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The role of the principal as an instructional leader in creating a quality learning environment.

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CHAPTER 1

Description of the study

1.1 Introductory background

The inception of a new dispensation in South Africa in 1994 resulted in the Department of Education introducing a decentralized form of power within the school system. Section 16 (1)of the South African Schools' Act 84 of 1996 entitles each school to establish a School Governing Body which determines the kind of governance they would like to see prevail in their premises. Measures of school restructuring include school-based management, devolution of responsibilities to principals, empowerment of teachers and the encouragement of parental participation in school decision-making (O'Donoughue & Dimmock, 1998). Parallel to these restructuring efforts are concerns for the quality of schooling which encompass curriculum reform and improvement in the quality of teaching and learning (Lee & Dimmock, 1999:456).

Some schools have managed to thrive under these new developments while others are still struggling to understand the concepts under which they operate. Schools are going to emerge with labeling of 'high' performing and 'low' performing in terms of the outcomes or results produced by learners at the end of the year. It is this labeling of schools which has motivated me to begin to find out what are the contributory factors that underlie the performance of a school. Contextual factors such as the socio-economic environment, organizational climate and teacher commitment all have a measure of impact upon the results at the end of the year but the focus of my

study is specifically upon the role a principal plays in school improvement. Whether this is direct or indirect influence, previous studies have shown that the principal of a school has a measurable role to play in the effectiveness of a school.

Now that the National Department of Education has introduced the National Curriculum Statement, it remains to be seen how principals will monitor and provide assistance to teachers. By contrast, according to my observation, teachers are sent to attend workshops and seminars on the implementation of the new curriculum statement while principals are not invited to attend such workshops. It then becomes a distorted portrayal of instructional leadership when a principal has little or no understanding of the new curriculum in the learning areas or subjects.

The focus of this study is in a school which has its status as a satellite school. The previous school (Main School) from which it was originated had been in existence since 1988.With the growth in the population it was decided to build this school to ease congestion and create an environment in which education can best be served to learners without undue pressure of overcrowding and lack of facilities.

The separation of this school from its main campus created many opportunities for all its stakeholders to prove their worth and meet the challenges of a functional school. More especially, the principal. She needed to convince the school and the community of being capable to build an educational institution. Her previous leadership experience as deputy-principal will play a leading role in helping her focus on creating a quality learning environment. It is

upon this background that we have to understand the role of this principal as an instructional leader.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The qualitative research I will conduct will contribute to the understanding of instructional leadership with regard to its theory, practice, policy and social issues with the intention of improving the quality of teaching and learning. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:315) qualitative research is first concerned with understanding social phenomena from the participants' perspectives. That understanding is achieved by analyzing the many contexts of the participants' meanings for these situations and events. Participants' meanings include their feelings, beliefs, ideas, thoughts and actions. This will also add towards generating theory and empowerment more especially to schools that have not been performing well or producing good results.

Relatively little research has been undertaken into the activities of principals of secondary schools in South Africa, more especially in the townships. It has always been accepted by a majority of educators that principals will always carry out instructions from the government without question.This happens when a principal does not have a vision to influence a school towards a particular goal. Bush (2008:278) says,

> *'Vision has been regarded as an essential component of effective leadership for almost 20 years. Beare et al. (1992) claim that outstanding leaders have a vision for their organizations. Southworth (1993: 23-4) suggests that heads*

are motivated to work hard 'because their leadership is the pursuit of their individual vision'.

There is also the perception that some principals are not capable of leading or managing their schools effectively because of a lack of insight into instructional leadership. According to Bush (2008: 279),

'Significantly, however, there was no mandatory requirement for school leaders to have a specialist qualification in educational management and many head teachers were appointed on the basis of their professional experience alone.'

This has resulted in a situation where the principal is always in conflict with his/her staff or the district officials over what needs to be done. This research intends to analyze instructional leadership at the micro-school level as there is no empirical investigation of how and by whom the curriculum is conducted in township schools, except for the literature which depicts the phenomenon in Western societies. Bush (2008: 284) concurs by saying,

'There is evidence that many South African schools are dysfunctional (e.g. Bush et al., 2007b), suggesting that a focus on management, as defined by Cuban (1988), would be more appropriate.'

In addition, few empirical studies of township situations have been reported in Western literature. This research attempts to address some of these gaps in the knowledge base.This research project also hopes to make a distinction on how instructional leadership is practiced in South African schools and corroborate it with a

theoretical framework drawn from Western literature. There is always a tendency to introduce theory and practices that were found effective in Western societies and apply these with little regard of the complexities and uniqueness of the local setting. According to Lee and Dimmock (1999:456)

> *'initiatives to restructure school systems throughout the Western world have focused on their organisation, administration and governmental configurations. In England and Wales, for example, the introduction of a National Curriculum in the late 1980s is coupled with the press for more school-based management and local control of schools.'*

This research project is highly appropriate for exposing and interpreting the lived experience of curriculum leadership from the perspective of the participants. Hartley and Hinksman (2003) say that leadership development requires a focus on structure and systems as well as people and social relations. Tusting and Barton (2006) argue that there is a movement away from the individual towards the emergent and collective as well as providing greater recognition of the significance of the context for leadership learning. Given the popularity of interactve learning, such as networking, a stronger focus on school-wide leadership development appears to be timely. One way this might be achieved is through shared leadership.Instructional leadership replaces a hierarchical and procedural notion with a model of shared instructional leadership.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research report is informed by the literature and research of international and national educational analysts. The theory surrounding instructional leadership is depicted from a model which involves the active collaboration of principal and educators on curriculum, instruction and assessment. Within this model, the principal seeks out the ideas, insights, and expertise of educators in these areas and works with educators for school improvement. The principal and educators share responsibility for staff development, curricular development and supervision of instructional tasks. Thus, the principal is not the sole instructional leader but the 'leader of instructional leaders' (Glickman, 1989:6).

Instructional leadership, narrowly defined, focuses on leadership functions directly related to teaching and learning (Murphy, 1988). In a broader view, instructional leadership also refers to all other functions that contribute to student learning, including managerial behaviours (Donmoyer &Wagstaff, 1990; Murphy, 1988). Such an action orientation theoretically encompasses everything a principal does during the day to support the achievement of students and the ability of educators to teach (Sebring & Bryk, 2000).

In a review of the literature on instructional leadership, Murphy (1990) noted that principals in productive schools – that is, schools where the quality of teaching and learning were strong – demonstrated instructional leadership both directly and indirectly. Although these principals practiced a conventional rather than a shared form of instructional leadership, they emphasised four sets of activities with implications for instruction: (a)developing the school mission and goals; (b) coordinating, monitoring, and

evaluating curriculum, instruction and assessment; (c) promoting a climate for learning; and (d) creating a supportive work environment (Murphy, 1990). Focused on learning, they infused management decisions and regular school routines with educational meaning (Dwyer, 1984).

In the context of teacher professionalisation, however, critics regarded the existing models of instructional leadership as paternalistic, archaic, and dependent on docile followers (Burlingame, 1987; Poplin, 1992; Sheppard, 1996). If educators are committed and competent, they argued, traditional forms of instructional leadership are not appropriate (Sergiovanni, 1991). Rather, principals should be concerned with facilitating educators' exercise of initiative and responsibility in instructional matter (Glanz & Neville, 1997; Senge et al., 2000) Such an approach is consistent with educational reforms in the professionalization of teaching that equip educators to play informed and active roles in improving schooling (Little, 1993).

Within a South African context, now that the department of education has introduced a new curriculum, the principal needs to empower educators who have the expertise to teach collaboratively and find new ways on how best this can be done. I have observed that principals are held in a high esteem and would instruct educators to teach in a certain manner. As leaders, they would not invite educators to participate in a discussion on how instructional activities should be conducted in a school. This practice belittled educators to a position of subordinates to the principal.

1.3.1 Shared Instructional Leadership

Unlike the conventional notion of instructional leadership, shared instructional leadership is an inclusive concept, compatible with competent and empowered educators. The principal invests educators with resources and instructional support (Rosenblum, Louis, & Rossmiller, 1994) and maintains congruence and consistency of the educational program (Conley & Goldman, 1994). Educators' participation in shared instructional leadership occurs informally as well as being manifest in formal roles (Prestine & Bowen, 1993). Educators assume leadership responsibility when they interact with other adults in the school community around school reform efforts, encourage others to improve their professional practice, or learn together with their school colleagues (Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996).

Several models of shared instructional leadership recast the process of instructional supervision. In these models, educators assume responsibility for their professional growth and for instructional improvement. The principal becomes less an inspector of educator competence and more a facilitator of educator growth (Poole, 1995). Whereas the principal remains the educational leader of the school, educators, who have requisite expertise or information, exercise leadership collaboratively with the principal. Collaborative inquiry supplants principal-centered supervisory practices (Reitzug, 1997). As educators inquire together, they encourage each other toward answers for instructional problems. Leadership for instruction emerges from both the principal and the educators. Principal and educators discuss alternatives rather than directives or criticisms and work together as "communities of learners" in service to learners (Blasé & Blasé, 1990). Principals contribute importantly to

these communities when they promote educator reflection and professional growth. When educators interact with principals as they engage in these activities, the educators report positive changes in their pedagogical practices, including using various and innovative techniques and being willing to take risks (Blasé & Blasé, 1999).

Principals and educators both play a part in forging an effective leadership relationship. Principals must provide opportunities for educator growth, but educators are also responsible for seizing these opportunities (Blasé &Kirby, 2000). Strong leadership on the part of the principal, however, often affirms educators' responsibility and accountability for change (Louis, 1994). The relationship is a reciprocal one, where those in formal roles step aside to let others step into leadership roles (Prestine & Bowen, 1993). This phenomenon is often subtle and might not be readily apparent except in certain critical incidents that threaten change efforts (Prestine & Bowen).

Shared instructional leadership, therefore, is not dependent on role or position. Its currency lies in the personal resources of participants and is deployed through interaction (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Such leadership extends throughout the organisation with revised structures permitting coordinated action (Ogawqa & Bossert, 1995; Pounder, Ogawqa, & Adams, 1995).

1.4 Conclusion

The starting point for the study is recognition of the importance of instructional leadership if schools are to improve in their performance and be in a position to implement a curriculum that requires a collaborative approach. Early conceptions of instructional leadership had focused on the principal's role in managing school processes and procedures related to instruction and supervision. As the challenge of school reform demands the principal to become an agent of change, the role of instructional leadership is brought to the centre.

Dealing with accountability in the context of systemic change, principals also had to face the implications of the standards movement, curriculum frameworks, and new forms of assessment. Responding to these demands with an outmoded conception of instructional leadership is senseless, but engaging educators in a collaborative dialogue about these and their implications for teaching and learning is essential. Thus, the conception of shared instructional leadership that is proposed emphasised the principal's interactive role with educators in the central area of curriculum, instruction and assessment.

This study suggests that strong instructional leadership by the principal is essential in supporting the commitment of educators. Because educators themselves can be barriers to the development of educator leadership (Smylie & Denny, 1990), instructional principals are needed to invite educators to share leadership functions. When educators perceive principals' instructional leadership behaviours to be appropriate, they grow in commitment,

professional involvement, and willingness to innovate (Sheppard, 1996).

Arguably, principals who share leadership responsibilities with others would be less subject to burnout than principal "heroes" who attempt the challenges and complexities of leadership alone (Marks & Printy, 2003:393). When the principal elicits high levels of commitment and professionalism from educators and works interactively with educators in a shared instructional leadership capacity, schools have the benefit of integrated leadership; they are organizations that learn and perform at high levels.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

As an educator who is concerned by a high failure rate in our schools, more especially in the townships, I realised a need for leadership that could improve the prevalent situation and develop a culture of effective teaching and learning. South Africa is challenged by evolving trends in educational reform such as curriculum, empowerment and organisational leadership. This report is a reflection upon the theoretical and practical validity of an educational leadership which has undergone empirical study to enhance a quality learning environment.

Principals, as head of schools, have a prerogative of deciding on the kind of leadership that will successfully change and improve their schools' effectiveness. The importance of the role of the principal was inferred from studies that examined change implementation (e,g. Hall & Hord, 1997), school effectiveness (Edmonds, 1999; Rotter et al., 1979), school improvement (e.g. Edmonds, 1979) and program improvement (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Scholars conducting research in each of these domains consistently found that the skilful leadership of school principals was a key contributing factor when it came to explaining successful change, school improvement or school effectiveness (Hallinger, 2003:331).

2.2 Conceptualisations of educational leadership

The past 25 years have witnessed the emergence of new conceptual models in the field of educational leadership. Instructional leadership models emerged in the early 1980s from early research on effective schools. This body of research identified *strong, directive leadership focused on curriculum and instruction from the principal* as a characteristic of elementary schools that were effective at teaching children in poor urban communities (Edmomds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Although not without its critics (e.g. Cuban, 1984; Miskel, 1982), this model shaped much of the thinking about effective principal leadership disseminated in the 1980s and early 1990s internationally. Moreover, the emerging popularity of this model, at least in the U.S.A., soon became evident from its widespread adoption as the 'model of choice' by most principal leadership academies (Hallinger, 1982; Hallinger & Wimpelberg, 1992).

With the advent of school restructuring in North America during the 1990s, scholars and practitioners began to popularise terms such as shared leadership, teacher leadership, distributed leadership, and transformational leadership. The emergence of these leadership models indicated a broader dissatisfaction with the instructional leadership model, which many believed focused too much on the principal as the centre of expertise, power and authority (Hallinger, 2003: 330).

2.3 Conceptualising Instructional Leadership

Prior to 1980, there were neither coherent models nor validated instruments available for the purpose of studying instructional leadership (Bossert et al., 1982; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). This began to change during the early 1980s when several conceptualisations of instructional leadership emerged concurrently (Andrews et al., 1987; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; van de Grift, 1990). An assessment of the most popular conceptualisations of instructional leadership yielded the following observations:

- Instructional leadership focuses predominantly on the role of the school principal in coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing curriculum and instruction in the school (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).
- With its birthplace in the 'instructional effective elementary school' (Edmonds, 1979), instructional leadership was generally conceived to be a unitary role of the elementary school principal (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982).
- Similarly, the fact that studies of effective schools focused on poor urban schools in need of substantial change, it is not surprising to note instructional leaders were subsequently conceived to be 'strong, directive leaders' (Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).
- Instructional leaders lead from a combination of expertise and charisma. They are hands-on principals, 'hip-deep' in curriculum and instruction, and unafraid of working with educators on the improvement of teaching and learning (Cuban, 1984; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).

- Instructional leaders are goal-oriented, focusing on the improvement of student academic outcomes. Given the dire straits in which they find their schools, these principals focus on a narrower mission than many of their peers.
- Instructional leaders are viewed as culture builders. They sought to create an 'academic press' that fosters high expectations and standards for students, as well as for teachers (Mortimore, 1993; Purkey & Smith, 1984).

The most frequently used conceptualisation of instructional leadership was developed by Hallinger (2000). This model proposes three dimensions of the instructional construct: (a) defining the school's mission, (b) managing the instructional program, and (c) promoting a positive school-learning climate (Hallinger, 2000).

a) Defining the school's mission

This function concerns the principal's role in working with staff to ensure that the school has clear, measurable goals that are focused on the academic progress of its students. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that these goals are widely known and supported throughout the school community. While this dimension does not assume that the principal defines the school's mission alone, it does assume that the principal's responsibility is to ensure that the school has a clear academic mission and to communicate it to staff (Hallinger, 2003).

b) Managing the instructional programme

This dimension incorporates three leadership functions: supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress. These functions, more so than functions in the other two dimensions, require the leader to be

deeply engaged in the school's instructional development. In larger schools, it is clear that the principal cannot be the only person involved in leading the school's instructional programme. Yet this framework assumes that the development of the academic core of the school is a key leadership responsibility of the principal (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

c) Promoting a positive school learning climate

This third dimension includes several functions: Protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for educators, and providing incentives for learning. This dimension is broader in scope and intent. It conforms the notion that effective schools create an 'academic press' through the development of high standards and expectations and a culture of continuous improvement. It is the responsibility of the instructional leadership to align the school's standards and practices with its mission and to create a climate that supports teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2003).

