introduce myself, wanting to find out, 'Oh, you're the other person that we have actually checked in for, as a teacher.' Thereafter I will say, 'Before I introduce you to anybody else, you need to know the SMT of the school.' I'll call upon the SMT to come here. 'Here is our teacher, you remember her? We interviewed her, this is the successful candidate' . Thereafter, 'Mrs. D, she's the one who is going to induct you into the whole school – to see where the ablution is, to see where the admin is, and the admin clerk, the non-teaching staff and so on.' Thereafter we'll meet with that particular teacher with the rest of the staff. And then we'll greet that person and tell her"

One of the newer teachers, Naledi, in the focus group interview agrees with the DP and speaks about her induction procedure when she came into this school. She was "originally an intermediate teacher".

> Naledi: So Mrs. M is the one who helped me, so it was new to me and it was very interesting because I was learning new things.

Mrs. M helped Naledi to get integrated into foundation phase because she says that Foundation Phase "is so different, but the principal said I can be there because I love these small children. I said I want to try to teach in Foundation Phase. It's Ma'am and the one who was HOD [who mentored her], the one who's retiring at the end of the year and now I can teach."

The DP is also in charge of mentoring new staff and it probably goes on "for a month or two, you know…Depending how flexible that person is. If that person easily grabs things maybe a month would be enough".

The many changes in curriculum are not something that the school was very comfortable with but it was "well received" especially the merging of subjects which helped cut down the number of periods. The principal explains the changes as:

> For me I still feel perhaps if we can just swallow our pride and go back to basics…Really, I mean, what happened is that certain subjects were brought in taken away and then brought in or left out completely.

The FP teachers spoke about the CAPS training and the changes that they implemented after the introduction of the curriculum:

Fikile: It's (the new curriculum) the same. It's the same. Nothing or little changed from the CAPS but it's still the education that we know.

Pinky: We do group them [the learners]. We do group them according to their abilities.

The SP teachers spoke about the changes they implemented in the delivery of the new curriculum leadership.

Elsie: Our school is busy with GPLMS.

Nqobile: Gauteng Literacy and Mathematics Strategy. It's another programme. It is that which is happening at CAPS.

They agreed that they went for CAPS training.

Elsie: Yes, we did. We did. Well we've already started this year. The whole school is involved in the changes?

Nqobile: The whole school is involved. Everybody is.

Elsie: The whole school…Yes, all the teachers went for training.

Nqobile: We go for that particular training that you're supposed to go for…Like myself, I'm an English teacher…I'm still an Economics teacher, so I go to GPLMS, English, CAPS and Economics training.

Mr. Simelane encourages the teachers to work hard and take advantage of the training provided to improve their quality of teaching and learning. He together with the staff has achieved a lot.

> Because in the past 2 years we've got 2 extra classes, 5 mobile classes, 1 other mobile class, a tennis court. I think that's an achievement…So, and there are still other things to come…I think the library as well. By the way, that library has been refurbished; it used to be an art centre. It was converted from an art centre to what it is… it must be much bigger so that it must allow learners to enjoy learning inside it.' And indeed it has happened.

He does not leave any project incomplete and makes sure that he works together with the teachers to bring it to completion. So in order to stock the library they obtained the books by purchasing them.

> Even in that, in the grant that we have…5% must be library books…So we do usually buy. Some companies request for wish list, we tell them library books. We went to the Rotary Club, we took a big van, we went there, I was with these male teachers, I told them they must just come with their normal home clothes and then we went there, we got into that big warehouse, we collected as many books as we could and we packed that truck. We came back with the books and we put them in the library.

6.10 Summary

As a visionary leader Mr. Simelane knows where he wants the school to go to and how to achieve this. He shares the vision with the stakeholders and staff members and ensures that everybody takes ownership of the vision and has the same goal in mind. Mandla says that

> They [SMT] make it a point that when teachers are teaching in class they must bear in mind the vision and the mission of the school. What do we want to achieve from those learners. It can be discipline as part of the vision of the school. You have to make it a point that whenever you are teaching those learners knows how important discipline is. You tell them about the different cultural backgrounds. You'll just be able to integrate with them; you must bear in mind the mission and the vision of the school.

The vision is an integral part of the school and fundamental to the achievements of the school as a whole.

The next chapter provides a cross case analysis, which is linked to the research questions, findings and the literature.

CHAPTER 7

DATA ANALYSIS of CASE STUDY PRIMARY SCHOOLS

7.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters provided the story of the three case schools. This chapter provides a cross case analysis, which is linked to the research questions, findings and the literature. The cross case analysis employs a methodology that allows for identifying, examining and emphasizing similarities and differences across case studies that share a comparable profile within a focus area. The main themes that emerged from the reviewed literature as well as from the case studies produced the structure of this chapter. To make sense of the data, these themes were interpreted to understand the various constitutive elements through an inspection of the relationship between them. Data analysis also helped the researcher to answer and understand the research question in a systematic, structured way (Mouton, 2001).

The data presented by the ANA results of 2011 indicated that all three case schools met the initial criteria of high performing and functional school, with the same principal as leader of the school for over five years my research started with the assumption that the instructional core forms the domain of the principal. Since the focus of the study was on the principal as the instructional leader, two of the schools studied showed up with strong, focused instructional leadership by the principals and one did not, thus the actions of the principals of School B and School C is analysed in greater detail.

After the researcher collected the data, data coding was used based on the strategy specified by Merriam (2001). Scott and Morrison (2007) argue that fundamental to data analysis is a two-stage process: the sifting and selecting of information collected into, ‘data bits’ and assigning to them a label or category that is usually called a ‘code’. The codes were then categorised. Different themes emerged from the interviews, focus groups and observations and analysed documents, which is discussed in detail. According to Cotton (2003) effective instructional leaders are intensely involved in curricular and instructional issues that directly affect student

achievement and instructional leadership influences the academic achievement of learners in school.

Different themes emerged from the analysed data. These themes were all linked in answering the research questions and therefore could not be separated, even though they could be differentiated. The themes that emerged will be discussed in detail.

7.2 Lessons about leadership and instructional leadership.

The focus of the current study is to understand how the principals engage with leadership in their schools. The key elements of instructional leadership include the prioritization of teaching and learning on a consistent basis. Leadership is a balance of management and vision (NAESP, 2001) with an intuitive sense of growth, change and aspirations. While leaders cannot neglect other duties, teaching and learning should be the area where most of the leaders' scheduled time is allocated. Instructional leadership therefore involves developing a common vision of good instruction, building relationships, exhibiting the necessary behaviour, developing and empowering staff to innovate in instruction, give one another feedback and share best practices. The kind of relationships and the type of behaviour displayed in each of the case study schools shows that instructional leadership is not dependent on one model but rather takes a different form and model in each of the schools.

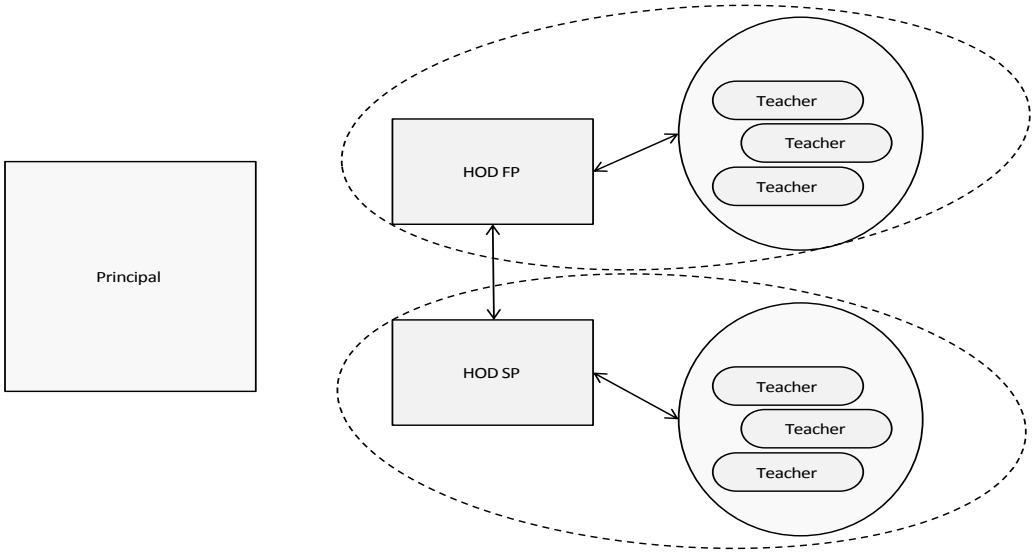
Instructional leadership is reliant amongst others on this significant variable, which is the context. The context revolves around many factors, such as where the school is situated, the school environment, the cultivated school culture, and most significantly on the human capital in the equation. The context influences how an individual behaves in a given situation and how this impacts on the people around them. Each school had its own unique culture, people, and environment that were embedded in how the school operated, practiced and enacted. School A is a primary school, in a fairly affluent middle class suburb catering for a multicultural community, has children and parents from a higher socio economic status, well educated parents and a safe environment. School B is a large primary inner city school in a densely populated area with mainly poor children, multilingual, mainly illiterate population made up of refugees, unemployed and employed parents from a

lower socioeconomic status. The principal and staff are highly qualified and have a wealth of experience in terms of teaching. School C, a township primary school is situated amongst the poorest of a poor community, lacks basic facilities and amenities, poor infrastructure and roads, surrounded by shacks and populated by a community who lacks formal school education. Each of these contexts affects the school in terms of support, engagement and involvement that influences the leadership of the schools.

These case studies of South African primary schools emphasise that there is more than one model of instructional leadership. Since the three selected schools were chosen on the basis of being successful it was assumed that some form of instructional leadership is taking place. The dashed-circle on each model (Model A, B and C) depict how the instructional leadership of each school in manifested.

7.3 Three models of instructional leadership

Figure 3: Model A - Leading from below



In the School A as depicted in the Leading from below model, the principal exerts very little direct influence on instruction. In this model the principal describes exercising an influence over student outcomes through the two heads of departments (HODs). But the focus on teaching and learning is driven very strongly

through the HODs own values and visions for instruction, an agreed school vision taking into account and working with the school context, using evidence based monitoring and critical reflection on classroom practice by educators. Thus in School A good instructional leadership occurs within each of the departments through the HODs and not through the principal who is supposed to be the instructional head of the school. The principal, as the instructional leader, is disconnected from the core business of the school as represented by model A.

This model denotes an anatomized, absent leadership model. The principal in this model is disengaged from the HODs and teachers. There is a supportive relationship between the two HODs and we see an intersecting node of instructional leadership including each of the HODs, but each interacts and engages with the teachers from her own phase.

Mr. John, principal of School A, describes his leadership position as a “dispersed leadership” style. As he is nearing retirement age and has been principal for the past 20 years he finds himself in a space where he would prefer other leaders to grow and take the core responsibilities of the school. The HODs claim that he is pretty laid back, unassuming, present in the school but absent to instructional leadership and basically on the “balcony” more as an observer than an active participant. By his own admission he is happy to play what he terms a more supportive role by providing the necessary resources and caring about the physical environment to make it conducive to learning rather than concentrating on the instructional core of the school.

The HODs of School A says that his impact on student outcomes has been indirect, focusing more on peripheral aspects surrounding instruction and on the HODs. He is fully confident in their ability and regards them as “kings” in their department. The HODs claim that the leadership of the school and the SMT has problems in that the three leaders have three different personalities where the principal has a “wait and see” attitude, the SP HOD an “I’ll confront it, direct” attitude and the FP HOD a “mixture of both...more balanced” attitude. The two HODs make up for the lack of instructional leadership from the principal and become “great” leaders, according to the teachers, in their own right to lead their own departments. However, their

leadership is limited by a disjuncture that the two departments do not work with each other.

