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An investigation into the nature of leadership development programmes for South African principals in Gauteng schools.

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An investigation into the nature of leadership development programmes for South African principals in Gauteng schools

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Declaration

I hereby certify that, except where noted otherwise, the report is a reflection of my own work.

This report is not confidential and may be used freely by Wits School of Education.

JM Scott

Abstract

Leadership development and learning programmes have become an international phenomenon and efforts to improve the ongoing development of principals are considered highly cost-effective approaches to successful school improvement. In South Africa, a national ACE in School Leadership is being introduced by the Department of Education as a pre-service qualification targeted at developing aspiring principals. It is a professional qualification, focusing on skills development, applied competence and on-site assessment. 16 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), predominantly comprising universities, are currently delivering and fielding testing the ACE using a common framework. This paper reports the findings of an enquiry which aimed primarily to establish how HEIs in Gauteng have interpreted the implementation of the national ACE in delivering a standardised qualification. The study revealed that all HEIs were critical of the official course materials and have modified the content of the curriculum, rewriting some or all the modules. HEIs have focused on the conventional classroom elements and the delivery of knowledge, predominantly using their traditional lecturing approach. One HEI has continued to emphasise the theoretical components of the content over the practice-based elements as per their conventional academic programmes. There are no standardised assessment rubrics and HEIs have been left to implement their own criteria across all elements. The lack of uniformity in the content and curriculum taught and the use of non standardised assessment criteria and possible outcomes across all HEIs, have diminished the notion of a standardized, national accreditation programme. The paper concludes by recommending the formation of a national professional body responsible for assessment of the ACE qualification.

Abbreviations / acronyms

ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
BEd (Hons)	Bachelor of Education (Honours)
DoE	Department of Education
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HoD	Head of Department
MGSLG	Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance
NCSL	National College of School Leadership
n.d.	No date
MEd	Masters in Education
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NMLC	National Management and Leadership Committee
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
REQV	Relative Educational Qualification Value
SASSL	South African Standard for School Leadership
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UP	University of Pretoria
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the research

Leadership is the second most important factor influencing what students learn at school, after the quality of the curriculum and teachers' instruction and controlling for the socio-economic background of learners (Leithwood et al, 2006, p4). There is virtually no documented instance of an underperforming school being turned around without the intervention of a talented leader. Although many other factors may contribute to such turnarounds, leadership is the catalyst for unleashing the potential and capacity that already exists within the organisation (Leithwood et al, 2004, p5). Effective leadership is critical to school reform.

Worldwide, recognition of the need for specific preparation for aspiring and practicing school leaders in order to improve school effectiveness, has been slow to emerge. In 1980, no country had a clear system of national requirements, agreed upon frameworks of knowledge and standards of preparation for school leaders. Training in many countries has not been a requirement for appointment to principalship and it was assumed that good teachers can become effective managers and leaders without specific preparation (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p418). Today however interest in leadership development and learning programmes has become an international phenomenon and there is much debate on leadership development philosophies and programmes. Efforts to improve the recruitment, training, evaluation and ongoing development of principals are being considered a highly cost-effective approach to successful school improvement (Leithwood et al, 2004, p4).

In many countries, principals are required to have a relevant leadership qualification or licence prior to appointment and the training/development of leaders has become of paramount importance. In England, the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), a government-funded body, has responsibility for the professional development of school leaders. From 1 April 2009 it will be mandatory for all aspiring heads to have completed the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) prior to appointment. Training centres and providers have been established in ten NPQH Training and Development Centres in England, Wales and Regional Assessment Centres and training is provided only by accredited trainers of the NPQH. (Caldwell et al, 2003, p113).