2.4 Research Findings on Instructional Leadership

Given the emergent popularity of this leadership model during the early 1980s, scholars subsequently generated a substaintial body of international research (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Goldring & Pasternak, 1994; Leitner, 1994). Indeed, in their comprehensive review of research on school leadership and its effects, Hallinger and Heck (1996) concluded that this was the most common conceptualisation of school leadership used during the period of their review of empirical research on school leadership effects (1980 -1995). A subsequent review of research focused solely upon

instructional leadership found that over 125 empirical studies employed this construct between 1980 and 2000 (Hallinger, 2000).

This body of research has yielded a wealth of findings concerning antecedents of instructional leadership behaviour (school level, school size, school S.E. S), the effects of the school context on instructional leadership (e.g., gender, training, experience), as well as the effects of school leadership on the organisation (e.g. school mission and goals, expectations, curriculum, teaching, teacher engagement) and school outcomes (e.g. school effectiveness, student achievement).

Hallinger (2003:333) arrived at the following conclusions from the research on instructional leadership:

- The preponderance of evidence indicates that school principals contribute to school effectiveness and student achievement indirectly through actions they take to influence what happens in the school and in classrooms.
- The most influential avenues of effects concern the principal's role in shaping the purposes of the school (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Goldring & Pasternak, 1994). The actual role that principals play in mission building is influenced by features of the school context such as socio-economic status and school size (Hallinger & Heck, 2002; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).
- Instructional leadership influences the quality of school outcomes through the alignment of school structures (e.g. academic standards, time allocation, and curriculum) with the school's mission (Hallinger & Heck, 1996).
- It is interesting to note that relatively few studies find a relationship between the principal's hands-on supervision of

classroom instruction, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). Where effects have been identified, it has generally been at the elementary school level, and could possibly be at a function of school size (Braughton & Riley; Heck et al., 1990).

- The school context does have an effect on the type of instructional leadership by principals (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). As suggested above, school level as well as the socio-economic status of the school influence the requirements for and exercise of instructional leadership (e.g. Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).

2.5 Limitations

The influence of the instructional leadership role of principals must be acknowledged. However, it was not and will never be the *only* role of the school principal (Cuban, 1988). Principals play managerial, political, instructional, institutional, human resource and symbolic leadership roles in their schools (Bolman & Deal, 1992; Cuban, 1988). Critics assert that efforts to limit or even focus narrowly on this single role in an effort to improve student performance will be dysfunctional for the principal (Barth, 1986; Cuban, 1988).

Moreover, as suggested above, instructional leaders must adjust their performance of this role to the needs, opportunities and constraints imposed by the school context. The principal in a small primary school can more easily spend substantial amounts of time in classrooms working on curriculum and instruction. However, this direct involvement in teaching and learning is simply unrealistic in a larger school, be it elementary or secondary (Hallinger, 2003:334).

2.6 Instructional leadership and school achievement

I strongly believe that if a principal adopts and priorities the practices underlying instructional leadership he/she will soon see effective and efficient learning in a self-governing school. According to Taxley and Weindling (2004:14),

> *'This form of leadership focus less on the leader – leadership is not perceived as simply a trait of an individual – and more on the sharing of leadership throughout the organisation. It is an inclusive leadership and one that is* distributed *throughout the school. In addition, and most significantly, 'learner-centred leadership' also has close connections to learning and pedagogy and andragogy. It is about learning – pupil, adult (teachers, staff and governors), organisational learning and leadership networks – and teaching.'*

Many principals are not able to produce good results because they are held back by managerial ramifications which are scattered around many different tasks that involve administration, political pondering and spending a lot of time in meetings that have no bearing in improving learner performance. In this case principals loose focus on curriculum activity and instruction. Individual teachers remain responsible for the instructional culture of the school with the result that the entire school is left on its own to decide on the best instruction with no overriding guidance, teacher come to school with different practices, each bringing what is considered best and learners in the same grade receiving different instruction as there is no one coordinating what students learn.

It is at this point of my discussion that I wish to bring forth clear explanations of concepts that I wish to elaborate on. For the purpose of this study, effective leadership will be defined as:

> *"Setting an atmosphere of order, discipline and purpose, creating a climate of high expectations for staff and students, encouraging collegial and collaborative relationships and building commitment among staff and students to the school's goals, facilitating teachers in spending maximum time on direct instruction, encouraging staff development and evaluation, and being a dynamic, educative leader*" (Angus, 1989:66).

For a principal to be effective, he/she has to set an example by instructing learners in the classroom. As soon as teachers realize the magnitude with which he/she delivers instruction, they too may double their efforts to reach the expectations. Bush and Glover state that,

> *'Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on personal and professional values. They articulate this vision for their schools based on personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share the vision. The philosophy, structure and activities of the school are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision.'*

To ensure that teaching and learning is taking place, the principal could organize a common planning session of lessons according to

the standards-based norms of the department of education which all teachers should attend. In these staff-development programmes, common problems experienced in classes could be addressed and similar approaches adopted to overcome problems recurring. Such common approaches lessen the problems of some teachers being behind while others are far ahead of instructing subject-matter content and a principal is able to spearhead a venture into achieving good performance by learners. Hopkins (2002) says,

> *'Instructional leaders are concerned to promote and develop their schools as learning organisations or professional learning communities in order to help bring about the school's learning goals for its pupils.'*

Such a practice can only prevail in a school where there is a common commitment towards work or a positive school culture exists. School culture in this study refers to:

> *"the characteristic spirit and belief of an organisation, demonstrated, for example, in the norms and values that are generally held about how people should treat each other, the nature of working relationships that should be developed and attitudes to change"* (Preedy,1993:45).

According to Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:41-42) the culture of a school is:

> *"…the peculiar and distinctive way of life of the group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations, in systems and beliefs, in mores and customs, in the uses of objects and material life. Culture is*

the distinctive shapes in which this material and social organisation of life expresses itself…"

Simply stated, a school culture is a teaching/learning environment created by a given school. The principal should strive to alert the teachers of their responsibility and obligation which is to teach the learners. It should be pointed out to teachers that there should be no compromise or back-tracking in delivering what is best for the learners. Although this should come as a common commitment from all teachers and not as an instruction from the top leader. Bush and Glover (2003:10) emphasise this point by saying that,

'Leadership and management at all levels in the school should be judged by their effect on the quality and standards of the school. Leadership should provide the drive and direction for raising achievement, while management should make best use of the resources and processes to make this happen. Management includes effective evaluation, planning, performance management and staff development. Inspectors should consider the extent to which leadership is embedded throughout the school and not vested solely in the senior staff. They should explore how well the leadership team creates a climate for learning and whether the school is an effective learning organisation.'

Another important task a principal should never lose sight of is monitoring if work is consistently done. There will always be disruptions that are unexpected which will interrupt attention on a particular instructional programme. It is the duty of an instructional leader to protect the integrity of the instruction without fail. This can be achieved if teachers themselves take ownership of the

programmes that are agreed upon. The question is how do teachers take ownership of a programme?

> *'The Department of Education requires that the principal, as the leading professional, should carry the primary responsibility for the leadership and management of the school. She/he, working with others in the school and wider communities, must effectively promote and support the best quality teaching and learning. The purpose of which is to enable learners to attain the highest levels of achievement in their own interests, the interests of their commuinty and of the country as a whole.'*(Department of Education: May 2005, p.3).

The most effective way is to build a community of instructional practices which is how Suporvitz and Poglinco (2001:7) explains it,

> *'based upon social learning theories (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), the basic idea behind communities of practice holds that groups that form around some specific purpose are a more effective means to achieve that purpose than would be individuals working on the same task in isolation. This is because there are synergies of learning in social contexts that are believed to be stronger than traditional transmission methods. In order to develop effective group practices, the theory goes; individuals have to comfortably and regularly interact in order to form relationship in substantive and particular ways around specific activities.'*

Similar to the previously mentioned strategy is the opening-up of communication and collaboration among different entities or working groups of the school. If a particular group is performing exceptionally well in improving students performance then the others who are struggling to have an impact on learners could learn from the others.

> *'The core purpose of principalship is to provide leadership and management in the school to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning take place and which promote the highest possible standards of learner achievement in any context.'*(Department of Education, May 2005 p.10).

This is supported by Motsaathebe (2000:52) who argues that,

> *'The concept of leadership is mutually inextricable with the concept of management. The two concepts are inter-linked and inter-dependent.' To ensure that a principal finds time for instructional leadership, a school management team would assist a principal to share his/her managerial responsibilities with his/her team.*

Bean (1993:253) states that any organisation that brings people and resources together to create product or service can benefit from improved planning and productivity. The critical part that the leadership plays in this regard is that of resource management.

Ambitious sentiments that a leader exposes tend to invoke a sense of inspiration. When a principal continuously encourages his/her staff

and learners to aim high in life, this builds their morale. Weber's study (1971) in Walker et. al. (1991:52) found that strong instructional leadership and high expectations are key elements of school effectiveness. This depends on courageous and motivational speeches the leader keeps uttering to his/her followers. If a leader does not send good-will messages then the school will slumber into oblivion. Bolman and Deal (1997: 14-15) say,

'Organisations, which are over managed but under led eventually, lose any sense of spirit or purpose. Poorly managed organisations with strong charismatic leaders may soar temporarily only to crash shortly thereafter. The challenge of modern organisations requires the objective perspective of the manager as well as the brilliant flashes of vision and commitment wise leadership provides.'

I agree with Bush and Glover (2003:10) who argue that 'in the current policy climate, schools require both visionary leadership and effective management'. This is so because the behaviours of staff as they engage in activities directly affecting the quality of learning and teaching in the pursuit of enhanced pupil outcomes relies heavily on the conduct of the principal.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined conceptualisations as well as empirical research concerned with conceptual models studied in educational leadership over the past 25 years on instructional leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). In this final section of the chapter, I will reflect upon lessons I have learnt about the use of this leadership model by principals in schools. One of the major impediments to effective school leadership is trying to carry the burden alone. When a principal takes on the challenges of going beyond the basic demands of the job (i.e. the transactional tasks of making the school run), the burden becomes even heavier (Barth, 1980; Cuban, 1988). Influential scholars have questioned whether it is realistic to expect any significant number of principals to meet this challenge. Lambert (2000) contends that 'the days of the lone instructional leader are over. We no longer believe that one administrator can serve as the instructional leader for the entire school without the substantial participation of other educators' (p.37).

This study suggests that strong instructional leadership by the principal is essential in supporting the commitment of educators. Because educators themselves can be barriers to the development of educator leadership, instructional principals are needed to invite educators to share leadership functions. When educators perceive principals' instructional leadership behaviours to be appropriate, they grow in commitment, professional involvement, and willingness to innovate (Sheppard, 1996). When the principal elicits high levels of commitment and professionalism from educators and works interactively with educators in a shared instructional leadership capacity, schools have the benefit of integrated leadership; they are

organisations that learn and perform at high levels (Hallinger, 2003; 345).

In their review of the literature on principal effects Hallinger & Heck (1996) concluded that it is virtually meaningless to study principal leadership without reference to the school context. The context of the school is a source of constraints, resources, and opportunities that the principal must understand and address in order to lead. Contextual variables of interest to principals include the student background, community type, organisational structure, school culture, educator experience and competence, fiscal resources, school size, and bureaucratic and labour organisation.

Roland Barth (2002) highlights both the principal's impact on the school's culture and the culture's impact on the principal:

> *'Probably the most important – and the most difficult – job of an instructional leader is to change the prevailing culture of a school. The school's culture dictates, in no uncertain terms, 'the way we do things around here.' A school's culture has far more influence on life and learning in the schoolhouse than the president of the country, the state department of education, the superintendent, the school board, or even the principal, teachers, and parents can ever have. One cannot, of course, change a school culture alone. But one can provide forms of leadership that invite others to join observers of the old and architects of the new. The effect must be to transform what we did last September into what we would like to do next September. (p.6)*

Thus, one resolution of the quest for an appropriate model of leadership in education would be to link the appropriate type of leadership to the needs of the school context.If school improvement is a journey, one could hypothesise that a more directive leadership style might be more suitable in contexts that are less well organised around effective models of teaching and learning. 'Schools at risk' may initially require a more forceful top-down approach focused on instructional improvement. Instructional leaders would typically set clear, time-based, academically focused goals in order to get the organisation moving in the desired direction. They would take a more active hands-on role in organising and coordinating instruction (Hallinger, 2003; 347).

The extent of appropriate staff participation in leading these processes (i.e., development of the school's goals, coordination of the curriculum) might vary depending upon where the location of the school is in its improvement journey. Nonetheless, it is safe to say that long-term, sustained improvement will ultimately depend upon the staff assuming increasing levels of ownership over proposed changes in the school.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

A qualitative research was employed in undertaking this study because,

> *'Qualitative research is inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings (e.g.field research). Qualitative research describes and analyzes people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions. The researcher interprets phenomena in terms of the meanings that people assign to them. Qualitative studies are important for theory generation, policy development, improvement of educational practice, illumination of social issues, and stimulus'* (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006: 315).

Three of the interactive research approaches (i.e. modes of inquiry) are discussed in this chapter. These are an in-depth interview, questionnaires, and participative observation.

3.2 Case study design

This research is a qualitative case study which seeks to establish the principal's and educators' perceptions of the role of the principal as an instructional leader in creating a quality learning environment. As indicated in Chapter 1, the focus of this study is in a secondary

school which was built to ease congestion from the previous school and educate learners in a conducive environment.

The separation of this school from its main campus created many opportunities for all its stakeholders to prove their worth and meet the challenges of a functional school, more especially, the principal who needs to convince the school and the community of being capable to build an educational institution. Her previous leadership experience as deputy-principal will play a leading role in helping her focus on creating a quality learning environment.

> *'In a **case study design,** the data analysis focuses on one phenomenon, which the researcher selects to understand in depth regardless of the number of sites or participants for the study. The one may be, for example, one administrator, one group of students, one program, one process, one implementation, or one concept'*(McMillan and Schumacher, 2006: 316).

It is upon this background that I decided to negotiate with the principal and educators of the school to participate in a study on instructional leadership.

3.3 Research protocol

Out of a staff complement of 24 educators, 14 responded positively to participate in this research.The principal, two deputy-principals, five heads of departments and six educators were each given an information letter (Appendix 1) requesting their permission to participate in a research study and a consent form (Appendix 2) in which they agreed to participate in the research. Confidentiality and

anonymity was assured. The settings and participants would not be identifiable in print. Thus, the location and features of the setting would be disguised to appear similar to several places, and the researcher would code names of people and places (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 334).

3.4 Research questions

The research question guiding this study is, 'are principals who are implementing instructional leadership effective?' I intend to answer this question by exploring a study undertaken by Supovitz and Poglinco (2001) who compiled a report by nine principals who were effective instructional leaders in their schools. The questions they ask borders around the interest of my study;

(i) What does it mean to be an instructional leader?

(ii) What do principals that are instructional leaders do differently than other principals?

(iii) How do they spend their time?

(iv) How do they shape the cultures of their schools?

(v) How knowledgeable are they of subject-matter content?

(vi) How do they work with, and develop, other leaders in their schools?

The interest of this study is to find answers to these key questions. Possible interview questions to be asked the principal will focus on these tasks;

(i) Defining and setting the school goals

(ii) Creating collegial relationships with and among educators

(iii) Supervising and evaluating educators

(iv) Coordinating staff development programme

(v) Parents/students and Community involvement in the school

Appendix 3 contains sub-questions related to these and asks further questions to gain a better understanding on how instructional leadership is implemented. Appendix 4 is a questionnaire which contains questions to be answered by the principal and the educators separately.

3.5 In-depth interview

The principal agreed to answer questions asked in an interview. These were given to her a day before to prepare as possible interview questions and area of focus in the research (Appendix 3).This instrument was used because 'In-depth interviews are open-ended questions to obtain data of participant meaning – how individuals conceive of their world and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their lives' (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 350). For triangulation, the data from the questionnaire and interview is useful, as Anderson (1990: 160) mentions:

> *'Interviews are prime sources of case study data. Not only does one typically interview a range of respondents, but the researcher tries to identify key informants who are part of the case and have inside knowledge of what is going on. These individuals are critical to enhancing the validity of the conclusions drawn.'*

What I needed to know was how the participant regarded instructional leadership and how it should be implemented. I needed to analyse those feelings and opinions so as (1) to obtain the present

perceptions of activities, roles, feelings, motivations, concerns and thoughts; (2) to obtain future expectations or anticipated experiences; (3) to verify and extend information obtained from other sources; and (4) to verify and extend ideas developed by the participant. The interview lasted between fifty (50) and sixty (60) minutes. The questions were categorised according to themes as guided by the research questions and as contained in Appendix 3.