SMT meetings are not held often so an issue that needs to be addressed goes unattended for a long time and sometimes never attended to. If the Senior Primary educators have any problems they go to their HOD even though she is so strict because she will “take it further” and she will “make decisions on (her) own”. The Foundation Phase HOD says that during the infrequent SMT meetings is a time to talk about issues relating to learner and parents complaints. She is very well organised with instruction and the curriculum. The educators say that she has appointed potential teacher leaders as grade leaders and subject heads and she attends to the instructional core via these leaders.

The SP HOD emphatically states that the principal “never” consults with the educators and the HODs of the school. There have been many “change overs” in terms of leadership styles and staff members so much so that the school had eleven different changes in HODs and teachers in three years. This is a predicament since the cohesive collaborative nature of the leadership is lost and new individuals take time to fit into the teaching and learning culture of the school. Strong instructional leadership is desired by the educators to work in tandem with each other and the entire school.

The educators are in agreement that the principal is “not so strict” and “not so watchful” and this means that he has relinquished his authority and leadership roles. They say that he is “fair” and “leaves you to do your own things”. He allows autonomy of the educators and the educators believe that he “trusts” them. They agree that he is “very approachable”, “understanding”, “nice” and “very good in a way” but go on to declare that “he doesn’t have ... good leadership skills” and that the school basically “runs itself in a way”. Due to this they say “the ladies in the office do quite a lot” referring to the leadership of the two HODs. “He could do more in terms of leadership” they affirm as they say he has an indirect leadership style and he is not so “authoritarian”. This is a real indictment to his leadership as the educators feel the lack of leadership that would help direct them. When it comes to supervision “he’s not one of those headmasters who comes around” so educators

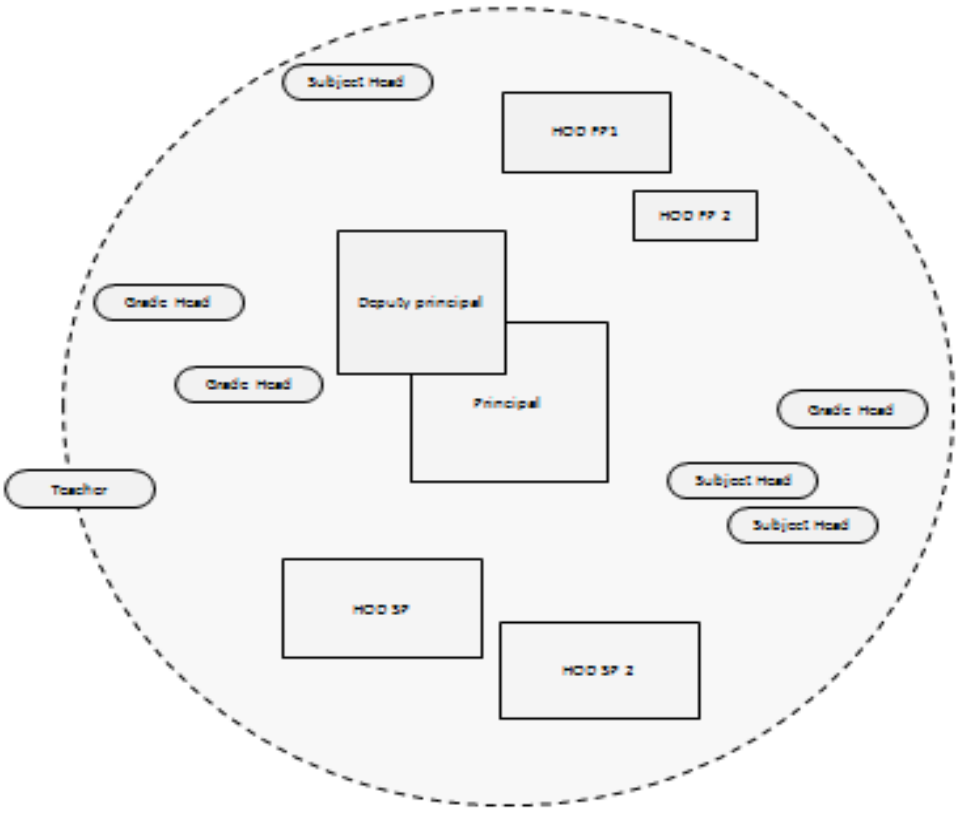
are left to their own devices since the HODs are not available to supervise them adequately because of their own workload.

The educators say, “Children don’t really scare for him”...”children don’t really know him” they say with some trepidation. Although he “interacts with children... in an interested way” and “he is nice to them” he “doesn’t know the children’s names”, an attribute which means much to effective leaders.

His absence is made more visible when it came to assemblies for learners. The educators say that he “doesn’t come to assembly” and “for years he doesn’t come in and hold assembly” even at the “end of term”. Another significant factor is that this school is smaller in terms of student size with an enrolment of five hundred learners as compared to the other two schools.

What happens in School A is in stark contrast to what happens in the other two schools where HODs have a strong say in driving instruction, but the principals are fundamentally in control.

Figure 4: Model B - Empowering influence



Model B, “Empowering influence”, stands in contrast to Model A in that the principal of this school has a direct and significant influence on instruction. In this model, the school principal is portrayed as the hub of the wheel, which moves around her with strong attachments and collaboration. This is a spinning wheel, which, when in motion, moves harmoniously as the school moves. We see the instructional leadership node expanded to include the entire SMT. The teacher depicted on the model represents all of the teachers. The dotted lines indicate that instructional leadership extends to the entire staff. The principal has a hands-on and unswerving instructional leadership style that helps her persuade her subordinates to become involved in the common good of al of the learners.

The shared vision of quality teaching and quality learning is important; values and beliefs are promoted at every opportunity for instance in her focus on litter or the assembly. She demonstrates the importance of values and beliefs making an impact on the learners’ education and learning and also on the community-at-large. She creates the ethos of a professional learning community with her daily SMT meetings and staff meetings. Her main objectives are to keep tight control of instruction and to develop existing staff to take up leadership roles. Her fifteen years of leadership is enacted with deep conviction and a focused engagement with the core business of the school.

Mrs. Alexander, a white female principal for the past fifteen years, in a school with predominantly Black learners, is passionate about learning and all her interventions and activities of the school revolve around teaching and learning. She is articulate, professional, organised, strong, decisive, and straightforward and a “teacher at heart”. She is unafraid of challenges and will hire and fire to suit the needs of the learners. She serves as a role model to her staff. She has a strong leadership identity and a strong sense of purpose, which she easily conveys to people around her. She asserts leadership by taking purposeful action – such as convening meetings of first the SMT and then the staff every morning to organise and set the tone for the day. The rest of the staff affirms her actions by enthusiastically following the actions. She comes across as being authoritarian at times and having very tight control over the school but her team discusses how their own leadership is being developed.

The weekly assembly of the school attests to the precision she expects to be followed in the school. When Mrs. Alexander follows a scrupulous assembly procedure the purpose is to engage the students. The action of the leader is connected to the tasks learners are asked to do to develop the potential of the learners and their level of engagement.

When Mrs. Alexander focuses on the litter in the school environment she is not only focusing on the cleanliness of the environment but she is instilling a valuable lesson of learning in an organized environment. Another example of this is portrayed in the congregation of the choir in practice or when presenting the choir at various outside functions. Each girl is dressed impeccably, stand in an orderly way, looking straight ahead and march in a military style. She is inflexible and expects order and obedience.

The HODs of School B discuss various issues that may arise during the school day in their meetings with the principal. Discussion revolves around teachers who may be absent or if learners require additional help. According to the SP HODs they have a full teaching load with a period or two free to do management work or supervision. The Foundation Phase HOD, who has a Grade 1 form class, indicated that the time is not enough to fulfill their HOD roles with a result that some of the functions are neglected.

To rise above this hurdle, the SP HOD states that she has a book that is circulated amongst the educators to “write down” anything that requires urgent attention or “if something needs to be said”. As a leader she “prefers” to go to the educator concerned directly and “speak to the educator [her] self”. She has not had any problems going into an educator’s class. She analyses her educators practice well and knows who to approach and when to approach them.

The Foundation Phase HOD says that principal believes that there is “one clear, right way...not two ways” to run the school. She is “very strict”, she is “forward. She tells you exactly where you did wrong and then you know where you stand”. The principal is forthright and understands exactly how the school should be managed and lead and everyone “knows what’s going on”. The HOD commented that the School Governing Body (SGB) was reconstituted.

The HODs of School B have a vast range of experience in terms of teaching years and in leading their particular phases for a number of years collectively. They arrive early at school, as the FP HOD does not “believe in coming late”. They share duties by attending the morning meeting or settling the children outside before going to their classes. They are also involved in extra mural activities, like choir, and they do gate duties. All their marking of learners’ books are done at home.

Unlike School A, the SP and FP educators in School B work together and “function very well”. They have a “good balance of people to represent both phases in the SMT”, so that both” the junior and senior problems” get addressed in an equitable manner. There is good camaraderie between the educators.

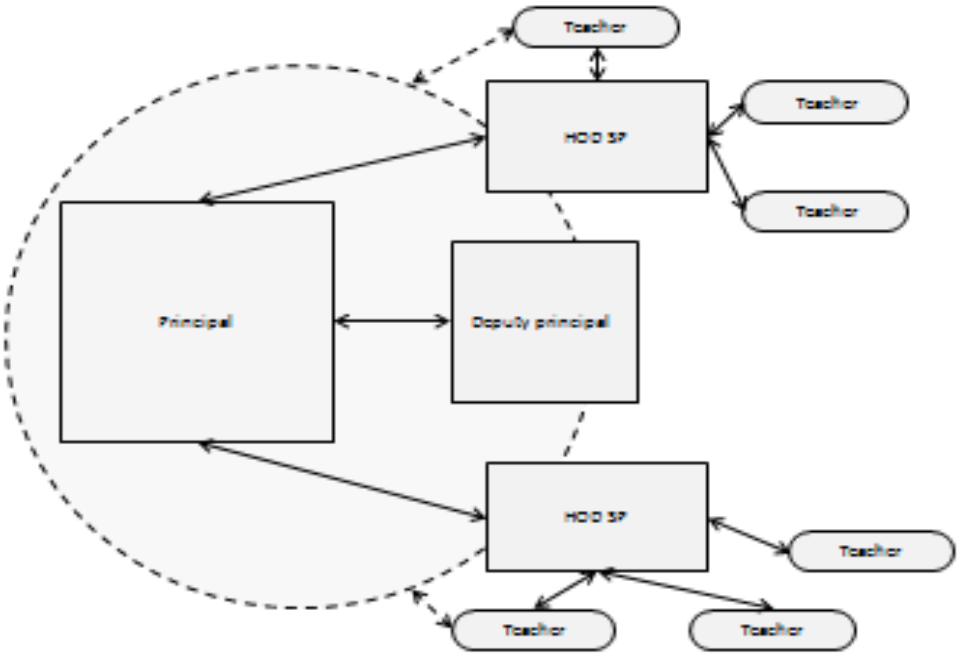
While the School B principal has clear ideas and sometimes presents with an authoritarian approach, the SMT appears to function collaboratively. According to one senior educator the SMT meetings which are held every morning and an official SMT meeting every Thursday helps them to find solutions to all their problems and “it’s always discussed together. The principal would never say “no she’s decided this, we always talk together, we discuss together, and we come up with solutions together. So it’s never one sided”. This is how the school functions and she emphasises that “it’s run very well” this system has been put into place “by the principal herself, who is very strong,” and with the help of previous SMT members. The “beauty” of the principal is encapsulated in that she “is always in for new challenges and new, different ideas and things”. She “never says “No, this is how it’s supposed to be done”. She is very accommodating and “always willing to listen”.

Further discussions in the SMT revolve around issues regarding children over “marks” or “discipline” and intervention strategies. Remediation is strongly recommended as the school provides extra classes for Mathematics and English. If remediation does not help the school “consults with parents and bring them on board”. They analyse the problem in depth and suggest alternative type of schooling if the problem is not resolved. School B has a “special education” class in Grade 4, which “is sort of a link between the junior and senior phase to help learners with transition issues. This is a small class where the educator works individually with learners to bring them up to par with what they are missing. They

try to catch up on English and Mathematics skills that maybe lacking, e.g. Phonics and reading, and then “introduce the other subjects slowly”.

In Grade 5 these learners are then put into the mainstream. They do this to keep the learners stable instead of “moving and chipping and changing” as the Grade 4s do. This instructional process gets monitored very closely by the educators and the leaders so that if “one thing goes wrong the parent gets notified by SMS”. The SP HOD states that parents are called to a meeting with all educators involved to discuss the learner’s progress and the steps to be taken. They get the parents on board so that they can monitor the learner at home and try “to improve whatever the learner is doing at school”. Where parents “neglect their child” the educator takes on a bigger role and more responsibility by doing “homework at school” as admitted by the educator.

Figure 5: Model C - Against all odds



Model C: “Against all Odds” depicts a supportive instructional leadership model that is adaptive, transparent and collegial. A successful township primary school in the heart of Gauteng, South Africa is very difficult to find but this school with a very

strong instructional leadership stance coming from the principal goes all out to succeed in its given context. There is a collective energy which helps drive the school forward and an unrelenting principal at the helm of the institution. Early in his career he knew he wanted to become a principal because he was passionate to make a difference in the lives of the children. As a principal for five years he is still establishing himself as a leader in developing staff. He is visionary and manages to draw people towards him and the school. His leadership style makes him the driving force behind the success of the school and its multitude of initiatives that the staff and learners are engaged in. His leadership is less distributed but not for the lacking of trying. The model depicts him as the central figure working as a team together with his DP, HODs and teachers.

The model depicts the camaraderie and how people are working as a team in this school. While I agree that there is much teamwork, I believe that more can be achieved at this school in terms of teaching and learning. My sense is that the staff relies too heavily on the principal as a leader to provide the influence, guidance and support. Mr. Simelane's pragmatic view about education and search for knowledge sets him apart from the other two principals in that he ensures that each learner is taken care of and provided for in their own individual way according to their own potential. He has very high expectations despite the context (as described earlier) and a positive attitude, which transfers easily to others. He has an agency and urgency that is played out before the staff and learners, which impacts on the core purpose of the school. He could easily be lost in the quagmire of challenges which he is surrounded with but his high level of energy, exceptional pedagogical and curriculum knowledge, expert instructional leadership ability and a capacity to develop and harness the best potential of each individual sets him apart from other principals observed in township schools.

Mr. Simelane, principal of School C displays strong democratic style of leadership and he is assertive and displays much authority. He shows "twenty-four hour" commitment to the school and learning and regards the school, as "the school is his baby". He has a strong management team, with HODs and teacher leaders who help drive the teaching and learning ethos of the school.

The educators say that he leads the school with respect, positivity, affirmations and "he is friendly to all".

Nqobile, the SP educator says, "he is a pillar, a real leader" and "it's easy to approach him". The other educators agree whole-heartedly with her. They say "he is a good leader because he leads by example". "He is always "early at school", he is not afraid of challenges, always encouraging and he will assist the educators anytime he is called". Thablie says "he always encourages his teachers to help one another and to respect each other". Nqobile says that he regards "teaching and learning the most important" aspect of the school, "assesses educators work and the strategies and methods which are new. He is not afraid to experiment. He likes the educators to be in class all the time and teaching. From observation it was noticed that he walks around the school often to make sure that teachers are teaching.

The educators declare that "he is democratic" and that "he doesn't give educators orders in a staff meeting". He asks them "to voice out their opinions and asks for ideas and suggestions". He "listens to them and never looks down on their opinions". Although, this may be so democracy can be defined in a number of different ways. When teachers use the term democratic leader they interpret the concept according to their own conceptions of democracy. The Foundation Phase educators in School C consider the principal a "motivator". Nqobile says that "he is good, he has the love of uniting all of (them) to bring them together" and in doing so "the one who is lazy gets motivated" to work. Thabile says that "he accepts ideas and he doesn't reject them". Elsie concurs with them and states that the principal helped her to overcome her "shyness and express herself so that she can discuss her problems with somebody". He has helped her grow personally and professionally.

Although Leithwood et al. (2006) define school leadership as a generic definition of "direction and influence" all three schools provide influence and direction at different levels. I argue that a principal needs to be conscious of the influence and direction they provide to their staff members in order to guide them so they are focused on the instructional core of the schools. While Weihrich and Koontzis conclude (1993) that leadership is the art or process of influencing other peoples' activities in the

organisation toward goal setting and goal achievement I would argue that the process of attaining the goal be the primary focus and all the leaders actions be directed towards this process. This is where the principals of School C and more especially School A should increase their efforts.

The term “instructional leadership” was derived from North America and it has been superseded in England with “learning centred leadership” (Bush, 2011 p.17). In South Africa we are moving from a teacher centred education to a learner-centered education. Many of our principals and teacher body come from the pre-apartheid structure of education where the teacher dominated the teaching/learning environment. This transition is very difficult for the teachers, and this is visible in all three schools to make this shift, thus education remains teacher centred and the benefits of learner centred education that helps to provide more student engagement with content and learning is lost.

Debevoise (1984) defined instructional leadership as "those actions that a principal takes or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning". This definition takes in to account two significant variables which are fundamental to leadership, namely, taking “actions” and the “promotion” of growth in student learning, which should be the explicit and implicit domain of the principal. The three dimensions of instructional leadership: Defining the School’s Mission, Managing the Instructional Program, and Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate as posited by Hallinger & Murphy (1985) are important tenets of instructional leadership. All three principals should have these as their central focus.

7.4 Context of Schools

Elmore (1995) stated that school reform efforts have been successful in those schools that need them the least. These schools are already having well-established processes and capacities in place. I agree with Elmore (2010) because if the schools in this study is analysed carefully the change and improvement in the two ex model C schools, School A and School B is more visible and ongoing. In school C, the school that requires change and improvements more, there is visible effort on the part of the principal but the effects are not completely discernible. In the South African school context the schools that need the most reform remain

stagnant and these are the many dysfunctional and historically disadvantaged schools because of their deprived socio economic challenges, lower levels of teaching and learning, unqualified or semi qualified staff, staff shortages, large numbers, standard of work and under-resourced schools (Fleisch, 2008).

Brophy (1998) found that effective instruction thrived in supportive environments and when the teacher spent most of the teaching time on curriculum related activities and on maintaining student's engagement in these activities then teaching was more effective. Elmore (2010) in his instructional core model agrees with this as he regards the three components of teacher, curriculum and student engagement as the core aspects for change and improvement. However, these components remain an enigma to most of the struggling primary schools in the country that are involved daily in fundamental issues of providing a meal for children and a suitable classroom environment. School C is a perfect example of a school working against all odds to overcome hunger issues, poverty, child headed homes, orphaned children and then to concentrate on what is happening in the classroom with the learners.

7.5 Roles and responsibilities of Principals

Although the authority of the principal to manage teaching and learning was fast tracked through the formation of the School Management Teams (SMT) in the 1996 South African Schools Act the principals of all three schools are struggling to become accountable mainly for learner achievement, irrespective of her/him teaching the curriculum or not, for different reasons. Their roles require them to lead and manage all aspects of the school and make instruction the top priority.

Instructional leadership is "a paramount dimension of leadership" (Bush and Glover, 2003) which affects the school's core activities of teaching and learning. You can only affect student learning only if your focus is on the desktop of the student.

The principal's role as instructional leader should be thus exercised 'with' others as in distributive leadership and not 'over' others. Leithwood (2004) state that leadership as "instructional leadership," encourages a focus on improving the classroom practices of teachers as the direction for the school.

In South Africa the purpose of SASP (2005b p 5) was to “provide information to all school stakeholders about what is expected regarding the role of the principal” and I argue that principals are not sure of their roles if they have not realised that instructional leadership is their core business and all their actions and efforts should be directed towards improving teaching and learning. Instructional leadership is the core to SASP.

While the principal of School A is not aware of his role, the principal of School B has long realized her role and is consciously directing all her efforts in the correct direction. School C on the other hand is trying very hard but is hampered by the huge contextual challenges the school faces.

Although Sergiovanni and Starratt (1998), Mitchell and Castle (2005) assert that the educational role of the principal is more appropriately configured as a facilitator of the teaching and learning process than as the one solely in-charge in deciding whatever goes on in the school environment, the principal must be the driver of the process and this is what happens in School B.

Blasé and Blasé (1999) share this view, arguing that the primary instructional responsibility of school principals should be to promote professional dialogue among their instructional staff.

Hallinger (2005) accentuates that the roles and responsibilities of a primary school leader are informed by a theory of learning that starts with an assumption “that the principal should be an instructional leader” (Hallinger, 2005).

While Bush and Glover (2004) contend that, “the core purpose of principalship is to provide leadership and management in all areas of the school to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning takes place and which promotes the highest possible standards of learner achievement,” (Bush & Glover, 2004, p 7) it is questionable whether the instructional leader will be able to attain this in all schools. The tasks that they envisage for principals require each principal to focus strongly on managing teaching and learning by undertaking the following activities to influence learner achievement:

- Oversee the curriculum across the school;
- Ensure that the lesson takes place
- Evaluate the learners' performance through scrutiny of examination results and internal assessment;
- Monitor the work of the HOD's through scrutiny of their work plans and portfolios;
- Ensure that the HODs monitor the work of educators within their learning areas;
- Arrange a programme of class visits followed up by feedback to educators; and
- Ensure the availability of appropriate learning and teaching support material.

Bush and Glover (2009)

Because schools in South Africa are transitioning from an exclusive education system that took greater care for the white populace to an education system equal for all, the country requires interventions of mammoth proportions to reach their desired goals. It is with these challenges as a frame of reference that the case schools should be viewed. Although they cannot undertake every activity fully, all three principals are trying very hard to fulfill their duties.

The three models show how the principals of all three schools lead the instructional core. Principle 1 of the instructional core states, "increases in student learning occur only as a consequence of improvements in the level of content, teachers' knowledge and skill, and student engagement" (City et al, 2010 p 24).

The ANA results of all three schools reveal how students could have been engaged with the tasks in their learning and how their improved performance are reflected through the results of the standardised tests. The learners seem to have engaged very well with their learning and thus with the curriculum although the ANA results will not give a true reflection of teaching and learning taking place in the classroom. A school can teach to tests and test exemplars and in so doing ignore the curriculum thus the results may be portrayed as above average but there may be gaps in the learner's learning. There may be disparity between the tests and the curriculum and thus the curriculum may be neglected.

In School A the pedagogical content knowledge of the HODs as instructional leaders are well grounded in CAPS and they are well versed in methodology. The Department of Education has used the HOD and teacher leaders from School A to train and lead other schools in the district with the new curriculum. The principal has a high level of trust in the HODs. The HOD's constant supervision and direction of educators in their phases allows the educators to teach to the set curriculum.