3.6 Questionnaires

3.6.1 *Use of a Questionnaire*

The need to establish a broader picture on how instructional leadership is implemented required that an interview schedule be preceded by a questionnaire survey. The use of the questionnaire had both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage was that it was relatively quick and could cover a large number of respondents, while at the same time ensuring anonymity without fear of embarrassment or reprisal. This assisted in providing a more truthful and honest response. The questionnaire was designed to explore attitudes and perceptions. Structured questions enabled each respondent to receive the same set of questions phrased in exactly the same way and so care had to be taken in its design and presentation.

The disadvantages of using this type of instrument are that questionnaires are rigid and provide no flexibility that the researcher may seek. Comments cannot be further explored or probed and the researcher has no idea of knowing exactly how the question is being interpreted by the respondent. Questionnaires leave matters incomplete as respondents, due to a lack of interaction, may not be able to justify or explain their responses.

The other problem is that questionnaires are not completed and, to obviate this, one has to obtain random sampling.

3.6.2 *Designing of the Questionnaire*

The questionnaire first utilised factual questions to obtain demographic information about respondents. 'A questionnaire should begin with easy questions which are short, unobstrusive and allow the respondent to become accustomed to complete items' (Orlich, 1975:31). Therefore, participants were first asked to indicate their particulars: gender, current position at school, experience in school leadership or managerial position, number of years in the teaching profession, and the highest academic qualification held. No names were used as anonymity was essential. The questionnaire mainly tried to elicit perceptions and attitudes and consisted of both open and closed questions.

The responses to the questionnaire were designed to project the following situations: (A) Defining and setting the school goals, (B) Creating collegial relationships with and among educators, (C) Supervising and evaluating educators, (D) Coordinating staff development programme, and (E) Parents/Students and Community involvement.

3.6.3 *Administration of the Questionnaire*

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher in person and left with the respondents for seven (7) days after which the researcher physically collected them. This approach enabled the researcher to explain the purpose of the study and to establish the deemed necessary rapport with the respondents as well as to fix a precise day and date for the collection of the responses to the questionnaire.

3.7 Participant Observation

As the researcher is an educator at the school, this afforded an opportunity to observe and record without interaction the proceedings at the school. According to McMillan & Schumacher (2006:347), 'Participant observation enables the researcher to obtain people's perceptions of events and processes expressed in their actions and expressed as feelings, thoughts, and beliefs.' In terms of the current research, it was important to tie in the perceptions of staff members to their responses on the questionnaires and the interview to actual practices at school level. In this way I obtained a clearer understanding of the issues related to instructional leadership.

The observation of an educator provides feedback regarding the perceptions voiced by that educator at another time. All observations were done with a clear idea as to what I was looking for. I wanted to elicit, through observation whether the principal played her role as an instructional leader and understand what are the problems she confronted and how she was able to cope in her tasks. What I essentially wanted to gauge was whether the perceptions advanced by educators were real and true and whether this was discernible in practice.

The idea of the participant observer was important in generating valuable information and allowing evaluation regarding instructional leadership. The advantage of this was that as an observer one could 'provide an extra pair of eyes, especially when their views are compared with those of participant' (Craft 1996: 109). I used the 'fly on the wall' approach where the observer tries to be as unobstructive as possible and minimise the impact of his

presence. This was done in a semi-structured way as I had no formal schedules which I had to adhere to. Rather, this qualitative form of observation involved writing field notes on what was being observed. This proved helpful in not prejudging responses to support my hypothesis.

3.8 Limitations

The first limitation was time constraints due to the fact that educators were approached to participate in the research during an examination time when they were busy preparing learners to write or they were marking exam papers. The researcher had to organise time to interview the principal over the weekend at a restaurant. A further limitation was that members of staff may have been reluctant to disclose hidden problems that may be prevalent in the school to 'someone they know'.

CHAPTER 4

Presentation, analyses and interpretation of data

4.1 Introductory background

The discussion and interpretation of the principal's instructional leadership perceptions are done in the light of the research questions which this study seeks to address. These questions focus on the tasks that the principal performs to create a quality learning environment. They seek to understand the strategies put in place to ensure that the established culture is sustained.

Out of a staff complement of 24 educators, I was able to use 14 participants in this study. Table 1.1 and 1.2 describes the gender, current position, leadership and teaching experience as well as their qualifications at the time of completing the questionnaire.

4.2. Description of participants

4.2.1 Principals and Heads of Departments

Gender	Current position	Leadership Experience	Teaching Experience	Qualifications Held
Female= 3	Principal = 1	0-5 years=6	5-10 years=2	Diploma = 2
Male= 5	Deputy Principal = 2	5-10 years=0	10-15 years=0	Degree = 6
	Heads of Departments = 5	10-15 years=2	15-20 years=6	

(Table 1.1) The current positions have been occupied for less than a year except the two deputy-principals who were H.O.Ds for 10 -15 years respectively.

4.2.2 Educators

Gender	Teaching Experience	Qualifications Held
Female = 5	0 – 5 = 1	Diploma = 3
Male = 1	5 – 10 =3	Degree = 3
	10 – 15 = 2	

(Table 1.2)

4.3 How the principal defines and sets the school goals.

Angus (1985:66) defines the role of an instructional leader as,

> *'setting an atmosphere of order, discipline and purpose, creating a climate of high expectations for staff and students, encouraging collegial and collaborative relationships and building commitment among staff and students to the school's goals, facilitating teachers in spending maximum time on direct instruction, encouraging staff development and evaluation, and being a dynamic, educative leader.'*

It is indeed the responsibility of the principal to ensure that the right climate is created to facilitate teaching and learning. This is crucial because educators do not want to work under chaotic conditions, or else fingers will be pointed at him/her when things go wrong. It is important at the same time to involve all stakeholders in the creation of a conducive environment and allow maximum participation in the decision-making process of the school.

Her response to the question: 'Are learners often involved in key decision-making processes in your school? Her answer was:

> *'Yes. It is a secondary school. According to policy, L.R.C members should be involved as they represent learners; so that learners can implement what was decided on as they were part of decision-making.'*

When asked the question, 'Do you think the involvement of all stakeholders would lead to a more effective decision-making process at your school?' Her response was:

'If all stakeholders are involved it involves comprehensive agreement, where everyone participated and hence will lead to effectiveness as all parties will be talking the same language. Everybody will be enforcing implementation. There will be willingness to do or participate as everybody was part of decision-making.'

4.4 Creating collegial relationships with and among educators.

Among the results of their survey into effective instructional leadership, Blasé and Blasé (1999:135) discovered that,

'effective principals recognized that collaborative networks among educators were essential for successful teaching and learning.'

In response to the question, 'Give some examples of team-work in your school.' She cited these examples:

'Curbing of late-coming by learners where all educators had to instill discipline to learners after discussions. The problem of absenteeism by some educators, where discussions took place to guide and motivate those affected. Planning together as educators doing the same learning area, conducting meetings, and workshops to develop each other.'

'Collaboration resulted in increased teacher motivation, self-esteem, efficacy and reflective behaviour, such as risk taking,

instructional variety, and innovation/creativity.' (Blasé and Blasé, 1999:135)

In asking the question, 'Do you think team-building and team work are important indicators of school effectiveness?' The response was:

'Yes, there is development, motivation and lifting of spirits which leads to school effectiveness as all are working towards achieving the same goal.'

Based on two decades of extensive research, Joyce and Showers (1995) have concluded that classroom implementation of a training design is effective only when training includes coaching from a peer at the classroom level. In response to the question, 'What do you think is the importance of staff-development both for the school and for the individual?'

'If developed, they will perform their duties to their utmost best. They will strive for effectiveness and efficiency. They will have aims and objectives they want to achieve. They will be motivated to go to class.'

4.5 Supervising and evaluating educators.

Blasé and Blasé (1999:133) says,

'Effective principals "hold up a mirror" serve as "another set of eyes", and are "critical friends" who engage in thoughtful discourse with teachers.'

A critical area in which an instructional leader plays a prominent role is to supervise and evaluate educators. To perform this duty

perfectly, it is important the principal has a thorough knowledge of the content that is delivered in the classroom. One of the research questions I asked sought to answer this phenomenon. 'How knowledgeable are they of subject-matter content?' This is in view of the introduction of the N.C.S. which has caught many principals in a confused state since there was little consultation with principals over its implementation. While workshops and in-service training is conducted by government officials aimed at educators only and principals are not invited.

In response to question number 3 under "Managing learner progress", 'What systems do you have in place to monitor curriculum implementation?' She mentioned five activities which indicated how she oversees the implementation of the N.C.S.

> *'Organising workshops so that there is information sharing to ensure that everybody is on board. Supplying all educators with relevant documents for curriculum implementation. Make sure educators attend cluster meetings and district meetings. Check S.M.Ts work to ensure that they do their job. Let educators and S.M.Ts submit their planning and work done in the office (do that department by department).*

The following answer is a response to the question, 'How do you know what takes place in your schools' classrooms?'

> *'By evaluating the educators' work through checking his/her work, e.g. requesting learners' books. In most cases it is by checking the S.M.Ts reports on different educators. In certain instances one has to do class visits that are pre-planned.'*

When answering during the interview how she ensures that the instructional schedule is protected from a variety of interruptions, she said:

> *'If something disrupts us we arrange afternoon classes and we encourage teachers to organise week-end classes. If I can make an example, there was a teachers' strike which affected the instructional schedule. To protect that, we had to have classes during the September holidays to cover up that lost time.'*

According to teachers who were surveyed by Blasé and Blasé (1999:134),

> '*effective principals demonstrated teaching techniques in classrooms and during conferences; they also modeled positive interactions with students*.'

She was able to stay in touch with the goings-on in the classrooms by having classes to instruct, herself, thereby demonstrate to other educators the significance of being punctual and regular in offering lessons in classes. This in spite of the fact that principals are always finding it difficult to maintain active involvement in the classrooms in the face of the ever-increasing demands of the job in relation to workload and competing priorities.

In response to question 19 during interview, 'How do you prioritize time for instructional leadership and other responsibilities that demand your attention? Her answer was:

'As a principal I have some periods to attend to. Now, usually what I do, I inform the administrator that during my class periods I should not be disturbed. I have to go to class and teach learners and if there is any one to see me he/she should wait until I come from class. Except in cases where we have district officials that need some urgent matters, it is only then that I can maybe attend to them, maybe sacrifice my class, but in most cases I do honour my classes unless if there is an urgent matter, I usually give learners some work to do or talk to an educator I share the same learning area with to assist me and attend to that class so that learners are attended to.

Supovitz and Poglinco (2001:16) say,
'Time is the bane of any busy professional, but for instructional leaders it poses a particular challenge because they seek to spend substantial time in classrooms and instruction is only occurring for part of the day.

4.6 Perceptions about Instructional Leadership

Tables 2 and 3 portray the perceptions of Deputy-Principals, H.O.Ds and educators about the instructional leadership practices at the school using the interpretation scale. Table 4 illustrates the perceptions by Deputy-Principals, H.O.Ds and Educators in a combined form. The questions are analysed one at a time.

Table 2: Deputy-Principals and H.O.Ds' Perceptions of Instructional Leadership

	Total	%	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8	Q.9	Q.10
S.A =Strongly Agree	14	20	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2
A = Agree	24	34.29	4	2	1	4	2	5	1	1	2	2
N= Neutral	16	22.86	1	2	1	1	2	0	4	1	1	3
D= Disagree	16	22.86	1	1	3	1	2	0	1	4	3	0
S.D= Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3: Educators' Perceptions of Instructional Leadership

	Total	%	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8	Q.9	Q10
S.A.=Strongly Agree	9	15	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
A=Agree	20	33.33	2	2	1	2	2	3	3	1	1	3
N=Neutral	12	20	0	1	0	3	1	2	1	2	2	0
D=Disagree	7	11.67	0	1	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
S.D.=Strongly Disagree	12	20	2	2	0	0	2	0	1	2	2	1

Table 4: A combined perception of Instructional Leadership

	Total	%	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8	Q.9	Q.10
S.A.=Strongly Agree	**23**	**17.69**	**3**	**2**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**3**
A=Agree	**44**	**33.85**	**6**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**4**	**8**	**4**	**2**	**3**	**5**
N=Neutral	**28**	**21.54**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**5**	**3**	**3**	**3**
D=Disagree	**23**	**17.69**	**1**	**2**	**6**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**4**	**3**	**1**
S.D.=Strongly Disagree	**12**	**9.23**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**1**

The responses to Question 1 indicate that there is agreement between the S.M.T and educators that parents play an important role in the running of the school. This is demonstrated by a high score of 6 which suggests that there is a high degree of consensus among educators and parents. In responding to the question, 'What role do parents play in decision-making at your school?' One educator's response was:

> '*Parents are considered as monitors who came to school to find out if learners arrive on time and are in school uniform, teachers perform their duties and there is progress and development. Their involvement is only when they attend meetings to endorse the policy or mission-statement after it has been formulated, normally by the teachers. Parents meetings that are called are a means of informing parents what was discussed in the S.G.B meetings.'*

Although some educators may not be happy about the extent to which parents participate, which is demonstrated by a low score of 2, but sharing of decision-making is of paramount importance in school effectiveness.

Educator involvement and participation in decision-making is supported by the S.M.T as indicated by a score of 4 while educators' score is 2 in question 2. This suggests that the

principal is helped by the S.M.T most of the time. In response to the question, 'Explain what the decision-making process is in the school.' One educator answered:

> '*Only team-leaders almost make 80% decisions of the entire school. 20% is sometimes considered or just left and ignored.'*

The other reason could be that the school does not have a mission-statement or espoused educational goals everyone could strive to achieve.

Most respondents disagreed with how learners are treated in the school as indicated by a combined score of 6 in question 3. The reason could be that learners are still too young to be considered to make a significant contribution. In responding to the question, 'Are learners often involved in key decision-making process at your school?' One educator indicated that:

> '*Learners are too young (Grade 8 and 9) and they refrain from, and are not encouraged to take part in decision-making processes.'* The other response was, '*They are given orders and told what they must do as learners. The T.L.O which is a teacher-component that is supposed to guide and groom learners on leadership is inactive and does not take learners' complaints seriously. Their involvement only goes so far as to tell parents about school-fund, parents meetings and fund-raising.'*

The high score of 4 from the S.M.T in question 4 indicates that they are the ones responsible for instilling discipline among learners and are therefore expecting respect from learners, while the score of 3 from educators being neutral could imply that they are reluctant in enforcing discipline. This could be consistent with question 2 where some educators felt they were not consulted or considered in decision-making, thus not being interested.

It is not clear where the decision of both S.M.T and educators lay in respect of question 5 as it concerned participation in meetings. This suggests that there is a significant amount of democracy and collaboration in the manner in which meetings are conducted. One educator's response to the question, 'What do you think are the advantages or disadvantages of collaborative decision-making in a school? How does this apply to your school?' The answer was:

> '*The advantage is that a common goal is pursuit. The disadvantage is that not all members might agree on certain issues.'*

The high score on both the S.M.T and educators to agree with question 6 has to do with the fact that the principal does not interfere much with how instruction is carried out in the classroom since her knowledge of the N.C.S. is minimal and assumes that educators know their content. She relies on the S.M.T to supervise delivery of subject-matter in the classroom.

Most educators with a score of 3 agree with question 7 that the principal monitors the implementation of a decision taken. This is because she frequently moves from one class to the other ensuring that educators attend to their classes and conduct class-visits that are pre-planned. The neutral stance taken by the S.M.T pre-supposes that they also supervise and conduct class-visits to assist the principal.

A high score of 4 disagrees with question 8, even though there seemed to have been some involvement of parents in the school. There was no in-service training conducted at the school to familiarise them with the way things are supposed to be done so that involvement could be meaningful and enhanced. I observed that some teachers met parents occasionally to discuss certain aspects of schooling such as academic progress and discipline

A high score of 3 from the S.M.T disagree with question 9 since they are responsible for instilling discipline while educators remain neutral as explained in question 4.