What was evident in School A was the problem that the principal has very little authority over the teachers and that there was a division between the Foundation Phase and Senior Primary educators. The break in communication affected the teaching and learning and presented a huge challenge in teaching and pedagogy. Extrapolating from the Model A (p 124) we can see that there is a fracture between the divisions and between the principal and the HODs that makes the SMT of the school dysfunctional. The instructional core model helps us think about school change and improvement. If the school does not look at the changes that are required in order to implement curriculum delivery and make in the tasks then student engagement is affected and improvement is hindered. Since the principal has neglected to take on his instructional leadership role and engage with the HODs and educator change and improvement is hampered in School A.

The same could be said about School B, where the educators are highly experienced and properly trained. Their pedagogical content knowledge is high and they do not rely on training to familiarise themselves to the new curriculum. They take it upon themselves to read and analyse the documents sent to them and begin with implementation as soon as possible. Educators from this school were also drawn to facilitate training in their school districts.

In School B the School Management Team (SMT) monitors curriculum very closely. The Foundation Phase educators and the Senior Phase educators work together for the benefit of the learners and Mrs. Alexander is "forthright and direct" to handle any challenges with regards to instruction.

In School C the picture is slightly different. The educators are very well experienced and some are close to retirement but these educators were trained and taught in the former education system during apartheid where inferior education was allotted

to the Black people of the country. These educators were then plunged into a democratic dispensation and expected to immerse themselves into an integrated education system without any formal retraining and expected to teach and deliver several changing curriculums in the past twenty years. According to the principal many of them are not completely confident and try their very best to educate the learners in their classroom. Although the learners have performed well in the ANA test and this attests to quality learning taking place, the educators themselves feel that to improve teaching and learning their pedagogical content knowledge and pedagogy can be improved upon. There is a dissonance between the idea of content and what the HODs and educators perceive about the content therefore they resort to using DVD lessons and other media to compensate for the deficits they experience.

School C has an instructional team to monitor curriculum delivery. The teachers say that they believe in supporting each other and inspiring each other to achieve greater heights.

We can see that the fourth principle underlying the IC theory state that “tasks predict performance”. Our schools often talk about higher order thinking skills, but too often schools in South Africa continue to teach in a sequential, teacher centered approach. How can the students learn higher order thinking skills in this way? Thinking of the garden as and the various ways students could engage with it, as mentioned in Chapter 2 demonstrates how this complex set of tasks could be used to help students master higher order complex thinking. Many project based learning tasks can allow teachers to accomplish the development of critical and higher order thinking skills.

This particular principle is pertinent for all schools. If teachers do not get learners to engage in their learning by thinking about their tasks then learning is superficial and higher order thinking is not promoted. While the teachers in School A are strong in pedagogy, classroom delivery and teaching and the HODs are strong in instructional leadership, the transition of learners from Grade 3 to Grade 4 and the breakdown of communication between these educators is noted by the participants as the source of breakdown between Grade 4 teachers who struggle to work with some of the learners.

Grade 4 educators complained that the Grade 4 learners “do not know their timetables” when they get to them. This is an indication that even if the Grade 3 teacher taught the multiplication tables it was not taught with understanding and application which is the higher order thinking that is required and expected by the grade 4 educator so that the child is able to apply what s/he learnt. It can then be questioned as to what type of teaching took place in Grade 3. Is teaching still by rote and teacher-centred or where learners given tasks were they could apply the concepts and skills taught? What does the instructional leader do to encourage the use of tasks that develop higher order thinking? The HOD explains that the principal did not investigate the instructional practice of the Grade 3 teachers but asked the Grade 4 teachers to teach them. This shows hindsight on behalf of the principal as it was an excellent opportunity to address important instructional practices with those educators.

In School B teachers are left to concentrate on their teaching in the classroom. The principal takes a lead as an instructional leader by communicating about instructional practice every morning in the SMT and staff meetings. When it comes to specific tasks she not only involves herself with training the learners herself as in the Eisteddfod but this poetry task involved high level engagement on the part of the students. This task was allocated to all teachers to participate in. By engaging in this task and other tasks throughout the year such as the weekly assembly, Easter egg drive, litter campaign and the choir the principal shows that learning can be taken out of the classroom and those opportunities are used to develop higher order thinking and learning not only. This modeling of her involvement in teaching is something that can be emulated by the educators in the classroom in their everyday tasks and takes the holistic learning of the learner.

7.6 Leadership Behaviours

I agree with Rutherford (1985) who came up with a list of four leadership behaviours of effective principals and regard them as very important for instructional leadership. “Focusing on students and their needs” and “translating this for their schools and expectations for their teachers, students, and administrators” are important behaviours that principals need to develop and project at all times. To “continuously monitor progress” is equally important but each of the

three schools does not have enough staff to accomplish these tasks thoroughly. The principal of School B and School C “intervene in a supportive or corrective manner when this seems necessary” (Rutherford, 1985)

Leithwood (1994) reinforces this idea of instructional leadership being a series of behaivours that is designed to affect classroom instruction.

Blasé and Blasé’s (1998) research of 800 principals, shows that effective instructional leadership comprises three aspects of “talking with teachers” that is promoted in School B and School C; “promoting professional teachers professional growth” which is advanced in all three case study schools and “fostering teacher reflection” which is not wholly developed in School C where the teachers find it difficult to understand the CAPS document.

Brophy (1986) found that certain behaivours of teachers, such as understanding the curriculum, using academic objectives of differentiated pacing of instruction based on content and curriculum were helpful to improve student learning.

Linked to behaviours is the important function of developing and fostering leadership relationships with each individual that will impact positively in the classroom. Daresh (1989, p. 216) identified participation in leadership, provision of support for instruction, the promotion of a sense of vision and resourcefulness as behavioural instances where the principal exercises huge influences and forms relationships with people to enlist positive actions or responses. In order to do this Dean (1991, p. 110) believes that ideally the principal needs to be a person who makes good relationships easily, is tactful and diplomatic, sympathetic with colleagues but clear sighted about their needs. Principals therefore need to have certain attitudes, believes, values and dispositions to continuously get this response from the teachers. Both the principals of School B and School C show signs of the behaviour that is called for but it is difficult to sustain if the morale of teachers is low. School A principal’s behaviour reveals how teachers become negative to the stance he takes and lose interest in his involvement and the relationships that they foster.

In this light, Petersen describes instructional leadership as a professional relationship involving school leaders and teachers – an alliance where the leaders assume a supportive role and think of others as constituents.

In School B and school C the Deputy Principals of the each school shares a very supportive relationship with the two leaders and can take over his position when he is not there. They recognise the principals as “true leaders” and model themselves on their leadership.

The SP educator, from School C states that “teaching here is interesting and we do a lot of sharing...whenever there is a challenge, it’s simple to get help”. They have “a good relationship with the principal and other educators. There is a lot of respect between the SP and FP educators even though they are “different people, different personalities, different abilities and different levels of relationship”. Thabile agrees with this and says that “this is a very good school, people are on good terms, and we motivate each other because they believe that no individual knows everything, so they learn from each other”.

7.7 Collaboration with SMT members

Democratic decisions in schools are difficult as observed from the three schools. Teachers and other stakeholders wait for the principal to make all the decisions and discuss these in meetings and then teachers follow them. In School C the principal tries hard to engage the staff in decision making and making their views count. The fact that he tells them what to do and they are fine with that their sense of being a “democratic” leader differs to the democracy prevailing in School B. Mrs. Alexander on the other hand is in charge and she is trying to create people who can argue with her or come up with their own ideas and may debate these ideas because the ideas are not up to standards. Her standards are incredibly high, as she does not see her teachers at 8 and 9 according to the IQMS rating scale. She sees them as 4s and 5s and she sees the potential in the teachers. She would not tell them this because she does not want to demotivate them. She wants them to be better. She has an interesting optimistic approach.

The SMT of school B is an open forum where educators are allowed to bring up any complaint or discussion. The Grade leaders meet in a separate meeting with the HODs every Friday morning and discuss curricular issues and other matters, which "they don't want to mention in front of everybody. They work collaboratively to work with these issues by other members of the SMT.

Disputes between educators are addressed by the next in command, which are the HODs, then the DP and the last resort would be the principal. The Foundation Phase HOD stated that the SMT meeting also revolved around "private issues" and decisions to "go on class visits" are made to help "the person with the problem". All that is discussed at this meeting is "kept private". The school leadership prefers confidentiality and the integrity of individuals are considered as important. "Everything comes out in the open" and problems are addressed in a professional manner following protocol. For example, when we met, the principal was busy working with an educator who has a drinking problem and the matter had been discussed in the meeting.

Communication with each other is easy and very little misunderstanding occurs in School B as every discussion is written on the staffroom board and everything is recorded as minutes. The principal sees to it that the minutes are left out for everyone to read and be aware of their duties and the discussions that have taken place. Everyone is allowed to communicate different ideas and solutions.

The SP HOD stated that to build and develop relationships they have teambuilding exercises like soccer or cricket once a term so that the leadership and educators are "forced to have that little relationship with either the SP or FP educators.

The Deputy Principal of School C who aspired to the principalship of this school agreed with the HODs and educators about the principal but spoke about experiencing some "resistance" from the educators. As an instructional leader she used all three styles of leadership but she still met up with "challenges". She is tenacious and says she "won't give up" as she seeks the help of the principal. "As a leader you lose your popularity" and that's what she experienced as she makes some demands on the educators. She liaised with other deputy principals and as the educators got used to her it seemed to be getting better. She admitted as a new

deputy principal the principal was “mentoring” her because it was his previous position that she had taken.

It is very conspicuous that both the Deputy Principal and Principal progressed from being a teacher to HOD to DP and Principal respectively in the same school.

The Intermediate Phase HOD says his role is to assist the principal with leading instruction in the classroom and he makes sure “that the culture of learning and teaching is happening”.

The principals of School B and School C display distributive styles of leadership. According to Spillane distributed leadership perspective recognises that there are multiple leaders (Spillane et al., 2004). A distributed model of leadership focuses upon the interactions, rather than the actions, of those in formal and informal leadership roles. It is primarily concerned with leadership practice and how leadership influences organisational and instructional improvement (Spillane, 2006).

A distributed perspective on leadership acknowledges the work of all individuals who contribute to leadership practice, whether or not they are formally designated or defined as leaders (Hargreaves, 2007). Distributive leadership is intentional. It assumes a set of practices that are, “enacted by people at all levels rather than at a set of personal characteristics and attributes located in people at the top” (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003, as cited in Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 28).

Distributive leadership takes place in School B but is difficult to display in School C because the teachers relies heavily on the principal for basic pedagogic content knowledge and cannot make decisions on their own because they are not confident enough. The principal can share the responsibility of managing teaching and learning together with the deputy principals, HODs, and the educators only if they are capable of making their own decisions.

Spillane et al. (2005) postulate that school instructional leadership “should best be understood as distributed practices stretched over the school’s social and situational contexts”. Distributed leadership is not evident in School A because the principal of this school was not engaged with the actual teaching and learning at his school and had not “distributed” leadership and decision making. The instructional

leadership role was taken over by the two HODs. The actions of the principal had made it essential for the other leaders to emerge and take charge of instruction as well as other activities around instruction. The HOD speaks about the principal being slow to address and disassociated himself with the problem of a parent that affected some educators of the school. Distributing leadership does not mean giving his responsibility away and not being accountable and this is what Mr. John's instructional leadership was contributing to.