The high score of agreement in question 10 suggests that team-work is evident and is encouraged. This highlights high staff morale which is motivated by the principal as she demonstrates this by attending classes herself. Despite less clarity on the implementation of the N.C.S most educators are still prepared to attend to their learners. There is an eagerness to receive more training on the N.C.S. This is evidenced by educators who responded to the question, 'What training and/or workshops have been most useful? What others would you like to have?' The response from most educators was,

> '*The training of N.C.S and L.O workshop. I like to have more workshops in order to develop us.'*

According to the combined perceptions of both the S.M.T and educators, it is clear that the high score on 'agree' indicates that the principal is doing her work in collaboration with her staff-members which is a sign of collegiality. The next high score falls on 'neutral', more especially question 7, which is indicative of the fact that most educators who participated in this study do not completely agree or disagree with the statement.

'Strongly agree' and 'disagree' share equal number of scores which is 23, more especially with question 3 which deals with the equal treatment of learners as equal stakeholders. This is indicative of the fact that learner leadership training programme is not in place to equip learners with the skills they need to effectively perform their leadership duties

Very few 'strongly disagree' as indicated by a low score of 12 which means that there could be other factors around learner and parental involvement and effective communication skills through sound and open channels of communication as indicated on questions 1,2,5,8 and 9.

4.7 Research Findings

4.7.1 Introduction

The case study school is situated in the East Rand. It caters for learners from an informal settlement which the government is upgrading through provisioning of formal houses known as R.D.P houses. A large portion of learners are drawn from middle-class families who struggle to make ends meet due to difficult socio-economic factors and are unable to send their children to the so-called progressive and well-resourced schools in town.

As reflected in the objectives of the study, contextual factors such as socio-economic conditions, parents and community involvement have a measurable impact upon the results a school produces at the end of the year. It was in the interest of this study to also investigate the manner in which the principal ensures that the goals and purposes of the school are pursued and achieved in spite of the position the school finds itself in. These contextual factors which affect the normal running of the school are going to be discussed and gauged as to their influence to either promote or deter the creation of a quality learning environment.

Lastly, as mentioned in chapter 1, this study also seeks to establish the extent to which the school under the principal's leadership tries to meet the social, economic, cultural and political needs of the learners. Most importantly, in this regard, it will be of great interest to realise how the gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged learners is bridged by the school and also what contribution it makes towards community development.

4.7.2 The socio-economic conditions

The social and economic context in which the school is situated has a direct influence on, and is influenced by, the school. During my observation the principal remarked that:

'Many families are dependent upon government's social grants' benefits as there is considerable unemployment and under-employment. Most parents work in the local town or further afield. Those who commute out of the area budget a lot of their salaries on transport. This is recognised through some *parents who are unable to afford the school uniform and other school necessities such as stationery for their children*.'

The other point to note is that the main catchment area of the school is an informal settlement where there is considerable social and economic disadvantage, with some learners travelling up to ten kilometers to attend school. When asked the question, 'Do you think the involvement of all stakeholders would lead to more effective decision-making process at your school?' The deputy-principal's response was;

'Yes. Discipline is slack. Parents could help to tighten it. For example, learners do not arrive on time at school. Parents could ensure that their children are at school on time.'

An educator who showed concern into the welfare of the learners remarked;

'*Drug abuse is another problem the learners from the settlement are very knowledgeable about. Sometimes the police are invited to intervene through their expertise to search for drugs, more especially "dagga" which is easily available. Most of the times, those arrested would be punished at the police station only to be released in the afternoon and be sent back to school the following day'*

These are some of the incidents that occur in the school that they become a pattern on instilling discipline. There are sometimes conflicts which are brought into the school premises and occassionally into the classroom. I have a vivid recollection of a boy who was brought to my attention. An educator complained of this boy who is not doing his school work. Apparently she was not the only educator concerned about the boy. Other educators came to the fore and expressed the same problem. After I had called both

parents, only the mother responded. On enquiry, I found out that the boy stayed with his grandmother because the mother has found a new live-in boyfriend while the father is staying elsewhere with another girlfriend. Neither parents wanted to take responsibility for the boy's school work and the grandmother is old and not educated. She is, therefore, unable to offer assistance to the boy's schoolwork and there are other children within the family to look after, at the same time. This helped me realise that there are learners who are faced with domestic problems which must be brought to the attention of the school.

Overall, there is a high level of need in the community the school serves. A senior educator expressed his sentiments as follows;

> ' *One other difficulty the school experience is the high level of turnover in the community the school serves, with new-comers arriving from disadvantaged provinces such as Limpopo and Kwa-Zulu Natal. The nature of in-coming families is often problematic, for example, one-parent families; two adults, each with children from at least one former relationship; or families who are escaping from something or somewhere and/or are looking for a good life. Many of these families display varying degrees of awareness of urban environment. The families often expect and sometimes demand that the school should be a replica of the one they have left behind, particular in terms of the medium of instruction in the school'* (head of department).

These are comments expressed by some educators who gave a '*grim picture'* (educator) of the school. I believe that a solution can be found to address the prevailing situation. The following discussion looks into what can be done to overcome challenges the school is faced with, without relying on the government to offer help.

4.7.3 Strong parent and community support

Five categories of parent and community support that are considered relevant to this school to improve the functionality of the school include the following activities: (i)

parents should ensure that children come to school prepared to learn; (ii) the community provides financial and material support to the school;(iii) communication between the school and parents is frequent; (iv) the community has a meaningful role in school governance; and (v) community members and parents assist with instruction.

i) Parents should ensure that children come to school prepared to learn.

In the first instance, family education plays an important role in shaping a child's education. As the saying goes, 'Charity begins at home,' children should be taught basic and fundamental Christian value systems like, 'Treat every human being like you would have them treat you.' These are teachings which will empower children to anticipate the same principles to be applied at school. The teachings received at home will formulate a solid foundation which will be transferred and associated to those found at school.

Educators I spoke to expressed some concerns about the parenting of the learners. These issues were always articulated as concerns and never as criticisms. There was concern about some learners' lack of experience in practical play and conversation with other children and the lack of stimulus they received from home. The disturbance to learners if there was a breakdown in their parents' relationship or domestic problems emerged was a concern and there was also some uneasiness about the lack of parenting skills in some cases like children who come to school in dirty clothes or having not washed properly.

Ensuring regular attendance by learners was a problem identified by some educators. Generally, however, the reason for non-attendance was not truancy in the sense of learners leaving home to go to school and not arriving. Typically, the learners wanted to attend. In many cases, attendance was affected by keeping learners away from school to attend to family funerals of relatives, collecting social grants from government offices, going to the clinic for an ailment of some kind or going to the homeland in compliance to cultural ritual.

> '*The school is aware of the problems and is addressing them in a collaborative and supportive way. We are working on it <u>with them</u> on it'* as the principal said. (her emphasis)

It is important to consider that there are three key players in a child's learning at school, the learner, the parent, and the educator. All three are partners in ensuring effective learning is taking place. They have different roles and responsibilities but in ideal circumstances they should have the same shared aim which is to ensure that a qualitative learning environment is created. It does not help to expect parents to take full responsibility for their children's learning, considering the socio-economic context in which the school is situated.

> '*The teaching staff of a school are directly involved and chiefly concerned with the organisation of learner activities at the school as part of learner educational programme…Each parent is intensely involved and interested in his/her child's welfare and process of growing up properly'* (van der Westhuizen,et. al.:356-357).

An understanding has to be arrived at on how the child should attain best performance at school. Late-coming, truency in attending school and absenteeism should be addressed in a collaborative and supportive way. The participation of parents and the community in the school's activities can involve a variety of influences which can have a positive impact upon the scholastic performance of the learners.

<u>ii) The community provides financial and material support to the school.</u>

This has to do with the importance of not only involving parents, but of securing their active engagement and commitment to their children's learning. Other activities may include selling food in the school's tuck-shop and contribute a portion of sales generated to the school coffers.

Parents who are unemployed should be invited to volunteer their services to the school. For example, to look after the school vegetable garden and sell the crop to the community at a profit for their own keeping and a portion of profit is given to the school. These parents should not be judged negatively but be accepted and invited to bring about learner achievement and a high level of learner performance and attainment.

A firm relationship should be built with families that live next to the school premises. The school's security does not depend on the school's security guards only but also on the families who live around the school that may assist by looking after the school property. I believe that if the school has productive links with individuals, organisations and institutions in the wider community this is to their mutual benefit. These links will broaden perspectives and enrich the learners' and educators' experience.

iii) Communication between the school and parents is frequent.

It is the responsibility of the school to inform parents of any project the school embarks upon. This will enhance the relationship that exists.

> *'The ways the school communicated with parents helped to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of parents were clear and were clearly different from those of the staff' (James et. al.:2006; 113).*

Sometimes learners tell their parents lies or distorted information about events at school but if a newsletter or pamphlet is given to parents regularly then parents would be informed formally or at first hand about the situation at school. Learners who involve themselves in criminal activities and commit misdemeanours at school should be given letters which inform their parents of the acts and steps taken against such learners. Progress reports which reflect scholastic performance of learners should be issued at regular intervals. They should be clear, straight-forward and use simple language to convey a message understood by ordinary people.

iv) The community has a meaningful role in school governance.

The South African Schools' Act 84 of 1996 affords for the involvement of the community to play a meaningful role in the governance of schools. Seven parents are supposed to be involved in the governance of a school as prescribed by the act. One alumni member may be co-opted if the school needs to. I am of the opinion that the eight parents who are legally entitled to serve in the governance of the school are not enough to make a meaningful and effective contribution to the school.

In view of the socio-economic condition the school is situated, there is a need for the involvement of other community members. In addition, the school should consider other 'communities'such as the sporting, business and arts communities and community sub-groups, for example charities, the police and voluntary organisations. Their involvement would be to augment what the school governing body can not fulfil through their expertise in different fields that will benefit the school and the community.

Low family income, which results from low pay and low levels of employment, is a criterion for entitlement to a no-fee school which may have a negative connotation of getting everything for free.

> *'Low levels of pay may result in a dependency culture, where over time, ambitions, aspirations and goals become scaled down. The 'low income/ high dependency' culture may bring with it a number of attendant problems, such as a lack of stimulation and wider experience for the learners attending the school (James et. al.:2006; 120*).

The important tool that can be used to overcome such despondency is the mindset.I believe that an overall approach the school and the community need to adopt towards the socio-economic context is to be empowered and be proactively optimistic in the way they do their work. This means to have an impression that individually and collectively they are capable of solving the problems they face, that they are working to improve matters

and that in the long term the situation would improve. This *'mindset'* is promoted by James et. al. (2006:99) as

> *'a feature of effective schools which improved the way of working. This approach was strengthened by resilience in the face of setbacks or problems, which as in all schools were part of their everyday experience.'*

In accepting the situation collectively, the school and the community should work together to improve conditions because a disadvantaged environment is not an excuse for low attainment, low achievement or low expectations.

v) Community members and parents assist with instruction.

I strongly believe that if parents are invited to assist with instruction it will enhance learning and reduce the burden of educators who are faced with a mammoth task of teaching and other commitments. Joint ventures could be established to enable parents to help with the learning of their children at home. Learners could be given tasks to perform for their parents at home. For example, they could be entrusted to read a daily newspaper or bible to their parents. They could be given a homework tasks which require a parental involvement in its completion.

Various tasks that are given at school could have an impact on the situation at home. This will ensure there is a home-school relationship. Parents could be asked to volunteer their services to the school and serve as assistant educators.

> '*Their role would be to assist educators in the development of important skills such as reading. So, if they did not have the requisite skills to teach learners to read, they would support the practice of reading skills by listening to learners reading' (James et. al.: 2006; 108).*

Parents' ability to assist educators should not be undermined because some could be experts in fields that the school is in dire need of. As some parents may lack the confidence to volunteer, they would need to be invited to help and be supported at an early stage.

4.7.4 Working with and for the community.

Since 1994, the Department of Education has given schools the latitude to determine the extent to which they would deliver quality education through a decentralised site-based education system as the key to the success of educational transformation. This transformation process has been introduced with the purpose of addressing the context of their communities and to address a concern with poor leadership and inadequate outcomes of schools in others.

> *'The Department of Education requires that the principal, as the leading professional, should carry the primary responsibility for the leadership and management of the school. S/he, working with others in the school and wider communities, must effectively promote and support the best quality teaching and learning. The purpose of which is to enable learners to attain the highest levels of achievement in their own interests, the interests of their community and of the country as a whole.'* (Department of Education, May 2005: 3)

The kind of leadership present in a school will determine the extent to which the necessary support, change and improvement is required in a community. This view is supported by Supovitz and Poglinco (2001:1) who emphasise that,

> *'Instructional leadership, not just by principal but by a wider cast of individuals in both formal and informal leadership roles, can play a central role in shifting the emphasis of school activity more directly onto instructional improvements that lead to enhanced student learning and performance.'*

On the other hand, complacency, ignorance or lack of interest in educational matters should be considered deterrent factors. This was revealed by the deputy principal when asked the question, 'How are parents and learners involved in the formulation of your school's policy or mission?'

> *'In township schools parents are not erudite (i.e. the majority of parents). They are usually not involved in the nitty gritty's of the above. They only serve to endorse the policy/mission statement after it has been formulated, usually by the teachers.'*

The principal's response to the same question was;

> *'S.G.B informs the parents through parents meeting, where agreements will be made. Learners are informed by R.C.L members and educators by their reps. The next step is the S.G.B meeting where all reps bring the views of their bodies. This is done to involve everybody so that all take ownership of what was decided on.'*

Despite the laxity of most parents, it still remains the principal's duty to arouse a sense of responsibility with regard to nurturing the well-being and development of the wider community, because school improvement and community development are interdependent processes. Supovitz and Poglinco (2001: 3) asserts that,

> *'Powerful instructional leadership involves more than just a generic focus on instruction, although that is a start. Principals that increase their schools' focus on instruction will certainly improve their students' performance, for more instruction is surely better than less.'*

This can be done by providing leadership and support to the wider community through the availability and utilisation of school facilities and expertise. Since illeteracy is one of the serious problems that require special attention, afternoon classes could be established to conduct lessons in reading and writing. Such lessons would benefit parents and

learners who experience difficulties in reading and writing. If this initiative proves to be successful, other educational projects such as computer-literacy could be embarked upon. Hopkins (1995: 4) maintains that,

> *'To ensure maximum impact on learning, any specific teaching strategy needs to be fully intergrated within a curriculum. Too often thinking skills or study strategies are presented in isolation, with the consequence (a) that is left to the student to transfer the strategy to real settings, and (b) that teachers have no curriculum vehicle to share good practice.'*

This initiative should not focus on educational matters alone, other concerns such as poverty alleviation and eradication should be considered which could imply the creation of a vegetable garden or the manufacture of artifacts to be sold to the public. Money generated in these projects could be used to benefit the school and community projects. All this can be realised if the principal establishes and maintains means of open communication between the school and the parent/community and encourage meaningful home-school relationships.

> *'The principal, working with the School Governing Body and the School Management Team, should work to build collaborative relationships and partnerships within and between the internal and external school communities for the mutual benefit of each.'* (Department of Education, May 2005:24).

4.7.5 Conclusion

Instructional leadership clearly states that the principal has a major influence on how instruction should be conducted in a school. Instructional leadership implies a direct and primary focus on instructional matters, as Fullan (2000:156) asserts,

'The job of the principal or any educational leader has become increasingly complex and constrained. Principals find themselves locked in with less and less room to manoeuvre. They become more and more dependent on context.'

The literature review revealed a concern for the management of time to fulfil the requirements of instructional leadership. It is not surprising; therefore, that instructional leadership requires a principal who will encourage collegiality and collaborative relationship. According to Cardno (2003:8),

'In terms of principals' individual capabilities, good time management was cited as a means for ensuring effectiveness as leaders. As would be expected, planning and prioritising were the most common time management strategies used for ensuring that important tasks were dealt with, including those that were most urgent and those that were important for the future effectiveness of the school.'

It means that if the principal delegates some of her duties appropriately to all stakeholders and puts into place clear management structures, the complex and unique contextual factors that exist can be easily resolved.

4.8 The school's organogram

The characteristics of functional and effective schools that affect student outcomes are embedded in an institution's contextual factors that greatly influence how internal and external factors interact with each other and how effective a school can become.

'Institutionally, the nature of administrative structure over the school, the level of democratization and professionalism in the system, its resources and other factors condition how a school functions' (Chubb and Moe: 1999).