We can see that School A principal's leadership cannot be regarded as distributive because what he does and what the other principals practice as distributive leadership is different. He can be regarded as a caretaker principal and to some extent a following a dispersed style of leadership. Because the two HODs were forced to take over the instructional leadership responsibility and display the hallmarks of distribution it does not mean that the principal used the distributive style. Practice is disengaged as shown in the model. They have found ways and means of managing because of the deficiency of the principal by engaging grade leaders and subject heads.

On the other hand, by looking at the achievements of School A in test results a counter argument can be constructed on the benefits of leadership dispersal as mentioned in the literature review (p 30). Leadership dispersal according to Bolden et al (2003) is a less formalised model of leadership where the leaders' role is dissociated from the organisational hierarchy. They argue that in this type of leadership the individuals at all levels in the organization and in all roles can exert leadership influence over their colleagues and thus influence overall leadership of the organization.

The context of school A is a well established school system that is based on traditional practices, strong and experienced teachers with good knowledge of the curriculum and a skilled instructional leaders who can coach and mentor teachers that they are directly responsible for. This context allows for dispersed leadership where followers take on important leadership roles exclusive of the hierarchical head and where the instructional core is not affected to such a large extent.

School B portrays the distributed leadership style in a more significant way where the staff members are encouraged to participate collaboratively at meetings and take up leadership roles for specific projects and activities.

In School C leadership is supportive to members of the SMT and educators by the team. This results in a conducive working environment and a willingness to work with each other and learn from each other as well. The leadership style is based on understanding, pride, collaboration, informative (informs knowledge base of educators) dedication and devotion to duty and democratic decision-making. Allows for leadership training and opens doors for continuous development and engagement.

These are different as the model portrays that School B principal has a strong hold of each educator and School C principal is more congenial and friendly and draws the people towards him. This may be attributed to the context that they find themselves in. While School B has a bigger student population than School C, far more educators, it has a strong history of a high performing school for many years with highly qualified, confident educators with quality classroom practice. School B also has been a school of choice. The principals of each school had to take these factors into account in their leadership of their schools. School C principal uses a supportive leadership style to try to improve the quality of teaching and learning in a charismatic way to make up for the deficits he encounters in the township context.

The HODs agree that the SMT of School C works as a functioning team and meets every two weeks “to discuss the progress of the learners, secondly the progress of the educators, how they are working and then the curriculum, the “duties of the educators, how to support learners through the SBST”. The SMT then meets with the educators either individually or in a staff meeting to discuss and provide support to them. Reports are written out and given to each educator. The educators are very “co-operative”.

One challenge that does occur in School C is that “the older educators do not want to be challenged by the younger ones” as they are not open to new ideas and suggestions. The HOD then goes to the principal for guidance and works together

with him. This creates a role conflict for the HOD. The school also has a very supportive School Governing Body and works well with the SMT of the school.

The educators in School A and School B were more articulate, more opinionated, more adventurous in their teaching, and communicate about their pedagogy more easily when they spoke in the focus group interviews. In School C the educators were not so forthcoming, more acquiescent and spoke about their lack of pedagogic skills and pedagogic knowledge with a result they had a number of intervention strategies to help them improve. The principal tried to get help from various outside organisations to compensate for their deficiency. Although Principal B leads a number of high performing people who have ideals and high standards they still require instructional support in their classroom practice. School C needs more nuanced, “hand held”, supportive leadership approach so that teachers are developed regularly to improve their pedagogy.

It is easier for School B leadership to work in a collaborative environment with the SMT as all the members can contribute and interact on an even footing. It is different for School C, as the Principal has to constantly come up with ideas to influence and challenge the others to follow. The principal of School B sets balanced parameters within which the educators can maneuver and participate in decision-making and then she can concentrate on issues of details such as the assembly and litter. The principal of School A is mainly absent and uninvolved from distributing leadership to staff members.

7.8 Curriculum

The curriculum and how it is implemented plays a significant part in determining the instructional practices of the principal in School B. It is the central focus of the school through which the activities of the school revolve around. It begins with the allocations of subjects to educators in a harmonious way. This process begins towards the end of the previous year. Each educator is given a form to indicate his or her preferences and dislikes for subjects and then the team discusses all the feedback from each educator. “Tensions are high during this time” and the leadership of the schoolwork collaboratively to come up with a timetable that is

mostly pleasing to all. However if an educator decides to leave at the end of the year and a replacement educator is sent then changes have to be made. The principal is part of the entire process so she is aware of each educator's allocation.

According to the FP HOD of School B the teachers were trying "to find (their) feet with CAPS" and were trying to implement the "7 plan scale" which is "a little bit confusing" for some. They are proactive and are trying to make sense of CAPS although the FP educators were not "very impressed" with the training they received which was "basically a read through your document and make yourself familiar with the content". She says that under CAPS she does not anticipate this school to change its pedagogy much but by "using different ways to bring about understanding" is encouraged.

Elmore's (2010) instructional core states that the task should be determined around the three components of content, teacher and student engagement and if School B is thinking about their tasks and using the tasks to improve engagement in the classroom then CAPS is helping them focus on the instructional core.

Educators attended CAPs training and they were going to teach the other educators from their district on how to "actually implement CAPs in the classroom" and how to teach "Natural Science, Science and Technology". According to these educators CAPs has helped to "repackage" the old curriculum "they've taken away the old book, they've summarised it, made it easier to understand, easier to use and easier to implement".

School B has a positive view of the curriculum changes that allows for more "intervention strategies" and "multi level teaching" within the classroom. If they are applying skills for teaching at multilevel, for example the use of group work and differentiated tasks especially in big classes, then CAPS is allowing learners to engage with the learning in more depth. The CAPS is therefore used to make a difference to the engagement of learners. Although CAPs is far more "prescriptive" they feel it is good as they are allowed to add their "own thing" if required. The curriculum is "flexible to a certain extent". The curriculum is now in more detail, as there is more substance in terms of content and depth to cover. This means that the content knowledge of educators must improve to incorporate the detail.

In School B the two HODs work in collaboration with each other in the Foundation Phase and share the duties. They share the grades and select their workbooks and textbooks. They monitor grade meetings and the discussions that take place and then have a Foundation Phase general meeting where they tackle issues collectively and constantly keeping the educators on track. Assistants appointed by the SGB to help manage the learning environment help big classes of forty learners in a class.

Improvement in terms of instruction with regards to quality delivery and quality teaching requires the instructional leaders of School B to have “more subject meetings, more communication” as “one meeting per term is too little. It would also help to have more orientation meetings with parents especially “with Grade 7 and Grade 4 parents”. The adjustments required by the children in these particular grades and the transition from FP to SP and SP to high school necessitate much preparation and “a little bit of an attitude change of the learners” and require the assistance of some parents. There are counselors on the school premises to assist with challenges that learners’ experience.

The teachers say they are frustrated with the many curriculum changes and one stated of them “first it is OBE, then it’s National this, then that”. She still believes “in the old way...you have your syllabus and you know exactly what to do from point a to b”... “not all this rubbish and funny things like ASes [Assessment Standards]and LOs [Learning Outcomes]. Old school for me – its reading, writing and arithmetic”... “not how to boil soap but rather how to add 1 and 1”.

The FP HOD of School B prefers the Foundations for Learning programme for newer educators who have little knowledge about the curriculum, the content and the methodology to be used in the delivery of the lessons. She, however, is very critical of the Gauteng Province Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) that she calls “an idiots manual” which has such explicit instructions for educators who are incapable of thinking for themselves. They do not need GPLMS because according to the HODs they do more and they have different challenges.

The educators concur that they were not “CAPs trained” but attended “a meeting”. They did much of their “own reading, research and finding out from other schools”.

School A is familiar with CAPS. HODs embrace it. Here the principal is not fully aware of CAPS and leaves its implementation to the two “kings” of curriculum to train, monitor and implement CAPS.

The educators in School C have the documents but they are following GPLMS but they say that they are afraid to unpack the document because they find it “confusing”. School C is a GPLMS school and educators are implementing this programme fully in their classrooms. The educators felt that they needed to incorporate good instruction. They were not implementing structured teaching and learning before and the GPLMS provided structure together with instructional coaching for the first time. By using GPLMS the teachers feel that they are getting greater guidance, coaches and more structure to follow.

In School C the teachers have utilized the GPLMS because the principal tried to skill the teachers in areas that he thought were lacking such as pedagogy and pedagogic content knowledge so that they will be able to engage better with the learners. The GPLMS offered systematic planning, content to be covered, and highly structured methodology to be followed. They were also given learning objectives to understand what they were teaching and the pedagogic skills that were required.

The teachers appreciated this intervention as they felt more supported with an easy reference documents and the coaches that were provided which helped them engage better with the learners. The principal is seen as giving teachers the skills that they do not have. The principal understands this because it is going to help the learners.

My contention with this is that if you follow the mechanics of what is stipulated you may not understand and engage with it fully. This is problematic as the principal assumes that the teachers are doing well. However, the transfer from the formulaic presentation of ideas to an embodiment of ideas needs coaching for a number of years. The educators need to take ownership of it and then integrate these ideas within their own work and generate their own thinking. The leader plays a vital role in assisting educators to reach this level. The educators went for CAPs training and are currently implementing the changes to their curriculum and planning. The

school also followed the READ programme to assist children with reading. The programme helped with the school being well resourced in terms of books and a library.

School C principal understands that the teachers are struggling. As a leader he is trying very hard but he is not reaching the targets/goals or the bigger vision of the school because of other factors such as teachers understanding, language problems, pedagogic content knowledge, pedagogy and teacher knowledge.

The Foundation Phase HOD states that the curriculum planning is done at the end of the year for the following year. Educators receive their allocations and are in readiness to start teaching with their timetables and curriculum and assessment plans. The Intermediate Phase HOD explains that the curriculum is discussed at subject meetings that are held regularly. Educators get an opportunity to discuss what they are teaching and how they are teaching various topics. He admits that the learners do not have problems of transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4 as the School Based Support Team (SBST) offers support for learners.

The HOD says that they equip educators to deliver the curriculum well by providing the necessary resources such as games, maps and other visual aids. In terms of resources like reading books the school does not have enough and the educators have to work with what they have by improvising. With the help of READ and other organisations the principal was able to secure books and stock a library for the learners. The school also has some helpful visual aids in the form of televisions and computers and through the Coca Cola Foundation managed to get a big plasma screen television and some LCD television. They have a number of DVDs and they've partnered with Discovery Channel on DSTV. The educators are trained to use all the equipment.

Although the language of instruction is English from Grade 4 the school has enforced the teaching of English as an additional language from Grade 1 that makes the learners more proficient in two languages in Foundation Phase.

The level of engagement with CAPS in the three schools is different. There are different challenges with the use of CAPS in each of the schools.

7.9 Classroom interaction

The FP educators in School B acknowledge/confess that the Foundation Phase teaching is “very important as in a “primary school, you get to realise that this is where it all begins and it is very important that the foundation is properly laid here for them to make it in school”. This judgment and belief is crucial for the leadership of a primary school to recognise and acknowledge. The education system of any school in the country and their ultimate expectations and results rests on how students achieve and learn in each phase of their schooling career thus the foundation of learning should be of paramount importance to create a nation of hungry learners.

The principals and other instructional leaders of the school work together to focus on quality instruction in the classroom. The educators need a vast amount of ongoing development to improve their level of practice in whatever phase they are teaching. Micelle from School B confesses that her practice in a township school before coming to this school fell short of providing the necessary skills to her learners but in this school she “feels like (she) is fulfilling her role as an educator. She says in a township school you “get away with a lot such as late coming, absenteeism and unattended classrooms, not preparing or doing your work”.