The establishments by the education system of clearly-defined policies for authority delegation and of expected student competencies are necessary to promote high academic

standards. Curriculum implementation and principal: teacher and teacher: learner relations contribute towards enabling conditions which influence academic achievement. All of these factors, external to the school and others internal, condition how effective a school can become. The following section discusses the potential impact these factors have on the school's ability to produce a quality learning environment.

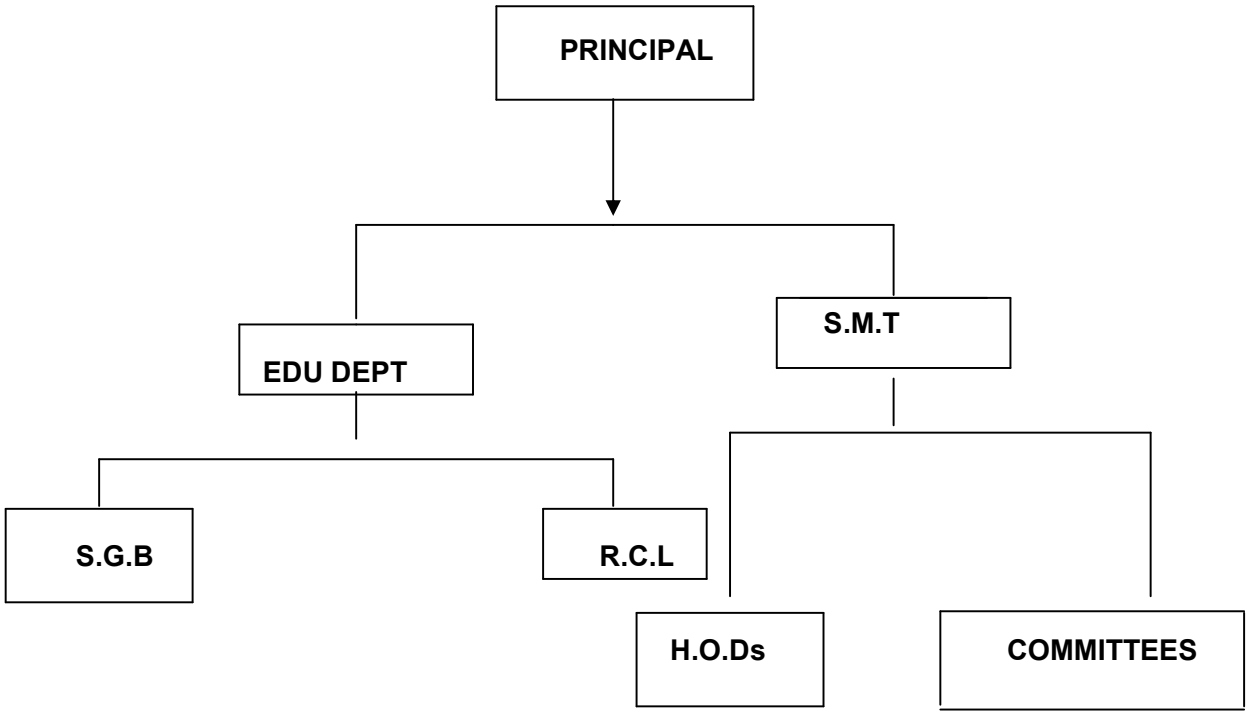

Figure 1

The schools' organogram identifies two key factors that influence student outcomes. The key factors responsible for the schools' functionality are external and internal conditions. All of them interact with each other and are themselves influenced by the context surrounding the school. It is their interactions, the integration amongst them in the school, which determines a schools' quality. The principal plays an important role of creating an environment to ensure that everybody, i.e., external and internal conditions, fulfil their responsibilities. The diagram summarizes the characteristics and their general relationship to each other in influencing educational outcomes.

4.8.1 The School Status

The South African Schools' Act 84 of 1996 entitles the school to operate as a Section 20 public school. According to sub-section (a), 'the governing body of a public school must promote the best interest of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school.'

This act defines flexibility and autonomy at the school's level of independence in making decisions about how time and resources are used to increase academic performance. Now that the school is on its own and no longer dependent on the main school, the principal and staff make decisions about time-tabling, about how teaching and learning materials are used, and other school processes including teacher development and extra-curriculum activities. This will allow the school to develop when it draws from its own resources without help from elsewhere.

4.8.2 The School Governing Body

The school complies with Section 16 (1) of the South African Schools' Act 84 of 1996, which prescribes that, 'subject to this Act, the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body and it may perform only such function and obligations and exercise only such rights as prescribed by the Act.' The governing body of this school consists of 16 members made up as follows:

The Principal (ex-officio)
Three learner representatives
Three educator representatives
One general assistant
Seven parents
One alumni member (co-opted)

It is important that the principal has a good working relationship with the S.G.B. so that the school can have a strategic plan to inspire and motivate all who work in and with the

school. The principal as an ex-officio of the government attends all meetings of the governing body to facilitate proceedings in terms of Section 19 (2) of the South African Schools, Act 84 of 1996 which stipulates that, 'The Head of Department must ensure that principals and other officers of the education department render all necessary assistance to governing bodies in the performance of their functions in terms of this Act.'

Through my observations at the school I discovered that the principal endeavoured to work closely with parents, to promote contact with them and to involve them fully. The governing body also functioned properly according to their designated responsibilities. They were fully engaged and committed to work for the school. This became evident in that the principal made sure that they:

- were kept informed
- were encouraged to undertake training and to attend courses
- had sound relationship with educators
- all attended most if not all the meetings of the governing body
- typically cared strongly about the school

The chairperson of the governing body was highly respected and valued by the school – especially by the principal. In the view of the principal, the chairperson of the governing body was,

'*always available and ready and willing to serve the school.'*

Even if the parent component may not be as competent or enlightened when compared to other members of the body, they hold the most influential and powerful position within the body. Their majority entitles them to hire or fire any member within the school. A controversial responsibility when considering that most of them have not acquired sufficient education to understand the consequence of their decision.

The S.G.B is an important legislative authority which needs to be treated with respect. It is no surprise that some principals will take advantage of their lack of knowledge and manipulate them to perform duties they do not understand. It remains the principal's responsibility to educate and empower them about their responsibilities. It is recommended that the principal create more time than the stipulated quarterly meetings, because the agreements reached within these meetings are fundamental in shaping and sustaining the school improvement and for empowering the school to be active and effective in its ongoing development.

4.8.3 Learner representation

A key assumption of this study is that the school is the critical unit in bringing about change in educational quality. In defining the quality of education, learners play an important role because,

> *'all children deserve the kind of education provided in the schools attended by the more fortunate. It is not right for one group of children to experience high quality education and for others not to. All children everywhere deserve to attend a very effective school* (James et. al. 2006:178).

Learners are the subjects in the educational process and the school's outcomes are defined in terms of their accomplishments.

James et.al. (2006:20) say that,

> *'a substantial body of evidence indicates that when teachers set high standards for their pupils, let the pupils know they are expected to meet those standards and provide intellectually challenging lessons that match those expectations, then the impact on achievement can be considerable.'*

Teachers are the enabling force in the creation of a quality learning environment, who allows learners to expose their potential in acquiring quality education.To enable learners play a meaningful role within the decision-making process of the school, a legislative framework is put in place to afford them the opportunity they require. Section 11 of the South African Schools' Act 84 of 1996 provides for the establishment of a representative council of learners at the school.

Some learners are discouraged by parents and teachers from participating in the R.C.L. activities because there is a perception out there that learners who occupy a position in the R.C.L. are there to make the school ungovernable or they spend most of their time on politicising school issues and do not do well in classrooms because they are more concerned with the negative situations of the school. I found learners' concerns to be genuine in a situation where they are not being taught properly or the school atmosphere does not allow them freedom to express themselves as they should.

> *'In effective schools, the concept of the school as a place of commitment to teaching and learning needs to be communicated clearly by the principal and staff. Effective schools are learner-centered and provide instruction that promotes learning based on students' learning styles'* (Duttweiler and Mutchler: 1990).

One contributor to effectiveness is a well-organised instructional programme. According to the conceptual framework of this study, a well-organised instructional programme should be put in place to ensure academic success by defining learning objectives that are matched to identified teaching strategies and how these are going to be achieved.

4.8.4 The school committees

Heneveld and Craig (1996:13) are of the opinion that,

> *'schools are more effective when teachers have confidence in their ability to teach, care about teaching and about their students, and co-operate with each*

other. These characteristics are reflected in the teachers' use of instructional time and in trying new ideas, by low teacher absenteeism and tardiness, and in a high level of group involvement in planning teaching and in resolving whole-school issues.'

My involvement in the school made me aware that the school has a policy which requires that educators need to belong to established teacher committees which facilitate the smooth running of the school. The school has five different committees with their main task being to improve the functioning of the school. The principal as the leader of the school is a member in all the committees.

It is expected that discussions in these committees should be focussed on improving the performance of the school, but in most cases these deliberations are more on personal issues and unrelated matters that they become a means to waste valuable instructional time. If the principal does not create time to attend them or delegate a senior teacher on her behalf, they are likely to be turned into clubs in which groups pursue their own agendas.

4.8.5 Educator confidence

Since order and discipline are an indication of the seriousness and purpose with which a school approaches improving student learning, a student's ability to learn relies on safe orderly environment which are conducive to learning. As a participant observer I found that when educators have confidence in their ability to teach, care about teaching and about their students, and cooperate with each other then student achievement will be enhanced.

In some instances I discovered that educators' lack of subject mastery and of confidence in the ability to teach probably hinders the development of such attitudes. The introduction of the N.C.S. contributed to a situation of uneasiness and a failure to adapt

the curriculum and available materials to the learners' needs and to produce local teaching-learning materials.

The next discussion seeks to find out the extent to which staff development is implemented and look into the principal's relationship with educators to create a quality learning environment. According to James et. al. (2006:23),

> '*Staff development in effective schools generally takes place at the school site and is focused on enhancing classroom teaching and improving teaching plans. It is continuous and incremental. Embedding staff development within collegial and collaborative planning is important as is ensuring that ideas from development activities are routinely shared.'*

4.9 Staff Development at the school

4.9.1 Introduction

This research has established, in line with the literature review, that adequate time and resources need to be set aside for teacher development, that staff members need to have a say in the content of activities, that skills learned should be practiced over time with follow-up sessions implemented where necessary, and that staff members should be encouraged to share ideas and work together.

> *'Changed attitudes and behaviours and new skills and strategies are the result of most in-service programmes'* (Purkey and Smith: 1983; Haneveld and Hasan: 1989).

In their study and review of educational systems in selected developing countries, Dalin et al. (1992), Farrel (1989) and Fuller (1989) found that local in-service training

particularly those that focussed on pedagogical skills, were key determinants for teacher mastery and student achievement.

A relatively short pre-service training programme followed by relevant, practical participatory in-service programmes are highly recommended. Conditions prevailing in the school that involve the principal's attempt to allow teachers' participation in staff development activities are going to be analysed. They are school-based activities that enhance a teaching and learning process which improves performance and create a quality learning environment. The following activities and responses are selected to reflect the extent to which teacher participation is engaged and how the principal is perceived to be involved and supportive of staff development in the school.

4.9.2 Time and money

One of the deputy-principal's responses to question 5 under 'Coordinating staff-development', 'How are staff prepared in their teaching development for the benefit of learner development?', responded by saying,

> *'The District Office organises in-service training program. We need more training in areas such as Science and Technology.'*

The principal's response to question 2, 'Are all educators allowed in the staff development programmes and how is this done?' Her response was;

> *'Yes. All are informed in due course for diarising so that they avail themselves. A register is circulated on that particular day. Importance of attendance is emphasised and it is compulsory. The school spends approximately R2 000.00 per month to allow staff members time to attend staff development programmes organised by the district and the cluster leaders. Money is also spent to give staff leave to attend courses outside the institution, including costs of travel and accomodation.'*

The principal's effort to improve teachers' ability to perform their duties efficiently is recognised through supporting and provisioning for teachers development through acquiring more knowledge elsewhere. Supovitz and Poglinco (2001:16) say,

> *'Instructional leaders take every opportunity to support teachers in their work and enhance teachers' skills to improve student learning. Principals' support for teachers manifested itself in a variety of ways including encouragement, counseling, and as a resource provider. Taken together, these efforts subtly changed the emphases of principals' roles into that of a service provider of the work of teachers.'*

4.9.3 Staff meetings

Supovitz and Poglinco (2001:7) say,

> *'A vision held solely by one person, no matter how powerful that vision, is invisible to others. In order for that vision to become reality, it must gain widespread acceptance and even advocacy throughout the organisation. How can a principal engender more than just compliance with superficial manifestations of her vision and encourage real consideration and adoption?'*

Question 11 asked the principal, 'Do you think the involvement of all stakeholders would lead to more effective decision-making process at your school?' and her answer was;

> *'Yes. If all stakeholders are involved it involves comprehensive agreement, where everyone participated and hence will lead to effectiveness as all parties will be talking the same language. Everybody will be enforcing implementation. There will be willingness to do or participate as everybody was part of decision-making.'*

One powerful approach through the cultivation of a committed staff is the conducting of regular staff meetings to consolidate common instructional practice. Blasé and Blasé (1999:135) concur by saying,

> *'Effective principals provided staff development opportunities which addressed emergent needs for teachers. These opportunities, along with teacher input, discretion in attending, and support for innovation, resulted in increased teacher innovation/creativity, risk taking, instructional focus, as well as effects on motivation, efficacy, and self-esteem.'*

During the observations it was discovered that staff meetings are scheduled for whole-staff training, evaluation of learner achievement and general management issues. Staff meetings are also used to discuss strategic planning, curriculum matters, teaching methodologies, familiarisation with new techniques and procedures, collective involvement, collaborative planning and leadership seminars. In- service- training meetings are about one hour sessions and could include visiting speakers, but normally focus on one school issue or need at a time.

4.9.4 Morning consultations

To ensure consistency in the promotion of an instructional practice, regular reflection has to be maintained through dialogue. It is up to the principal to devise a strategy on how this can best be done.

> *'Reflective practice is founded on the assumption that increased awareness of one's professional performance can result in considerable improvements of performance. Specifically, reflection on teaching has been advocated by researchers as a means to question teaching/learning events in order to bring one's teaching actions to a conscious level, to interpret the consequences of one's actions, and to conceptualise alternative teaching approaches*.'(Blasé and Blasé 1998)

The research conducted by Blasé and Blasé (1998) found that the need to reflect as a basis for improvement in practice should be seen as an essential element of professional learning at an individual as well as a whole school level. These reflection sessions are held at morning consultations every Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. They are held in the staff room to brief the staff about the latest developments and consult about the progress achieved with the intended goals.

In response to question 3 of 'Coordinating staff development' whose question was, 'What do you think is the importance of staff-development both for the school and for the individual?' the answer from the principal was,

> *'If developed, they will perform their duties to their utmost best. They will strive for effectiveness and efficiency. They will have aims and objectives they want to achieve. They will be motivated to go to class.'*

Motsaathebe (2000:128) says,

> *'Educators need to work towards making schools places where learners are developed as citizens who are transmitted with knowledge and understanding of social values.'*

I maintain that if this is practised in schools, educators are likely to commit themselves to contribute positively and meaningfully to improve and enhance opportunities for quality and effective learning.

4.9.5 Management meetings

Blasé and Blasé (1999:136) say,

> *'The principal of a successful school is not the instructional leader but the co-ordinator of teachers as instructional leaders.'*

An instructional leader uses the expertise of staff in a variety of ways to improve teaching and learning. The principal will rely on the school management team to develop policy and practice as well as working to develop the effectiveness of aspects of teaching and learning such as classroom and behavioural management. Additionally, Blasé and Blasé (1999:136) believe that professional dialogue during feedback appears to enhance

> *'teacher reflection about teaching methods and expected student outcomes' as well as informing teachers' classroom behaviour.'*

In answering question 13 during interview which asked the question, 'How has collaboration and communication within various departments improved students' performance?' Her answer was;

> *'Usually on a monthly or sometimes weekly basis we have S.M.T meetings where reports are given by different S.M.T members of the difficulties they encounter or of any new developments they think will improve teaching and learning in our school. So through communication we found that that improves the students performance because the S.M.T. start in their departments, from their departments after communication with educators they report back to the S.M.T. so that the S.M.T. can apply the same thing, maybe that is new and very good for the school, we adopt and apply it and that improves students' performance.'*

As a member of the school management team I am aware that the management team has a monthly INSET meeting which consists of seminars by visiting speakers or a district

official. Most management development is based on perceived needs relating to the school as a whole and many are used to help analyse and evaluate performance. Management also has a quarterly needs analysis and review meetings.

> *'We know that the kind of social interaction necessary for teacher learning and growth can be promoted, in part, by instructional leaders who value dialogue that encourages teachers to become aware of and critically reflect on their learning and professional practice.'*(Blasé and Blasé 1999:137)

4.9.6 Departmental Work Sessions

Research clearly states that teachers as well are learners who learn from each other. Russell et.al. (1995:71) point out that it is essential for teachers to engage themselves in various reflective activities in the classroom to help them develop their understanding of teacher education practice in their own context. In the event a subject concept is not understood by all, this calls for teachers to meet and advise one another on the suitable method to teach the learners.

> *'Fundamental to the core purpose of the school, student's learning, is the notion that those who are responsible for student learning should also be learners themselves – not just subject experts but people who make mistakes, are anxious, fail, are exhilarated by understanding and filled with awe when something new is discovered.'* (West-Burnham and O'Sullivan, 1998)

As an educator and a member of the staff, I am of the opinion that educators belonging to the same department or teaching the same subject/learning area need to find time to meet and discuss how they are going to approach their work so that a common plan can be outlined and be followed. The purpose of such meetings would be to build what Supovitz and Poglinco (2001:7) refers to as a community of instructional practice.

'The basic idea behind communities of practice holds that groups that form around some specific purpose are a more effective means to achieve that purpose than would be individuals working on the same task in isolation.'

When the principal was asked question 4 under 'Coordinating staff-development', 'Does your school use curriculum specialists to train you and your staff to deal with the demands of the newly introduced curriculum framework, N.C.S.?' Her response was,

'Only on workshops arranged by the district. Usually members of the department discuss together after a workshop, when encountering a problem they usually inform the cluster leader or subject facilitator from the district.'

During my observations at the school I discovered that time is set aside for meetings among colleagues in a particular department. This is facilitated either by a team leader or an appointed leader. There is a pre-set agenda determined by all departmental members. These sessions allow departmental members to collaborate in teams or work independently on curricular and instructional concerns.

4.9.7 Class visits and observations

During the apartheid era educators were subjected to a humiliating practice of class visits known as inspection. In those days, inspectors from the district office would pounce upon a school unannounced to check if educators were doing their work properly. Those found wanting would be humiliated in front of their classes and made to feel unqualified as educators.

An article published in a weekend newspaper (Sunday Times; September 28 2008: p.15) gave an account of why educators were against class visits.

'Teacher appraisal and monitoring was stopped in the early 1990s after the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (Sadtu) banned inspectors from

schools because of the unwarranted punishments they meted out to teachers. These included giving teachers low scores, which deprived them of salary increases, and punitive transfers to schools in remote areas.'

The suspension of class visits created a vacuum which left classrooms without being monitored.

In expressing their opinion on inspection James et. al. (2006:123) says,

'One view was that inspection in some form was important for the system as a whole and was nothing to be feared or concerned about. For schools that expressed this view, inspection was an opportunity to be reassured that they were succeeding, to celebrate success and to validate important aspects of their work. Another view was that inspection was disruptive and unnecessary because of the existing high levels of accountability throughout the system.'

The theoretical framework guiding this study advocates for the principal to consistently monitor if the instructional programme is followed without fail. This can only happen if class visits are arranged to ensure that educators do not loose focus of the intended goals the school has to achieve. The significance of class visits is emphasised by the insistance that the practice should be reinstated through the formation of a unit to ensure its implementation.

'More than 20 years after the hated school inspectors were given the boot, minister of education Naledi Pandor is setting up a special unit that could soon visit teachers in their classrooms to see how well they do their jobs. Accountable only to her, Pandor's new National Education, Evaluation and Development Unit (Needu) will evaluate, monitor and support schools and the country's 430 000 teachers' (Sunday Times; September 28 2008:p. 15).

This is a move which will ensure that the implementation of class visits will help the school to refocus and reflect on its goals if some aspects of their activities reveal weakness in meeting required standards or set objectives. The principal, as an instructional leader, should support teachers through encouragement, counselling and being a resource provider. It is through frequent engagement about classroom practices that student work can be monitored, analysed and improved. Instructional leaders should take every opportunity to support teachers in their work and enhance teachers' skills to improve students' learning. Supovitz and Poglinco (2001:17) say,

> *'No longer can the work of the principal be distinct from that of teachers. Instead, principals' roles become symbiotic with those of teachers. Instructional leadership binds principals more closely to teachers and to the everyday activities of classrooms.'*

Class visits can be the most influential instructional leadership tasks to enhance teaching and learning in the classroom. These should be conducted with the spirit of offering suggestions, pro-actively giving advice for the improvement of instruction and teacher development. Blasé and Blasé (1999:134) also noted, however, a negative impact when principals interrupted lessons, leading to feelings of frustration and resentment by teachers.

> *'You must, therefore, consider if your visits have a positive or negative influence on teaching and learning and focus on using them to increase staff motivation, perhaps by using them to show your accessibility and willingness to provide support.'*

During my observations at the school, class visits were organised by departments to observe and analyse teacher conduct in classrooms. These are conducted to identify and develop effective teaching techniques. Based on two decades of extensive research, Joyce and Showers (1995) have concluded that classroom implementation of a training design is effective only when training includes coaching from a peer at the classroom level. Such

efforts led to greater teacher efficacy, motivation, self-esteem, and impacts on reflective behaviour, including innovation/creativity, risk taking, instructional variety in teaching, planning/preparation, and focus.

4.9.8 Organisation of Staff Development

Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001) argue that it is more legitimate to examine school leadership as a cumulative activity of a broader set of leaders, both formal and informal, within a school rather than as the work of one actor. Supovitz and Poglinco (2001:10) take this further by saying,

> *'The development of other school leaders serves many purposes. First, it expands expertise across the faculty, thereby deepening efforts for instructional improvement and increasing the likelihood that these efforts will be sustained over time. Secondly, it became a necessity for principals to lighten their management burden in order to spend more time in the classroom and on instructional issues.'*

It is for these reasons that this research suggests that staff development should not be the sole responsibility of the principal alone but other members of the staff should be given the responsibility to assist the principal. When asked question 1 within 'Coordinating staff development', 'How are staff development programmes or in-service training workshops planned in your school?' Her response was;

- *When there is a new policy or circular, a workshop is arranged to discuss it.*
- *Working on I.Q.M.S. by co-ordinator so that all educators understand the policy.*

Whilst there isn't a formal Staff Development Committee, one teacher acts as co-ordinator of staff development initiatives. His function mainly is to ensure that any staff or expert advisor from outside the school, who is presenting a workshop or programme, is given whatever is needed for the said programme. The co-ordinator is also responsible for

the general organisation of workshops ensuring that the venue, notice, attendance and so-forth are properly taken care of.

4.9.9 Standing Committees

When asked question 4 which falls under 'Managing learner progress' the question was, 'What are the structures in place to manage the quality of education provided?' Her answer became,

- *I.Q.M.S.*
- *S.M.T*
- *Different Committees who deal with various issues affecting the normal running of the school*

Educators should be given a meaningful role to assist the principal create a qualitative learning environment. McNeill, Cavanagh and Silcox (2003:8) argue that it is ironic that whilst schools exist to educate children, the principles and processes of learning are rarely applied to organisational learning and the professional learning of teachers. Fullan (2001:92) observed that,

> *"... schools are in the business of teaching and learning, yet they are terrible at learning from each other."*
>
> *'At the dyadic (collaborative pairs), and whole staff level the literature on instructional leadership emphasise the principal directly, in a hierarchical sense, with teachers to improve their performance'* (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; McEwan, 2003; Petersen, 1999; Supovitz & Poglinco, 2001).
>
> *'The shortcoming in this model is that knowledge creation and development is depended on one person. There is a need to widen the base of knowledge finding and sharing throughout the school by teachers assuming responsibility for their*

own learning and that of colleagues.' (King, 2002; McEwan, 2003; Supovitz & Poglinco, 2001).

There are five standing committees in the school, each to see to the well-being of a particular aspect, namely L.T.S.M., Cultural, Bereavement, Admissions, Disciplinary and Time-table. Members of staff are free to join one or more of these. Committees engage in discussions and policy-related issues within the ambit of their brief. They provide valuable recommendations and ensure that school development occurs constructively. These committees provide in-service training by giving participants a better and broader perspective of school life and insights into pertinent educational issues that might otherwise not be disseminated to them. They are therefore an important part of the school's general staff development.

4.9.10 Extended classes

Hopkins (2000:4) maintains that,

> *'to ensure maximum impact on learning, any specific teaching strategy needs to be fully integrated within a curriculum. Too often thinking skills or study strategies are presented in isolation, with the consequences (a) that it is left to the student to transfer the strategy to real settings, and (b) that teachers have no curriculum vehicle in which to share good practice.'*

This supports my belief that it is the responsibility of the principal to support his/her staff in performing their duties so that good results could be achieved and learner performance could be enhanced. Hopkins (2000) continues to say,

> *'Successful teachers are not simply charismatic, persuasive and expert presenters; rather, they create powerful cognitive and social tasks to their students, and teach the students how to make productive use of them. The purpose*

of instructional leadership is to facilitate and support this approach to teaching and learning.'

The school principal also has to be exemplary to his/her staff in pursuing avenues that will ensure everybody remains on track in achieving the goals set for the school. Hopkins (2000) supports this view by saying that,

'School improvement is about raising student achievement through focusing on the teaching-learning process and the conditions that support it. It is about strategies for improving the school's capacity for providing quality education in times of change.'

The principal was asked question 12 during interview, 'How do you ensure that the instructional schedule is protected from a variety of interruptions?' Her response was;

'If something disrupts us we arrange afternoon classes and encourage teachers to organise week-end classes. If I can make an example, there was a teachers' strike which affected the instructional schedule. To protect that, we had to have classes during the September holidays to cover up that lost time.'

Most departments arrange for extra classes to be held after school. These are run by educators (without additional pay) who mainly use these classes as reinforcement activities, enrichment classes and homework guidance sessions. As a lot of time here is spent in learner evaluation, these sessions are normally well attended by learners. Subjects that encourage attendance are Mathematics and Physical Science, seemingly because learners struggle to understand them.

From this it was evident that there was a regular staff development programme in place which seemed very much school-focussed and school driven. Even though some educators were not aware of its intention of being developmental in nature, some felt a lot needed to be done to refine it to achieve its purpose. In addition to educators being

committed to the programme, the principal also gave her support in areas where there seemed to be conflict or uncertainty.

4.9.11 Conclusion

As a teacher at the school I found that the principal in her role as an instructional leader attempts to engage educators in staff development activities which ensured participation and involvement of all educators. Hopkins (2000:5-6) says,

> *'if we are serious about raising the levels of student achievement and learning in our schools, then we need to research and develop, more than ever before, styles of leadership that promote, celebrate and enhance the importance of teaching and learning and staff development*.'

Elmore (1995:366) argues that sole focus on teaching and learning is not sufficient condition for school improvement.

> *'Principles of best practice related to teaching and learning have difficulty taking root in schools for two reasons: (a) they require content knowledge and pedagogical skill that few teachers presently have, and (b) they challenge certain basic patterns in the organisation of schooling. Neither problem can be not solved independently of the other, nor is teaching practice likely to change in the absence of solutions that operate simultaneously on both fronts.'*

What Elmore is arguing for is an approach to educational change that at the same time focusses on the organisational conditions of the school, in particular the approach taken to staff development and planning, as well as on the way teaching and learning is conducted. Leithwood (1999:8) defines it as an approach to leadership that emphasises

> *'the behaviours of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students.'*

I am compelled to echo the definition by DeBevoise (1984:15) who explain it as,

> *'those actions that a principal takes or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning' and coordinating staff development programmes; and creating collegial relationships with and among teachers.'*

It is through the principal's efforts to initiate a staff development programme at the school that collegiality and improved learner performance will be realised. Hopkins (2000:4) says,

> *'it is in the confluence between expanding the teaching and learning repertoires of teachers and staff development that school improvement defines itself.'*

From this perspective, instructional leaders are able to create synergy between a focus on teaching and learning on the one hand and capacity building on the other.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion, implications and recommendations for future research

5.1 Conclusion

In the introductory background I asked the research question which guided this study, 'are principals who are implementing instructional leadership effective?' I went further to explore other questions asked by Supovitz and Poglinco (2001),

> *'What does it mean to be an instructional leader? What do principals that are instructional leaders do differently than other principals? How do they spend their time? How do they shape the cultures of their schools? How knowledgeable are they of subject-matter content? How do they work with, and develop, other leaders in their schools?*

These and many other questions which arose out of the exploration of the role of the principal gave sufficient evidence as to the significance of a collaborative working relationship within a learning environment in order to gain improved learner achievement.

The results of this study revealed that the principal had a good understanding of the concept of change. When the school relocated to new premises, she was able to transform the school into a new entity bearing in mind that most educators had little experience in teaching and management, thereby taking them along a path full of changes as some changes had been initiated and managed within the school. The changes that were evident at the school ranged from curriculum, structural changes in terms of power relations and change in ownership and management of the school.

A mechanism was put in place to ensure that there is free-flow of information in all directions. Regular morning consultations, staff-meetings, departmental meetings and the creation of committees are intended to develop a school-focussed staff development programme. The educators' feelings were that their participation, respect and recognition of their input at different levels were a source of inspiration and motivation for them and that contributed to their personal growth.

The principal endeavoured to ensure that power was shared between the S.M.T. and educators. She encouraged educators to seek more information by attending workshops on the N.C.S. organised by the district office and the cluster leaders. She did not completely exclude herself from curriculum matters, but ensured that what the staff was doing was in line with the school's goals and purposes. Her insistance on class-attendance and monitoring of work by both educators and learners was a way of ensuring teaching and learning is taking place.

This study discussed the current research findings on staff development and based on the case study school examined the impact such staff development activities would have on general school development, and also discussed why there was a dire need for a more collaborative system of school management. Additional conclusions drawn from the case study further endorse the very notion supported by this research which points towards the effectiveness of staff development activities. How schools could begin to implement characteristics of such development within their local schools has also been examined. The introduction of school-focussed staff development acitivities should be tied partially to the nature of the school, its historical traditions, its personnel and the views and aspirations of all its stakeholders. The introduction of such school-based practices needs very careful handling at levels of interpersonal relations and group dynamics if it is to be successful in changing school practice. Ineffective institutions are often characterised by defective relationships and every attempt should be made to generate good relationships between colleagues.

5.2 Implications for practice

Involving as many people as possible creates:

- An environment where people develop morally, holistically, and intellectually.
- A possibility for active parental and community involvement in school governance and management structures.
- A room for departmental intervention in improving the standard by helping to resource the school and monitor the use of such resources. Thus the department can monitor the quality of education provided by the school.
- A possibility for self-discipline and mutual respect among members of the school community.
- Necessary benchmarks for turning schools into real progressive institutions that are committed to intellectual and moral development rather than being oppressive zones.

Once parents are involved in matters that affect their children in the school they feel being part of the school community. Thus they can take part in various school activities such as cultural day, school special or open day where they come and learn more about what the school offers to their children. It should be noted that in conducting this study, the researcher could not reach parents to get their views and involvement in such prime activities.

Collective leadership, consultative and collegial management, coupled with an all-inclusive democratic leadership style work best in schools. These are the most vital ingredients that determine success and efficiency in schools. Motsaathebe (1999:150) mentions the advantages of staff development programmes as follows:

- Educators learn to move forward – professionally.
- They learn how to improve their professional practices and enhance learners' academic growth and moral development.
- Staff development programmes provide opportunities for satisfying crucial organisational needs (Dunham, 1995:94); in that schools become work environments where teachers can learn, grow and improve the quality of their teaching (Frase and Conley, 1994:3). As Frase and Conley put it, 'the quality of student learning cannot be greater than the quality of the systems in the school and other environments in which teachers must teach.'
- The school will get an overview of potential skills, knowledge and level of capabilities in usable resources that are essential to meet its challenges, and their long and short term goals.