The educators in this school admit that they learn from each other by viewing their teaching and by talking to each other about rigorous practice in the classroom. They teach other “things like letter length and phonics” and seek other advice constantly. The instructional leaders encourage this behaviour and the educators are always willing to share their knowledge to help improve classroom practice and student learning. The relationship that educators and SMTs share is essential for a school to function and succeed.

In a prep meeting Thelma agrees that they “help each other with concepts that they are struggling to teach” and they “are free to come to each other’s class to see how another teacher teaches a concept better than her”. She concurs that “working [and actually teaching the little ones], you become fulfilled that “Oh my God, there is this improvement” and there are no gaps in their learning. Chantal reiterates that seeing

the child who is very weak “the light is turned on...or the light is turning on” is the biggest joy.

The educators regard the principal as “a real mix...both authoritarian and democratic...because everyday she’s different”. They say that with her in charge “they really work”. “She’s a driving force...and a good leader”. “She makes things happen...and she inspires them... and that’s what she wants from everyone”.

They see her as “our leader” and the relationship that they share with her is a professional one. However, Micelle feels that “there could be an improvement in relationships” because when a change is requested in their meetings “it is not always considered” despite giving a number of reasons.

In School C there is much peer support and sharing with colleagues and the HODs to improve their classroom practice. The Foundation Phase educators admit that the educators share ideas and “counsel each other”. Naledi says that “the educators are friendly and they are willing to help if needed” and she will approach them if she needs instructional guidance. Many of the educators are very experienced and close to retirement. Teamwork helps the educators grow and develop their weak areas. Thabile emphasises that “there is guidance in our school, there is love in our school, there is motivation in our school and there is teamwork”.

The Foundation Phase HOD says that she encourages group work in her classes, as the numbers are too big for class teaching. The Grade 1 and Grade 2 classes each have 60 learners or more in their classes. She says learners “are grouped in such a way that she knows exactly what to do with each group...but it is difficult”. She uses the fast learners to help the ones that are struggling. In terms of resources the HOD makes learners share books, as they do not have sufficient for every learner.

While Leithwood et al (2010) survey results of schools indicate that “focused instruction” showed variation in student achievements and “this approach to instruction was most sensitive to school leader influence” it is difficult to attain in the classrooms because of poor classroom management, discipline problems and concentrating on basic knowledge and skills development. School C has close to

sixty-one learners in one class. Situations like these are prevalent in many schools in our country and make it impossible for teachers to teach basic knowledge let alone concentrate on “focused instruction”.

7.10 Monitoring

The SASP (2005b p 5) suggests that principal use better recruitment and selection procedures. The whole process of recruitment and selection as observed by the researcher is based on the educators who are available for selection but too few are trained every year to meet the needs of the country. Although the principal is an ex-officio member of the selection process the selection panel is made up of members who may select according their own bias and the final selection is made by the Department of Education based on the recommendations. The school ends up appointing someone who may not fill the post adequately. The educator’s often remain in the position for many years even if they are unsuitable for the position.

This policy of recruitment and selection poses challenges as many personnel take up leadership promotion posts for various reasons. School C, for example, require HODs and educators who are pedagogically strong and innovative to make a difference to the instructional core but the main body of the teaching cohort remains the same for many years.

Tomlinson (2004 pp 133-134) regards the setting of performance targets as one of the core roles of the management team. Performance management thus also involves provision of feedback to the monitored people and the determination of the needed improvements where and when possible. Coleman, *et al.* (2003 p 84) claim that such monitoring can promote people’s accountability for their work, provided that it is conducted in a structured and well-managed manner. They recommend the drafting of monitoring policies, which clarify aspects such as quality teaching, effective learning, assessment and recordkeeping.

In School B, according to the HODs, monitoring is done by moderation “within the different grades” and “within the different subjects”. The Grade heads check the “mark books, files and small book control”. The subject head also does the same. “There is book controls, monitoring of assessments, there’s post and pre moderation”. There is constant monitoring throughout the year. The leadership of

the school knows exactly what is happening in the school in terms of teaching and learning. The quality of curriculum delivery is monitored very closely. Educators are encouraged to improve pedagogy by using practical situations and experiential learning. Every opportunity is used to improve the quality of learning and the quality of teaching.

However, the educators of the other two case schools stated that much of their supervision is conduct for IQMS purposes and they receive a report where improvements are recommended with timeframes to make sure that they have attended to it. In School C the district and the SMT do monitoring of educators work. The educators are given feedback and then the HODs and principals call individual educators for discussion on areas of development.

The FP HOD says that the school has set up a School Based Support Team to "monitor the children who have problems in learning". If the school fails to address the problem the learner is referred to the District where additional help could be sought. The school enjoys a healthy relationship with the District. They also have a separate "school assessment team" which deals specifically with assessments so that "tasks are monitored for suitability and standardization". Interventions come in the form of setting up Saturday classes were educators take the initiative to helping learners with learning difficulties.

The Deputy Principal of School C explains that class visits were conducted to see "how the educators are delivering lessons", which is not real monitoring. The monitoring panel then identifies the development aspects of each educator. The School Development Team then draws a development plan. This Intermediate Phase HOD is involved in checking the educators' registers, moderates and checks examination scripts and work with the DP and the educators' performance. Monitoring takes place by "checking educators' files with work schedules".

While Earley and Bubb (2004 pp 77-82) recommend that data collection instruments, such as questionnaires, observations, participants' portfolios and interviews be used for progress monitoring purposes and stress the importance of regular and constructive feedback to the monitored and evaluated parties, Rhodes, et al. (2004 pp 25-31) promote classroom observation as a form of performance

management. These may be essential for performance management but are very hard to achieve in any school. The staff of all three schools has a full teaching load and daily schedule. HODs teach a full day with one or two hours of management time that it is impossible to do justice with performance management.

7.11 Professional development

The SASP (2005b p5) identifies “the basis of improved performance management and processes applicable to principals” and “the professional development needs of principals and aspiring principals.” (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007 p 439). Seyfarth (1999, p. 7) sees instructional leadership as an “electric merging of instructional supervision, curriculum development and staff development.”

The view is endorsed by Blasé and Blasé (1999) who argue that instructional leadership is a blend of tasks, such as shaping and communicating goals, supervising and evaluating instructional practices, developing and co-ordinating the curriculum, developing staff and evaluating progress in learner achievement.

However, Krajewski (1996) argues that instructional supervision is not entirely collaborative but is moving from control to collaboration because power differentials still exist between instructional leaders and teachers. Given the hierarchical nature of the South African school as an organisation and the SMT’s role of evaluation responsibilities the teachers find themselves in power play situations since in this relationship exists a strong element of power and judgment. In all three schools that were studied it was found that thorough supervision of the teachers work is not carried out because of time constraints, workloads and other interferences such as highly unionized teachers who sees their role as professionals and questions classroom visits.

Most of the supervision and class visits in all three schools are done because of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) which requires each teacher to be evaluated, a professional growth programme to be developed and then each teacher to be given a time frame to develop in those identified areas. However, professional development is then fragmented due to constraints in funding, service providers and trying to satisfy the structured options and individual need of educators.

Lambert's study (2003) found that teachers performing at a high level of personal and professional capacity tended to become involved in external opportunities, networks and graduate programmes. Similar types of opportunities should be available to all our educators to develop them on an ongoing basis. The principal of School B tries hard to implement developmental programmes with her teachers.

School B designs a "development plan" where educators that are "very weak gets on a form of some sort and we (HODs) write down exactly their weak points and how we're going to improve on them". Educators are also given the minutes of the meeting indicating their weaknesses and they sign to acknowledge that they have "listened and are aware of their "development areas" and have to try "out everything into practice" and when it is not done by the time suggested then they are made accountable for their actions or lack thereof. This is "ongoing" and support and guidance is given to those that require it and they are visited in the classroom more than once.

Older educators "don't appreciate it because they think that they've been teaching for many, many years and they know everything. This poses a problem but the HOD says that she needs to change her stance by being sensitive to the "educators needs" and their feelings by wording it in such a way that "they don't think that you are there to invade their teaching or their territory". "you may do so by giving suggestions on "how a worksheet can change" or by using some "new textbook". The approach of leadership must change to suit the purpose and the individual. Younger educators are more "willing" and "will do whatever you ask them to do". The instructional leaders will suggest workshops for educators to attend. It depends on the educator what development they may need.

A senior educator in School B specifies that "English is the learners' second or third language, concepts cannot be understood" so they have to do "a lot of visual work, you've got to give them things like measuring tapes ...as "language is the biggest barrier" to learning. They had to "lower the language for understanding" and make adjustments to their pedagogy by using the environment to make learning more meaningful. Much communication is encouraged between educators who take over new learners at the beginning of the year to understand each learner's potential and where he left off.

She indicated that the various changes pertaining to the curriculum had forced change in pedagogy and teaching style and when she finds it difficult to implement she is “always going back to the Grade heads and subject head” for guidance and support. Instructional teams provide instructional leadership and set up teams to assist with problems. Although much of her teaching is class teaching she is aware of the learners who are struggling and she gives them individual attention.

Thembi from the SP says that she “goes to anyone” for help but not so much to the principal. Shawne says that they “have a good team of educators at this school and the school is managed by a good principal”. The “focus is mainly on the academic side of the school and you are always expected to be busy and working”. Mary points out there is “a really great system of communication and that if you need to talk to somebody you can go to absolutely anybody”. She says that “we are valued as teachers in the school as much as we value our principal and management team”.

The HODs and the principal in School C identify areas of development. These are written into the minutes to formalise the discussion. The HOD says that the educator is given an option to select a peer to help develop them. Peer teaching and peer coaching are used and the educators are sent to various district workshops to help them improve. The HOD indicates that the educators are monitored for IQMS purposes as well and that they are given their professional growth forms which indicate their areas of growth.

In School C the Intermediate Phase HOD states that that when an educator has a problem “they will approach the DSG to monitor or do class visits and discover where the problem lies”. The PGP will indicate, “what areas he wants developed and also who must develop them – it can be the SMT, the principal or the district”. They will attend workshops arranged by the district, Sadtu or Naptosa. “Educators must attend courses and cluster meetings” and report to relevant educators and the principal when they are finished.

One method of developing teachers can be the use of teacher leaders who according to Lieberman et al state “teacher leaders gain credibility with their peers through their classroom practice” (2010, p. 665). However, Grant et al (n.d) in their

paper looked at this important debate in South Africa and found that teacher leadership was generally supported across the schools but the extent to which it operated in practice was limited.

7.12 School Culture and Vision

According to The South African Standards for School Leadership (SASSL, DoE, 2007), “the principal working with the School Management Team (SMT) and others has a primary responsibility to promote a successful learning culture within the school.” May and Supovitz (2011) argue that the scope of the principal’s leadership activities vary from school to school depending on the culture of the school and type of leadership

School B is a “functioning school” according to the HODs and “the children are learning, they are being assessed, they have an exam – so that’s mediating exactly what the vision is” and that is “to promote learning – so there’s a result at the end, they’re feeling confident and they’re feeling good about themselves”

Effective leadership from the SMT and more especially from the HODs is required when educators are not “properly trained”, when they “have conflicts with others and the SMT” and when “parents don’t get involved in the children’s well being” or when “children can’t read and write”.

Educators agree that the work ethos in this school is rigorous and hectic so much so that “you can be drowned by the workload”. Mary emphasises that “there’s a lot of hard work, but for me, the hard work that they put into school is so that the standard can be high and so that we do it for the children...they are passionate about education”. The passion is evident for Mary when she “looks on a child’s face when they finally understand something...when you’ve finally broken through”.