> '*Professionally empowered teams usually like what they are doing because they are being recognized and their efforts are valued. A school's culture is partly reflected in the way it chooses to recognise accomplishments'* (Purkey and Smith: 1983).

'Culture should therefore be seen as the central factor when considering whole-school development interventions. The culture of the school comprises the value, the underlying norms which are given expression in daily practice, the overall climate of the school. A way of describing the culture of a school is by looking at'the way we do things around here'. (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997:21)

Examples of aspects of school life that reflects its overall culture are:

- The extent to which teachers and learners are motivated
- The way in which learners and parents are involved or not involved in the life of the school
- The way in which people relate to one another
- The general attitude towards teaching and learning

- The approach to discipline
- Late (or punctual) arrivals
- Missing of classes
- Whether staff development is fostered or supported

> *'When a school publicly honour and reward academic achievement and positive social behaviour, this encourages all learners to follow a similar pattern. Effective schools have clearly-defined academic standards, and academic success is recognised through regular public rewards and incentives for achievement'* (Joyce, Hersh and McKibbin: 1983).

While this factor has not been clearly identified within the school, one can expect that as the school develops, the principal will recognise that rewards and incentives reinforce a positive school climate as well.

5.3 Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to find out if the principal created an atmosphere which allowed the capability of stakeholders to participate in decision-making processes within bureaucratic structures that allowed being a member of the school. As Lee and Dimmock (1999:479) observed in their study on secondary schools that,

> '*whilst the principal is key player and leader, there are a number of people who take leadership roles, including deputy-principals, department heads, team leaders and senior teachers*.'

The principal need to realise the involvement of various stakeholders in decision-making and action-planning processes. Motsaathebe (1999:138) emphasises that,

> '*if the organisation wants to be people-oriented organisation it needs to work with as many people as it possibly can in order to get good and collectively decided objectives.'*

Research states that the success of a school relies on the principal's initiatives to set up structures and procedures to arrive at democratic decisions. Decision-making structures and procedures refer to specific structures, rules and methods developed in the school that provide the framework for making decisions around the various tasks of the school. Questions that help us to analyse decision-making processes in a school include:

> *'Who makes the decisions, and how?' 'Are they made by one person, through consultation, by consensus, by majority vote?' 'Are structures and procedures in place to facilitate decision-making processes where the voices of teachers, learners, parents and others can be heard, or does the principal, with or without heads of departments, make decisions on his or her own?' 'Is there some form of appropriate representation in the meetings where crucial decisions are being made?' 'Are the decision-making procedures transparent and clear to everyone so that a sense of ownership of the decisions is fostered?'*(Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997:25)

These plus many other questions, help us to measure the extent to which democracy has been integrated into the school's structures and procedures.There is a strong commitment to democratising schools in South Africa. Decision-making structures and procedures relate very closely to issues of control and management of the school and are therefore central when considering the development of a democratic organisation. This study suggests that instructional leadership by the principal is essential in supporting the commitment of educators. This support can be realised through a staff-development programme. Because educators themselves can be barriers to the devlopment of educator leadership, instructional leaders are needed to invite educators to share leadership functions.

5.4 Recommendations for implementation in the school

5.4.1 A school-focussed staff development programme

A principal should consistently and vigorously promote a staff-development programme in a school, whether through in-service training, visits to other schools, or peer support schemes. Such develoment should not only focus upon needs which are of direct benefit to the school, but should also be of direct benefit to the individual. Instructional leadership requires that the principal be at the forefront of a school-focussed staff development programme. A staff development programme,

> *'is where teachers gain understanding, see demonstrations of the teaching strategy, and have the opportunity to practice in a non-threatening environment. In particular, this means providing the opportunity for immediate and sustained practice, collaboration and peer coaching, and studying development and implementation. Instructional leaders realise that one cannot 'ad hoc' staff development – time has to be found for it.'* (Hopkins 2000:4)

The principal as the head of the school is the one who must articulate a coherent vision of instruction, develop a set of non-negotiable expectations and ensure a consistent implementation of the vision across classrooms.Hopkins and MacGilchrist (1998:413) say,

> *'Schools that add value to the learning, progress and attainment of their pupils are consistent in their teaching practices, educational values that they hold, the high levels of expectation that they have and their low tolerance of failure.'*

A school that expects the department of education to always provide with initiatives of sustaining its development will not be able to achieve good performance. This is supported by Meer (1999:4) who wrote extensively on the subject. The author says,

'the strive for autonomy has led to 'school-focussed' staff development aimed at meeting the needs of the school, of groups and individuals within the school.'

The point is well made by Fitch and Kopp (1990:3) who says:

"The challenge is to provide ways and means to help professionals to grow on the job, as well as in gaining assistance in order to deal with the evolving curriculum. A staff development program, carefully designed to meet the pressing needs of the current era, represents the best approach to meeting the escalating challenges of modern society place upon our schools."

It's easier for any school to survive if the ideological gap between it and the staff is bridged. Effective staff development offers a means to do this, by emphasising collaborative planning and the introduction of training activities which involve all educators. Meer (1999:7) emphasise this by saying,

'*The essence of this approach is that schools should be pro-active in maintaining and improving educational standards.'*

In this way the school will be able to sustain its development and will not be disturbed by outside interference.

5.4.2 Designing a policy

This research suggests that for a school to achieve its goals, it becomes necessary not to lose focus of the agreed principles but remain on course towards the realisation of intended goals. When the school has decided to implement a development programme then a policy should be drafted on how this will be carried out. Meer (1999:97) points out that,

'a well thought out policy provides a framework for coping with change, and acts as a co-ordinating mechanism which brings together ideas relating to staff development into one coherent statement.'

For a policy to be effective it must be consulted from time to time to ensure compliance.As indicated by the Minister of Education, Mrs. Naledi Pandor in 2007, one of the reasons there is a high failure-rate in South African schools is because of a lack of follow-through. In response to an interview question on high failure-rate which appeared in a Sunday newspaper (Sunday Times, 30 December 2007; p.19) **'In hindsight, is there anything you or your department could have done differently?'** Her answer was:

"Well, one of the things I've always felt the department needs to really look at is a much larger monitoring capacity. I think we tend to take our eye off the ball. We sometimes devise a strategy, but forget that we should pursue impact. Therefore, one of the capabilities I want to see the department build far more strongly is that of monitoring. We shoudn't believe that a policy or strategy is everything. Follow-through can sometimes be far more important than the strategy.'

Principals need to prioritise time for instruction. Considering the highly interrupted nature of a working day which is clouded by other duties including parents, staff, learners, governing body members and community organisations, planning and time management strategies should be used for ensuring that important tasks are dealt with, including those that are most urgent and those that are important for the future of the school. Supovitz and Poglinco (2001:12) say,

'When you make your primary focus instruction, you have to spend a lot of time in the place where instruction is going on, and that's in the classrooms.'

5.4.3 Learner and parental involvement

The researcher insists that since parents and learners play an important role in the governance of the school they need to be provided with training programmes. According to Cardno and Collet (2003), among the factors impacting negatively on the principal's role as instructional leader are the involvement of parents, students and other community organisations.

> *'A further difficulty was the fact that these individuals and groups compete with each other, not just because they vied for the principal's time and attention, but because they came from differing perspectives and had different motivations'.*

Such training programmes need to incorporate values which would also be perpetuated at the school as organisations. That is, they should be tailored in such a way that they address both the social and functional outcomes of schooling so as to illuminate the contextual set-up. This is necessary because rigid and authoritative organisations tend to stifle the professional and personal growth of the educators as well as the growth and development of learners.

5.4.4 Group learning

This discussion on group learning includes the area of staff development which, in a school context, usually refers to educator development. This incorporates education and training opportunities through various forms of in-service programmes. Without ongoing programmes and processes to encourage and support staff development, schools become out of touch with educational trends and latest developments. Educators need to realise that it is important to improve the standard of education in their schools and not expect the government to provide in-service training all the time. The point is clearly made by Kremer-Hayon, Vonk and Fessler (1993) who state:

"Moreover, teachers have to develop habits and routines in order to cope and survive in the classroom; but this result in their becoming wedded to forms of practice ...that inhibits subsequent change. In spite of this routinization of many aspects, teaching is so complex that teachers still have to think a great deal about it, both proactively ... and interactively. Research into teacher thinking is beginning to elucidate the nature of some of this thought, but it also confirms that the unpredictability of teaching is a disincentive to too much forward planning."

Group learning would lessen the alienation caused by an apparent external imposition of an unfamiliar system upon professionals who are comfortable, successful, and enjoying self esteem in current practice. Research has shown that:

- Collectively tackling the problem and agreeing to solutions gives confidence to insecure individuals in the group, whose involvement in the development process takes place in an atmosphere of mutual support.
- Collective responsibility for successful outcome places individuals in a position where obstructionism, justified by one or a combination of Gestalt Theory's "learning blocks", may be minimised if it is unhelpful in the attainment of the shared goal.
- The value of each person's contribution to the solution encourages identification with and interest in a successful outcome.
- Finally, the reliance upon the group's own experience as a springboard for change and progress promotes the view of changed behaviour as development – not as re-birth in another form.

The whole organisation could benefit from the achievement of the desired goal because of efforts of its staff, whose ownership of change, earned through participation in the change process, fosters positive attitudes.

'The tension between school development needs and individual needs is eased. Group learning enables staff to evolve so as to cope with a developing reality. It

must be remembered that group learning is an appropriate means for securing staff development when the important outcome is not simply a change in knowledge, but rather in attitude – a commitment to a changing practice. It allows a dynamic response to change, rooted as it is in reality, grounded in existing practice, and targeting personal growth' (Meer, 1999:100-101).

5.4.5 Induction

Newly qualified educators who have joined the school and have no experience need to be put through a vigorous induction process which will see them settle into the culture of the school. The induction process should be viewed as a way of easing the tension between the school or department needs and those of individuals. Coupled with this a professional school-focussed in-service training into the acquisition of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values necessary for classroom management must accompany the process. To this the following proposals are made:

- Induction cannot be viewed as discrete from other forms of staff development. Rather, it is a particular intensive first phase in a career-long process of development.
- Induction must be explicitly and systematically integrated into staff development policy, with special provision for individual support. New staff should know what they can expect.
- Mentor and peer support is effective, if such support is offered without threat, bypeople who are close to the reality of the new teacher's experience. Well-intentioned support from senior management will boost morale, but is less likely to be directly effective.
- Provision must be made to involve mentors, senior management, advisors and the new teacher together, to an appropriate degree, in discussing progress and difficulties. For example, one meeting termly for the first three years.
- School policy on induction should dictate that it is handled at the micro level – by departments and/or peers. However, it must conform to procedures laid down

centrally, preferably through a collaborative decision making process in the interest of consistency.

- Although the structure of induction could be prescriptive, its content should respond to individual needs.

To conclude, Meer (1999:103) says,

> *'induction is most likely to succeed in the flexible environment of task culture in which collaboration, mutual support and valuing individual differences are harnessed. An over-concentration on organisational needs (typical of role culture) in planning induction has a normative effect, through which the individual's development is guided to fit in with the status quo, and this ultimately hinders the potential for new staff to contribute to effective change.'*

5.4.6 Collaborative School Management

Within the school management team a task group should be formulated to broaden the participation and involvement of other stakeholders within the school into the formulation and implementation of the school's policies, vision and mission. School-focussed staff development programmes will need to be driven by a focus group which will ensure that everyone owns the initiatives that accompany such programmes. By the same token Caldwell's and Spink's warning must be noted (1998:65-7) that:

> *"...Collaborative School Management alone is no guarantee of effectiveness ... Due attention must be given to the adoption of appropriate strategies, the development of appropriate skills, the selection of appropriate staff and the development of shared values."*

In considering the ramifications of collaborative school management, issues such as the ownership and stakeholder identification with goals of the organisation, of individuals' needs for professional growth, of the inevitably changing environment to which the

school must respond, are all important. It is an essentially practical approach which, by rigorously referring and relating to the organisation's goals, does not allow practice to lose sight of ethos through preoccupation with technical management issues. Rather, the latter is integral to the process.

5.4.7 Conclusion

I found out that for schools to improve in their quest for academic performance, principals need to involve educators in a sustained dialogue and decision-making about educational matters. While maintaining their positions as leaders in their schools, they still need to recognise educators as equal partners in the process. The hierarchical orientation that prevailed in the past, where educators were subordinates, should give way to a democratic and participative organization of a school that need to restructure and move towards empowerment of educators as professionals.

5.5 Recommendation for further research

This research report was confined to a case study school. There is a need to examine the effects of instructional leadership in a broader perspective. It is clear from this narrow focus research that the South African education system would benefit from a longitudinal study, with a much wider scope, on the role of the principal as an instructional leader. I, therefore, recommend that a further study be undertaken to examine the effects of instructional leadership in a broader scope to include other stakeholders, such as parents and learners, who were not participant in this research.

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION LETTER

P.O.Box 6028
Etwatwa
1519
21 June 2007

The Principal
X Secondary School
P.O. Box 14
Gauteng
1500

Dear Madam

Request for your participation in a research study.

As a part-time Masters student at the Wits School of Education of the University of the Witwatersrand, I am requesting your voluntary participation in a research study into the role of a principal as an instructional leader. The intention of the research is first to understand what factors influence a principal's decision to institute instructional leadership, and second to understand the conditions under which this approach is implemented to influence an effective learning environment. Therefore, I would like to have your input and that of your deputies, your H.O.Ds and staff on their perceptions of instructional leadership. To help me in this research, your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

The research will be conducted through interviews, which should require approximately 60 to 90 minutes of your time. A short questionnaire will be left with you to complete as soon as possible after the interview. The interview will be conducted in privacy and recorded for later transcription. A topic guide will be presented for your approval and consent. Confidentiality will be ensured through the use of fictitious names. You have the right to withdraw at any time from the interview process, and to withdraw your permission to use the information obtained. All information obtained will be treated in strictest confidence.

Yours truly
Cleopas Kau

APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM:

I agree to participate in the study conducted by **Cleopas Kau** a Part-time Masters student at Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. I have read the information letter and understand its contents. I am aware that the interviews will be recorded for later transcription for use in research analysis and a thesis. I am also aware that the information I provide will be treated in the strictest confidentiality and anonymity.

SIGNATURE: ……..

DATE: …….

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND AREA OF FOCUS IN THE RESEARCH

1. Defining the purpose of schooling

1.1 Tell me what you know about instructional leadership.

1.2 What do you consider to be the fundamental purpose of schooling?

1.3 What influenced your perception towards this definition?

1.4 How do you hope to align your S.M.T, teachers, parents and learners towards sharing the same view as yours?

1.5 In the event some members of your staff do not agree with your point of view, how do you persuade them to have the same view as yours?

2. Setting the school-wide goals

2.1 What would you like to see happen in this school or what do you believe are the strong points of the goals you have set for the school?

2.2 How do you hope to achieve these goals?

2.3 What process do you have in place to implement these goals?

2.4 What role do parents, learners and teachers play in enforcing the vision and mission statement of the school?

2.5 Do you have programs which encourage teachers and learners to support a commitment towards this goal?

2.6 Do you feel anxious, happy, afraid, intimidated, and confident about the goals you have set for the school?

3. Providing the resources needed for learning to occur

3.1 How do you support and encourage teachers to do their work?

3.2 What is the best practice you employ of coming to know what each teacher's needs are?

3.3 What incentives do you provide to teachers who perform their duties optimally?

3.4 What about teachers who show no commitment to their work? What do say to them?

3.5 What do you say to a teacher who is in need of an important instrument the school cannot provide at that time and the teacher is urgently in need of that instrument?

3.6 How do you encourage your teachers to comprehend changes that are introduced in the curriculum so as to be efficient in implementing them in the classroom?

3.7 What do you do which serves as an example to teachers on how to conduct instruction in classrooms? How are you a good model to your staff-members?