Many intervention strategies are put into place to assist learners and educators provide the best to all learners. A “granny programme” is implemented so that grandmothers come to the class and listen to reading. Grade 7 learners and other assistants are also used to listen to reading. The educators also agree that “they have very supportive parents” who are fully involved in their children’s learning.

School B starts with the “Lords Prayers and singing of Bible songs or religious songs”. They try to include other religions when an opportunity arises. Learners are encouraged to do charity work and mini counselors are appointed to take things to the poor. This indicates that the principal does not only consider learning in the classroom as important but also what happens outside as well. Values, morals and ethics are not forgotten. However this also shows that some of the habits and cultures that were inculcated in the previous educational dispensation still lingered on in the school although the environment and student body had changed drastically. Some of the ex model C, affluent, rich school behaviour was still practiced in School A and School B.

For example, in School B the HODs took a look at the “girls dressing, hair, neatness and cleanliness” in the assembly as these were considered as fundamental requirements of the school.

School C educators regard punctuality and being in the class as important criteria for good education. They have an assembly everyday where values, conduct and morals are spoken about. Educators are given turns to conduct the assembly and the principal is always present. Late coming is discouraged and the principal has taken it upon himself to stand by the school gate to monitor learners directly and educators indirectly.

One of the main challenges, educators admit, is the problem of discipline in the school. Nqobile blames the “government” for this as they have brought in “rights and everything”. They call parents to the school to help discipline their children if the educators fail to do so. Parents do respond very well but those that are required to come to school do not “respond”. The school has the benefit of coaches and psychologists to assist struggling learners. Hard work is the ethos of this school and educators says it is “tiring” at the end of a day. “Some days are good and some are bad when you meet undisciplined learners with parents who don’t respond”.

Although School C encounters the occasional discipline problems on the whole there is order, good discipline and a strong culture of teaching and learning which the principal built upon. Late coming and absenteeism is sorted out. The school has a strong sense of purpose and vision with strong values, morals, ethics and time on

task. Contact time is protected time for teaching. Some challenges exist in allocations and big numbers in the class. The Foundation Phase HOD states that she has sixty-one learners in her class and still has to see to the educators' needs and her Head of Department roles. This is a fundamental concern, as the number of learners in this class does not warrant focused instruction and teaching and learning become almost impossible. The instructional core is affected, as tasks set for this number of children is difficult to organise, control and monitor.

In addition she has to liaise very closely with the school principal to assign time for meetings with specific teachers and with the SMT. The principal has made some arrangements for her to be free to do administration work and supervision of educators.

7.13 Summary

The critical role of an instructional leader of a school is to manage the teaching and learning of a school, which is the core business of the school. If the principal does not fulfill this function in his capacity as the head of the core business then it is evident that the school is not functioning to its full potential. In these three case schools it was observed clearly that two principals were on the right track to practice instructional leadership while one principal was struggling. The models depicted earlier in this chapter clearly show this anomaly and how it affects the school. The themes that emerged in this chapter were used to show what impact the principal has in each school. The study set out to get the perception of the principals, HODs and educators on the influence of leadership in instruction for the purposes of higher achievement through quality teaching and learning.

The next and final chapter provides a summary of the salient points of the study. The summary section will present a global overview of the entire research report; provide a conclusion and implications of the study.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this research study was to understand the role that primary school principals play in instructional leadership and how instructional leadership can lead to effective teaching and learning. In order to accomplish this general aim the objectives were to:

- explore the different roles the school principals take in their schools
- explore how the primary school principal's work influences classroom practice.
- offer a reflection on the consequences of policies and practices for primary schools and the role of primary school principals in managing instructional improvement.

This final chapter summarizes the salient points of the study. The summary section will present a global overview of the entire research report. The important findings drawn from the literature and the response from the research sites in attempting to answer the research question will be presented in the summary of the important findings section. The conclusion highlights the relationship between the role of the principal and his/her influence on classroom practice.

8.2 Summary

8.2.1 Global view of the research report

Chapter 1 of the research study was concerned with defining the problem statement. In this chapter the researcher sets out the general and specific aims of the study. The study was initiated by the concern of poor performance, especially of primary schools in the country. The background was clearly defined and discussed. The chapter then gave a rationale of the study. The study hoped to add to the body of knowledge and the focus was instructional leadership.

Chapter 2 discussed the literature reviewed and in trying to answer the main question on the role of the principal as an instructional leader, local and

international literatures were examined. The literature started with the premise that effective instructional leadership in a primary school will lead to enhanced teaching and learning. The reviewed literature then discussed the theories of instructional leadership and the use of the instructional core to bring about desired change in instruction at the classroom level.

Chapter 3 explained in detail the methods that were used to explore the study, as well as the empirical investigation. The research design was used to explain and justify tools and key strategies in explaining the research methods, samples selected, research instruments, ethics, validity and reliability.

Chapter 4, 5 and 6 presented the data from School A, School B and School C respectively. The data was in accordance with the research question and sub-questions in relation to the principals' role of instructional leadership in the three primary schools.

Chapter 7 dealt with the discussion of the findings and a cross case analysis was done. Literature reviewed was discussed in the discussion chapter.

8.2.2 Findings from Literature review

The reviewed literature revealed that there is a strong relationship between the instructional leadership of the principal and success in the classroom and that effective instructional leadership is central to enhancing teaching and learning in a school to improve student academic outcomes. It also revealed that there is a strong correlation between the instructional leadership behaviours of school principals and the relationship of SMT and other staff members to significantly enhance the teacher's commitment, professional involvement and innovativeness and to the overall improvement of student results.

8.3 Conclusions

Focusing on instructional leadership relations between principals, other School Management Team (SMT) members and teachers, this study examined the potential of their active collaboration around instructional matters to enhance the quality of teaching and student achievement. The analysis was grounded in one conception of leadership-instructional and the conceptual framework of this study

located instructional leadership within the context of the instructional core and the role of the school principal and SMT in the learning context. The main question driving my research was: How does the work of the school principal influence classroom practice of teachers?

The main aims were to examine how the primary school principal lead and influenced classroom practice to encourage improved academic performance and how the principal and other senior management team members worked together to communicate with, monitor and evaluate teachers. The research objective was to understand the role that primary school principals play in instructional leadership and how instructional leadership can lead to effective teaching and learning. My goals were to characterize “good practices” for instructional leadership; and to identify strategies used by the school principals that show how their work influences classroom practice. Further, the study investigated how teachers perceived and interpreted the actions of the school leadership around their own classroom practice. It looked into the particular behaviours, relationships and interactions between the principals and SMT members and educators that influenced or hampered the delivery of quality education in the classroom.

The sample was comprised of three primary schools in Gauteng, South Africa. The methodology used was structured interviews of the principals and senior management members, focused group interviews with teachers, observations and documental evidence. Data was collected, coded and analysed under themes that emerged from examining the data and literature around instructional leadership.

In the South African educational context, both international standardized tests and important internal studies revealed that South African students are performing below average in the majority of the cases. This is indeed concerning to educationists and the country as a whole. Despite this there are primary schools achieving above expectation in terms of student achievement. One of the factors that may be contributing to poor performance locates the problem with the instructional leadership of school principals and working with the core business of the school, which is teaching and learning. My study therefore investigated the following three questions: i) Does leadership contribute to the ultimate success of schools? ii) What are the three successful schools doing? and iii)How do the

principals of these schools recognise, implement and bring about change that contributes to their success? This study demonstrated what successful primary school principals are doing to make teaching and learning effective.

The first question of this study aimed to examine how the three Gauteng primary school principals lead and influence classroom practice to encourage improved academic practice. The principals in this study use very different models (Models A, B and C) of instructional leadership to influence practice and encourage improved academic improvement. While two principals have direct influence on practice one principal has little but indirect influence on the instructional core.

The core roles and responsibilities of principals is teaching and learning and requires an effective blending of a common vision of teaching and learning being the central focus of any decision that is made and the empowerment of all people involved in this process. In case study B (Model B) the principal, as an instructional leader, uses a strong vision for the school and a tight control of instruction to articulate her decisions, decision making and practice to focus on her core duty to improve teaching and learning. Case study C (Model C) also depicts that the principal has a collaborative culture to influence the SMT members and teachers to improve academic practice. This principal is involved in and is dependent on adapting to the process and taking the necessary actions to improve.

However, in case study A (Model A) it can be viewed that the principal does not see the greater vision of teaching and learning of his school. Consequently his influence in this sphere is not a priority in implementing change and he shifts the core responsibility to the HODs.

Thus while one of the core practices to developing a vision is by identifying the needs of the learners and community, fostering the acceptance of the stakeholders and then articulating this vision clearly to achieve the desired outcomes this school is failing to realise this important goal. Instructional leaders should have the necessary leadership capacity in themselves and be wholly conscious to achieve this aim as an educational priority.

Other roles and responsibilities of the primary school principals should include as a matter of importance:

- That the principals leadership is not a position-it is a disposition and her/his instructional leadership requires her/him to be accessible, approachable and knowledgeable
- That the principal should analyse the leadership characteristics of the staff members of the school and use this information to reflect on how a leader leads, what decisions s/he take and what actions s/he engages in and how to use these leaders to enhance instructional leadership and improve instruction.
- That the principal should have a good knowledge about where a school community is and where it needs to move. The principal should also know what skills and knowledge teachers and learners require and how to reach set targets.
- Be able to work with people in a manner that ignites their passions, talents, and desire to attain a shared vision.

The second question sought to understand how the principals and other senior management team members work together to communicate with, monitor and evaluate teachers. In the leadership model of School A it is clear that a more "dispersed leadership" style is incorporated and communication is not so apparent to get the school functioning at a higher level. In case studies B and C it was clear that the principal and SMT members worked as a team and communicated amicably with each other. Case study B shows that the principal used the SMT and staff meetings every morning and staffroom break time to communicate with staff on instructional matters. Case study C shows that the principal uses every opportunity, meetings, corridor conversations, staffroom talks and informal conversations to communicate with staff.

However, case study C shows that there is a breakdown in communication, which contributes to some challenges in classroom practice. These findings demonstrate that communication is vital in the process of change and improved learning. Clear communication conveys explicit expectations so that the SMT members and teacher body understand school policy and procedures that affect them, to clarify and explain district expectations in areas that affect them like learning, classroom management, data driven decision making and curriculum management which

directly affect student outcomes. The ability to communicate also helps to clarify difficult situations such as learner discipline, disagreements with parents and confrontations with other staff-they want to know you will listen to their side and back them if evidence supports them.

Principals should ensure that they provide teachers with adequate resources. Where the school lacks resources, such as School C, it is difficult for teachers to teach effectively. Reading books, for example, is essential for learners to have their own to appreciate the use of them.

All three schools are involved in monitoring and evaluating teachers. In all three case study schools it was found that thorough supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the teachers' work are not comprehensive because of issues of time constraints, workloads and other interferences such as some highly unionized teachers who see their role as professionals and question classroom visits. Most of the supervision and class visits are done because of the IQMS which requires each teacher to be evaluated, a professional growth programme to be developed and each teacher to be given a time frame to develop in those identified areas. However, professional development is then fragmented and has mammoth challenges due to constraints in funding, service providers and trying to satisfy the structured options required and individual need of educators. The findings of the case studies reveal the importance of monitoring and evaluation to identify the strengths and weaknesses of teachers, and the necessity to develop an individualised professional development programme geared at improving instructional practice.

The final question investigated how teachers perceive and interpret the actions of the school leadership around their own classroom practice. All three case studies showed that the actions of principals as instructional leaders either influence or inhibit teachers' classroom practice.