3.8 What do you do to lift their spirits in their efforts and their commitment to their work?

4. Coordinating staff development programmes

4.1 Do you hold seminars or planning- sessions with your staff to plan activities for the year ahead?

4.2 What did you expect teachers to have difficulties with in the seminar?

4.3 How did participation in the seminar affect the teachers?

4.4 What did you learn about the teaching strategies you presented to the staff?

4.5 What did you like to see the planning committee do at the end of the session?

4.6 What were the most difficult aspects of the program to implement?

4.7 How do you expect the teachers to be effective in their instruction after having participated in the seminar?

4.8 How did the planning committee handle unanticipated opportunities?

4.9 What role do H.O.Ds and senior teachers play in implementing the program?

5. Supervising and evaluating teachers

5.1 How is consistency in implementing an instructional program both across and within classrooms employed in the school?

5.2 How do you ensure the instructional schedule is protected from a variety of interruptions?

5.3 How do you ensure conformity from both teachers and learners?

5.4 How frequently do you observe instruction in the classrooms?

5.5 What do you do as you supervise and evaluate teachers and learners' work?

5.6 How do teacher feel and react towards your observing their instructional conduct in their classes?

5.7 What is your personal impression about the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement?

5.8 How much input do you provide teachers with who are not certain with how to implement the N.C.S.?

5.9 What did you acquire from the in-service training provided to principals by the department of education on N.C.S.?

6. Creating collegial relationships with and among teachers

6.1 How has collaboration and communication within various departments improved students performance?

6.2 How do you perceive your school to be a learning organization?

6.3 What are the things you do to encourage shared learning in the school?

6.4 How do you afford a teacher who has just acquired a qualification or knowledge an opportunity to share it with the rest of the staff?

6.5 How do you create an inviting climate for your staff to have an input towards improving a learning atmosphere?

6.6 What mechanism do you have in place which builds and develop leadership among faculty members?

6.7 How do you share some of your responsibilities with members of your staff?

6.8 How and by whom are the school-based needs determined?

6.9 How do you motivate your staff and learners to produce the best of their abilities?

6.10 How are teachers and learners held accountable for their performance?

6.11 How do you priorities time for instructional leadership and other responsibilities that demand your attention?

Appendix 4

A transcribed interview with the principal.

Question 1

Tell me what you know about instructional leadership.

Answer

Instructional leadership is exercised by educators, the S.M.T. and the principal. Educators exercise it through curriculum delivery when they deliver it in class, just as S.M.T have to check if educators are doing it correctly according to policy through instructions and make sure that policy is adhered to up to the latter.

Question 2

What do you consider to be the fundamental purpose of schooling?

Answer

The fundamental purpose of schooling is teaching and learning. Teaching the learners so that they are having certain things that they can apply as adults and also learning from colleagues certain issues or things they do most like sharing information from colleagues of different schools so that we can develop and impart knowledge.

Question 3

What would you like to see happen in this school or what do you believe are the strong points of the goals you have set for the school?

Answer

I would like to see the entire staff work as a team, having the same mission and vision with the interest of learners at heart. The strong point here is to develop each other if one having a speciality, one should share knowledge with the other and also working along the policy we have at school.

Question 4

What role do parents, learners and teachers play in enforcing the vision and mission statement of the school?

Answer

Firstly, the vision and mission statement of the school, everybody should be part and parcel of it. The R.C.L is the elected body of the learners in the school. The parent body is elected by the parents of the school. If we have the mission and vision statement of the school, the learners should take that to the student body and decide what they want to see happen in the school. All representatives sit within the S.G.B to discuss their goals. Implementation will be easy because everybody will have participated.

Question 9

Do you have seminars or planning-sessions with your staff to plan activities for the year ahead?

Answer

Yes we do, but it is once or twice with the S.M.T and plan what we do for the year ahead, after planning we invite the cluster to plan with the S.M.T and know exactly what we are supposed to do and get ideas from them so that our plan becomes full and planning becomes implemented by everybody.

Question 10

What did you expect teachers to have difficulties with in the seminars?

Answer

With me, because I'm having some new educators, mostly whatever we have to plan I have to workshop them on what is supposed to happen because they don't know most of the things since they are new. It is a big problem because most of the information comes from me or from any other person we have invited to help us with our plan. Participation is not to the latter because they are still new.

Question 11

How is consistency in implementing an instructional program both across and within classroom employed in the school?

Answer

Consistency in implementing an instructional program is maintained through following policy. Policy will direct us and tell us that we are consistent in what we do, without policy it means that everybody will do as he/she does and there will be no consistency. So exactly what is directing us is policy.

Question 12

How do you ensure that the instructional schedule is protected from a variety of interruptions?

Answer

If something disrupts us we arrange afternoon classes and encourage teachers to organise week-end classes. If I can make an example, there was a teachers' strike which affected the instructional schedule. To protect that, we had to have classes during the September holidays to cover up that lost time.

Question 13

How has collaboration and communication within various departments improved students' performance?

Answer

Usually on a monthly or sometimes weekly basis we have S.M.T meetings where reports are given by different S.M.T members of the difficulties they encounter or of any new developments they think will improve teaching and learning in our school. So through communication we found that that improves the students performance because the S.M.T start in their departments, from their departments after communicating with educators they report back to the S.M.T so that the S.M.T can apply the same thing, maybe that is

new and very good for the school, we adopt and apply it and that improves students' performance.

Question 14

How do you perceive your school to be a learning organization?

Answer

Firstly, I encourage my educators to try and communicate with educators who are teaching the same learning area from different schools to get more information concerning their learning area. Secondly, I encourage them to also study further in their learning area so that they know more about their learning area and attend serminars, workshops and meetings where N.C.S. is discussed.

Question 15

What is your personal impression about the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement?

Answer

The N.C.S is good but when looking at how it was introduced, so many things were introduced in a short space of time. Training was too short. Educators were trained in a week and you were expected to understand and apply it. Maybe if they had started in Grade 1 and made sure that educators understand it clearly what is expected, if need be they should have trained educators for a year or maybe on week-ends if not everyday for a year so that they understand clearly what is expected, because now there is confusion concerning N.C.S. Some teachers understand it while others are confused because by then some were still trying to absorb or understand O.B.E, the new curriculum was introduced and it became frustrating to the educators who now have to keep changing things and it has a lot of paper work.

Question 16

How much input do you provide teachers with who are not certain with how to implement the N.C.S?

Answer

Firstly, I speak with the H.O.D and find out if there are problems and if there is a problem, then I invite an educator from one of the neighbouring schools to assist with the N.C.S. If still there is no solution then we consult the district office. Usually when you invite the district official you will find that educators become satisfied.

Question 17

What did you acquire from the in-service training provided to principals by the department of education on N.C.S?

Answer

There was no workshop for principals on N.C.S. The only N.C.S workshop was conducted for educators in various learning areas for a week. If as a principal you did attend such workshops then it means you would not get another chance to attend the workshop on N.C.S.

Question 18

What mechanism do you have in place which builds and develop leadership among staff-members?

Answer

There is information-sharing when we are having our weekly meetings as S.M.T. We usually talk about these things and talk about the downfalls of some of our colleagues and then we assist each other on how to think and develop and we sometimes arrange a workshop where we talk about certain issues that are of need on those workshops we try and develop one another.

Question 19

How do you prioritise time for instructional leadership and other responsibilities that demand your attention?

Answer

As a principal I have some periods to attend to. Now, usually what I do, I inform the administrator that during my class periods I should not be disturbed. I have to go to class and teach learners and if there are any other people to see me they should wait until I come from class. Except in cases where we have district officials that need some urgent matters , it is only then that I can maybe attend to them maybe sacrifice my class, but in most cases I do honour my classes unless if there is an urgent matter, I usually give learners some work to do or talk to an educator I share the same learning area with to assist me and attend to that class so that learners are attended to.

APPENDIX 5: PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS

Dear Participant

Please answer these questions as best as you can. I wish to reassure you that your identity and confidentiality will by no means be revealed to anyone. It is essential that we find ways to improve teaching and learning in our schools for the benefit of us all. I am especially interested in how you perceive to be the best practice to improve instructional leadership in our schools.

If you need to contact me regarding the interview or this questionnaire, please feel free to contact me at 082 5731 302. My supervisor is Mrs. Caroline Faulkner who can be contacted during office hours at (011) 717- 3089 or on her cell-phone number 082 5741 788, her e-mail address is Carol. Faulkner@ wits.ac.za. Included is extra paper if you need it to complete the questions.

Mark the answer applicable to you:

1. Your gender

Male…….	1
Female…….	2

2. Current Position at School

Principal……..	1
Deputy Principal...	2
	3

H.O.D. ……...

3. Experience in School Leadership or (any) Managerial Position

0 – 5 years……..	1
5- 10 years …….	2
10- 15 years ….....	3
15 years and above.	4

4. Number of Years in the Teaching Profession

5 – 10 years ……	1
10 – 15 years ……...	2
15 – 20 years ……...	3
20 years and above...	4

5. Highest Academic Qualification Held: ……..

A: Defining and setting the school goals

1. What is your view or understanding of the following concepts?

(a) 'Leadership'

…….

…….

(b) 'Management'

……

……

2. In your opinion, who should be involved in school management or leadership? Please explain briefly:

……
……

3. As a school leader of teaching and learning, how do you empower your staff to work towards achieving the goals of your school?

……
……

4. Who makes decisions in your school? Please explain in brief why that/those individual/s in particular.

……
……

5. In which area/s of school management do you get involved in more often? Why in that area in particular? Please specify the area

……
……

6. What role do you play in that area? Please tick the letter of the most appropriate category.

(a) I am a facilitator in that specific area;
(b) I am a leader of that faculty
(c) I have fair expertise and skills in that area

7. Why do you think other teachers are not involved in that area of school leadership?

……
……

8. Do you often involve learners in key decision-making process in your school? Why/ why not?

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9. What role do learners (or their representative council) play in decision-making?

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10. What role do parents play in decision-making at your school?

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11. Do you think the involvement of all stakeholders in the school leads to an effective decision-making process at your school? If yes/no in what way?

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……

12. Do you involve more parents and/or learners in the formulation of your school's policy or mission statement? Why those people in majority than others?

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13. Briefly explain your school's vision and mission statement, with its long and short term goals.

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14. How do you develop and sustain the process you elaborated in 12 above?

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15. What are the advantages or disadvantages of collaborative decision-making in your school?

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B: Creating collegial relationships with and among teachers

1. What is your perception of teamwork?

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2. What is your understanding of the concept of effective leadership?

……

……

……

……

3. (a) Do you perceive yourself as an effective ‘leader’ or ‘manager’ in your school?

……

……

(b) Why do you perceive your role as in 3 (a) above?

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……

……

……

4. Do all staff-members in your school participate in team-building initiatives or in any other program of your school development?

……

……

……

……

5. What is the ‘level’ of teamwork participation that exists in your school? Please tick one category.

(a) The spirit is relatively high

(b) The morale is very low

6. Would you like to explain the cause of 5 above?

……

……

7. Could you please highlight some memorable action/s that shows teamwork at your school?

……

……

……..

8. In your opinion, do you think team building and teamwork are some of the prime indicators of school effectiveness?

……

……..

C: Supervising and evaluating teachers

1. (a) Do you have learners and staff appraisals policies in your school?

……

(b) Would you briefly explain how such policies work in your school?

……

……

……

2. Who decide/s on such policies?

(a) The Principal and Deputies only

(b) Some members of Staff and the Learners' Representative Council

(c) The School Governing Body

Please tick one or provide your own answer

……

3. In your own opinion is such a policy working effectively for your school or not? Explain in brief

……

……

……

4. Would you kindly highlight some of the prime successes of the school policy on teacher/learner selection?

……

……

……

……

D: Coordinating staff development program

1. What is your perception of teacher professionalism?

……

……

2. To what extend do you see your fellow teachers as professionals?

……

……

3. In your opinion, does a clear demonstration of professional attitude indicate effectiveness?

……

……

4. Please explain your perception of 'school effectiveness'

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……..

5. How do you relate to other members of staff besides being colleagues?

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……..

6. Do you have any staff development programmes or in-service training workshops conducted in your school?

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……
……

7. (a) How often do you organize such workshops?

……

(b) Who facilitates at these workshops?

……
……..

8. Are all members of the professional staff encouraged to take part in such workshops?

……
……

9. What do you think is the importance or the advantages of such workshops for your school in particular?

……
……

10. Does your school often have curriculum specialists coming to train and empower you to deal with the demands of the newly introduced curriculum framework, N.C.S?

(a) How often do they come?

……

(b) Who initiates their visits?

1. The Principal
2. The Deputies
3. H.O.Ds
4. District Officials

(Please circle)

E: Parents/Students and Community involvement in your school

1. Do you involve stakeholders such as parents and civic organizations in school activities where they show keen interest to participate, for example, in fundraising activities?

……..

If so, what role do they play?

……

……

2. Does the school-based management team decide the involvement of parents, learners and community organizations according to what they (S.M.T) view to be of best interest for them? Please explain

……

……

……

…….

3. What effect does the involvement of parents and learners in school activities have for the school?

……

……

……

……

4. How do you sustain the school's relations with the community?

……

……

Thank you very much for your assistance and the time you spent filling in the questionnaire.

APPENDIX 6

QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE FOR EDUCATORS

Dear Participant

Please answer these questions to the best of your ability. Included is extra paper if you need it to complete the questions. If you need to contact me regarding the questionnaire, please do so at 082 5731 302. My supervisor is Mrs. Caroline Faulkner who can be contacted during office hours at (011) 717-3089 or on her cell-phone number 082 5741 788, her e-mail address is Carol. Faulkner@wits.ac.za. Thank you for both your time and the sharing of your personal experience.

Mark the answer applicable to you:

1. Your gender

Male …….. 1
Female……... 2

2. Number of Years in the Teaching Profession

0 – 5 years…… 1
5- 10 years……... 2
10- 15 years……. 3
15 years and above… 4

3. Highest Academic Qualification Held: …….

1. In your opinion does your school perform better under the current leadership and governance structure?

……

……

……..

2. Does the Principal make proper consultations before he/she takes key decisions that impact on the school?

……

……

……

3. Who often decides on your school policies on admissions, staff selection, code of conduct, school vision and mission statement, etc.?

……

……..

4. Are teachers and learners well represented in such forums?

……

……

5. In your opinion, do you think all decisions emanating from such forums are of great benefit to the school? Please explain in brief.

……

……

……

6. How often does the school invite members of the community to discuss matters pertaining to school progress, school discipline and progress, etc.?

……

……

……
……

7. How often do you get invited to take part in school development programmes (of any kind)?

……
……

8. Do such workshops/ in-service training programmes strengthen your professional capacity and make an impact on your classroom instruction?

……
……
……

9. How often do you meet as staff to discuss how you could improve school performance and maintain standards?

……
……..

10. In your opinion, what are the strengths of your current school leadership? Please explain briefly.

……
……
……..

11. Does your school leadership encourage teamwork or individual approach? Please explain how.

……
……
……..

12. Describe, in brief, the channels of information flow and communication in your school.

……
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……
……..

13. Does the Principal often come to ‘evaluate’ your work as teachers?

……
……
……

14. What support or encouragement does he/she offer in an attempt to enhance your school effectiveness?

……
……
……
……
……
……

PLEASE TICK THE MOST APPROPRIATE ONE BY CIRCLING THE LETTER OF THE RELEVANT ANSWER THAT YOU CHOOSE

S.A= Strongly Agree
A= Agree
N= Neutral
D= Disagree
S.D= Strongly Disagree

1. Parents play an important role in the running of our school:

S.A	**A**	**N**	**D**	**S.D**

2. Our Principal is very open and always listens to our inputs and ideas:

S.A	**A**	**N**	**D**	**S.D**

3. We are a family that treats learners as equal in our school:

S.A	A	N	D	S.D

4. All learners respect us for the way we treat them in and outside school:

S.A	A	N	D	S.D

5. Our staff meetings are always fruitful to me. We discuss relevant issues:

S.A	A	N	D	S.D

6. We are all free to teach in our own particular way and style in our school:

S.A	A	N	D	S.D

7. After reaching a decision, the Principal monitors its implementation process:

S.A	A	N	D	S.D

8. There are regular meetings with parents to discuss how we can improve our performance and maintain standards and enhance effectiveness in our school:

S.A	A	N	D	S.D

9. Student discipline is not a major problem in our school, because we always emphasize self-discipline among the students, and they adhere to the code of conduct:

S.A	A	N	D	S.D

10. Our school puts emphasis on outcomes-based-education and we all work hard to ensure that students acquire necessary skills:

S.A	A	N	D	S.D

Thank you for your assistance and the time you spent filling in the questionnaire.