While case study A showed that the actions of the principal as an instructional leader is interpreted negatively and teachers desired to be given instructional guidance and specialised interventions, case study B revealed that methodical and rigorous actions of the principal lead to positive reactions to classroom practice and

teachers spending more time on the core activities of the school. Case study C showed that the teachers welcome the principals' actions and look forward to them for enhancing their own knowledge and capacity in teaching and learning. It can therefore be concluded that teachers perceive the school leadership actions as helpful and welcomed those that focused on the core responsibility of providing quality teaching and learning.

To conclude, my main question explored how the work of the school principal influences classroom teacher practices. The findings from all three case studies show categorically that the principal plays a critical role in influencing classroom practice and that his/her agency cannot be replaced by any other activity in the school. In addition the three models of instructional leadership enactment show that the success of schools are not based on one model and that instructional leadership success is not based on a one size fits all framework.

This study highlights the importance of more studies on instructional leadership and calls for increased research in primary school education in South Africa.

8.4 Limitations of the study

As stated at the outset, my study is a relatively small one in that it is based only on three primary schools, one from an inner city school, one from an fairly affluent middle class suburb and one township school in the province of Gauteng, South Africa. Hence, my findings are directly relevant to the three schools where the study was conducted. In addition, certain unaccounted for factors could have influenced the findings of which the reader needs to be aware.

First, with regard to the interviews, the interviews were conducted in English with both English and non-English speakers. Although every effort was made at ensuring a miscommunication-free interview, making the interviewee as comfortable as possible, and keeping the interviewee ignorant of my own views on the subject, there is no guarantee that my use of only English did not influence interviewees' responses.

Furthermore the presence of the tape recorder during interviews would have, in varying degrees, affected the responses of the interviewees. For example, being conscious that they were being taped (especially those for whom being interviewed and/or tape-recording their voices was a first time experience), interviewees might have been more careful about how they framed their responses, their choice of words and so on, than they would otherwise have done had they been asked the same questions without their knowledge that they were being interviewed or that the interview was being recorded.

8.5 Implications

While the findings in this study may not be generalizable, they point to the complexities of the job of primary school principals, their instructional leadership, their roles responsibilities and actions. This study suggests that the specific models used in the analysis of instructional leadership in each school indicate that a 'one-size fits all' model is neither applicable nor desirable. Each school develops it own style of instructional leadership determined by contextual factors such staff and community needs and the values the characteristics of the employees at the school. Of critical importance is the need for principals to take cognisance how his/her actions affects each individual. This study also shows that collaboration with other principals contributes to enhanced instructional leader input styles and from engagement with research.

Finally, my findings lead me to make the following suggestions: First, there is need for extensive study to i) investigate the role of the principal as instructional leaders in primary schools; ii) investigate the role of the SMT as instructional leaders; iii) the role of teacher leaders as instructional leaders in a collaborative effort to enhance quality teaching and learning in the school. Additional primary schools should become the basis of study on instructional leadership, its impact and influence on student achievement. Lastly Foundation Phase leadership should be investigated so that informed decisions could be made for HODs in this phase to be given adequate time to work within their phase in a more meaningful way and to help develop educators.

8.6 Summary

Central to the instructional leadership discourse, of which more is required in South Africa, is the emerging terrain of instructional leadership in a developing country.

The three case studies set in the three periods of critical change in a developing nation: i) changing political environment and ii) changing educational milieu and iii) changing curriculum raised the fundamental concerns of school leadership and teaching and learning. Of critical concern was that the notion of instructional leadership would produce improved results in student engagement with learning, change in pedagogy and improvement in academic achievements despite the upheavals and constraints experienced by schools in a growing democracy.

The study finds that effective instructional leadership is central to enhancing teaching and learning in a primary school to improve student academic outcomes and that the instructional leadership behaviours of school principals were significantly related to teacher's commitment, professional involvement and innovativeness and to the overall improvement of student results.

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Appendix A : Sample Participant Informed Consent Documents

Letter of Permission

Wits School of Education
27 St Andrews Street
Parkton
2001

The Principal
X Primary School
Dear Sir/Madam

Permission to do Research

My name is Geeta Motilal. I am a student at University of the Witwatersrand. As part of the PHD Degree, I am intending to do my research in three primary schools in Gauteng, which did well in the 2011 ANA tests.

My research topic is Instructional leadership in primary schools: What do successful primary school principals do to make teaching and learning effective – case studies of three primary schools in Gauteng.

The aims of the research are:

1. To identify, analyse, evaluate and disseminate instructional leadership practices which will improve student achievements in Primary schools in Gauteng.
2. To make recommendations for improvement of instructional leadership in Primary schools.

I am writing to seek permission to do the research in your school. I have selected your school on the basis of your outstanding results in the 2011 ANA tests. I would like to invite you, your management staff and educators to participate in the research.

I will be conducting taped interviews with the school management team (Principal/Headmaster, Deputy Principal and Heads of Departments) and taped focus group/individual interviews with educators. I will also conduct a two week-long observation of the school during March to June 2012 but may add an additional week if required to do so. I will also seek permission to view certain documents around school leadership issues.

To preserve confidentiality, I will do the following:

- Names and identity of the interviewees and the school will be kept confidential (will use pseudonyms)
- I will send a transcript of the interview to the interviewees to verify its accuracy.
- All data from this study will be kept secure.

Participation in the study is voluntary, participants have the right to withdraw at any time and there is no penalty for that.
The interviews will be conducted on a one-on-one and will last for about an hour.
I will very much appreciate it if given the opportunity to do the research.

Thank you
Yours faithfully

_____ _____

GeetaMotilal (082 5630246) Date

Email address: Geeta.Motilal@wits.ac.za

Supervisor: Dr James Stiles _____ Date: _____

INFORMATION SHEET

1. The principal and GDE have granted permission for this research.
2. I will be conducting individual interviews of roughly 45-60 minutes duration with the school management team (Principal/Headmaster, Deputy Principal and Heads of Departments) and two 90 minutes focus group (one Senior Primary and one Foundation Phase) discussions with educators. All interviews and focus groups will be audio taped with the consent of the individual respondents.
3. I will also conduct a two week-long observation of the school during March to June 2012 but may add an additional week if required to do so.
4. I will view official school documents that pertain to school leadership. These might include meeting notes (SMT, SGB, staff, and phase meetings), school newsletters to parents, curriculum planning documents and staff development plans. These documents will be requested in writing and all documents will be held in confidence.

Appendix B
Interview Preparatory Documents

Semi-Structured Interview Questions – Principal

The schedule represents the range of questions that could be asked during the two interviews with the Principal. Not all questions will necessarily be asked.

SECTION A

Semi structured interviews:

1. As the principal of the school tell me about your typical day?
2. As you walk around the school what catches your eyes/ what do you find interesting?

Improving quality and teacher practice

3. Your school has done very well on the ANA tests. When you think about improving quality in your teaching, what are the things to come to mind?
4. What is your sense of the teachers' practice in this school?
5. What are the ways the school encourages the teachers to change their practice?
6. Do your teachers talk with each other about their instructional practice? Are they inquisitive about their own practice?

   Do you have any sense of what teachers talk about?

   Do you discuss these with the SMT? Do they mentor each other?

Professional Development

7. The department has been discussing lots of new approaches to professional development, what do you think are the best ways to develop teachers?

   How would you characterize the approach?
8. How do you think professional development is perceived by teachers?

Core Instructional Management

9. Unexpected situations or events occur during the school year e.g. a staff member gets seriously ill or a group of learners are selected to take part in a debating team or swimming gala overseas. Can you think about a couple of such events in the past three years and how you responded to the situation?

Teaching and Learning

10. What area of the curriculum did you qualify in teaching? How does this background fit into the work you do today?

11. When you visit classrooms what happens? What do you do?
    If not, what kind of conversations, if any, do you have with your teachers?

12. What kind of conversations do you have with the SMT of the school about the work of the educators?

13. With your strong ANA results this year, what were the reactions of you and your colleagues to these results?
    OR
    When I compared the ANA results over the past two years I noticed that they were lower/higher than the previous year, what sense do you make of that difference?

14. Where do you think you would put your teachers on this continuum?

Teachers know what to do **Teachers are constantly evolving**

Why?

15. Who do you think is your best teacher? Why? How do you know it? How do you involve this teacher in classroom teaching programmes and other programmes?

    If I asked all of your teachers that same question do you think that they would agree with you reasons for that choice?

16. How do you induct a new teacher to work this school for the first time?

17. The department has introduced CAPS this year. How was it received?

18. You have been a principal of this school for a number of years. If you were going to create a metaphor describing this would it be? ….When I am at my best as a principal I am a ……

Semi structured Interview Schedule: SMT (Deputy and HOD)

1. What is a typical work day like for you in your role?

SMT work

2. When you think about the Senior Management Team, how does it function? What does it discuss and work on?
3. Does the SMT communicate as a body with teachers? Or do individuals communicate different ideas and initiatives?

Curriculum Planning

4. Does your school have a curriculum implementation plan?
5. Have you been involved in the drafting process of this plan? If so, to what extent?
6. How is the implementation of the curriculum monitored?

Teacher Practice and Professional Development

7. How do you individually with teachers around improving their practice?
8. How do you equip teachers to implement the curriculum?

Professional Challenges

9. How do you mediate between the vision of school and the understanding of what happens in the classroom?
10. What challenges have you come across in the execution of your work?
11. What steps do you think need to be taken to address these challenges?
    - Does this ever create a role conflict for you?
12. What support (i.e. from outside or inside) will be required to address these challenges?

:

Semi structured Interview Schedule: SMT

1. Does your school have a curriculum implementation plan?
2. Have you been involved in the drafting process of this plan? If so, to what extent?
3. At your school, how do managers communicate with implementers of the curriculum?
4. How is the implementation of the curriculum monitored?
5. How do you equip teachers to implement the curriculum?
6. What successes have you achieved in terms of managing the curriculum implementation thus far?
7. What challenges have you come across in the execution of your work?
8. What steps do you think need to be taken to address these challenges?
9. Who should take these steps and when?
10. What support (i.e. from outside or inside) will be required to address these challenges?

Semi structured Interview Schedule: Expert/Senior teacher

1. What is your field of expertise in education?
2. How do you help enrich pedagogy across your school?
3. How do you communicate your ideas to teachers?
4. How do you monitor the implementation of content in the classroom?
5. Do you organise staff development programmes?
6. Are you involved in the evaluation of teachers?
7. If Yes, how do you use the information you gathered to improve the quality of practice?

APPENDIX C

Study on Instructional Leadership of Primary schools in Gauteng

Areas of discussion for Educator Focus group

- Role of the Principal
    - Direct or Indirect mgmt?
    - Leadership of the SMT
    - Active in instruction?
    - Authoritarian vs. democratic – closed vs. open

- Curriculum Leadership
    - Negotiating curriculum changes
    - Observation of lessons
    - Innovation?
    - How was CAPS handled?

- People Dynamics in the school
    - Principal vs,. teachers
    - SMT vs. teachers
    - Teachers vs. teachers

- Teaching and Learning in the school
    - Improving practice?
    - Improving pedagogy?
    - Student issues?
    - Curriculum change
    - The connection between tasks and achievement

Potential Opening questions

1. What is it like to work with the other adults here at XX school?

2. If a friend were going to apply to work here, what would you tell them about teaching here?

3. What is your deepest passion as an educator? Why is it important to you?

4. How would you describe a typical day at school?

5. What do you consider as the most important part of your school day? Why?