In the US it is mandatory for principals to attain an educational masters degree and licences regulate who may become and practice as a principal. However critics in the US, including principals themselves have raised numerous concerns about the quality and effectiveness of the leadership preparation typically provided by university-based programs and elsewhere: that it is disconnected from real-world complexities; that the knowledge base is weak and outdated; that curricula often fail to provide grounding in effective teaching and learning; that mentorships and internships often lack depth or opportunities to test leadership skills in real situations; that admissions standards lack rigour and as a result, too many graduates will eventually be certified, but not truly qualified to effectively lead school wide change. (Davis et al, 2005, p4).

Fundamental criticism of pre-service preparation programs has led to extensive revisions and evaluations of these programmes over the years (Leithwood, et al, 2004, p67). Although the knowledge base about effective educational leadership is constantly growing and there is a plethora of information available to guide leadership practice, policy and research, much of it is normative. Internationally, it is recognized that empirical evidence on the best ways to prepare and develop highly qualified candidates is lacking (Davis et al, 2005). Attention and research is focused on determining how exemplary preparation and professional development programmes develop strong school leaders and identifying their programme components and design features.

1.2 The South African context: the apartheid legacy

The historical context must be an overriding consideration when examining school effectiveness and improvement, as systemic school improvement is inextricably linked to wider social, economic and political conditions, in South Africa's case the political transitions from apartheid to a democratic government (Fleisch & Christie, 2004, p96).

From 1910 to 1990, educational inequality along racial lines, pervaded South African schools. Severe under funding, high pupil-teacher ratios, inadequate infrastructure, a lack of basic learning resources and under-qualified teachers epitomised South African black rural and township schools. Bureaucratic leadership styles and departmental control governed and determined all decision making.

Schooling under apartheid was characterized not only by the most visible signifiers of injustice but also by the political legacy of resistance within schools. Young people created a subculture of defiance against educational authority. The rejection of apartheid education (known as “Bantu Education”) meant the rejection of its authority figures, including school principals. In the early period of transition to democracy in the early 1990s, a culture of resistance also emerged among unionized teachers.

During the last decades of apartheid, the profound inequalities and under-resourcing of schools, the oppositional politics of urban youth and the rise of teacher militancy led to the collapse of effective schooling in many disadvantaged schools in South Africa (Fleisch & Christie, 2004, p103).

In many dysfunctional schools, principals lacked legitimacy and authority and were unable to influence the daily operations of the schools. They were unable to build vision or to harness the leadership that existed among students and staff towards the goals of the school, with the effect that students and staff often pulled against principals’ authority leading to a collapse of the culture of teaching and learning (Fleisch & Christie, 2004, p102).

Women in general were perceived not fit to hold top positions and were under-represented in senior management positions (Steyn, 2003, p1).

While the establishment of a legitimate democratic government in 1994 set the conditions for school change, it has taken some time for this to manifest in school improvement (Fleisch & Christie, 2004, p104). The legitimacy of the new provincial education departments gradually reasserted control and work discipline introducing new labour regulations and monitoring and evaluation of teachers.

1.3 Role of the principal under apartheid

The role of the principal in the traditional model dominant in South Africa prior to 1994 was that of a manager or administrator (Steyn, 2003, p3). School principals had more managerial and administrative tasks and fewer teaching duties. These schools were characterized by authoritarian, hierarchical, top-down management styles (Chisholm & Vally as cited in Steyn, 2003, p3). Principals were implementers of official decisions, rather than managers with the freedom to manage as they saw fit.

The organisational structure in many previously disadvantaged schools was bureaucratic with rigid school procedures, policies and rules; the principals lacked visibility, and their class visits were often not well-planned; the principal's criticism was negatively received and affected educators' performance with a negative effect on the culture of teaching and learning; relationships between principals, educators, learners and parents were characterized by a lack of respect, mistrust, conflict, dissatisfaction, isolation, poor communication and little or no cooperation and support (Chisholm & Vally, as cited in Steyn, 2003, p2).

The training and development available to principals during the apartheid era was inadequate and headteachers were often appointed to the role without any preparation, having to rely on experience, common sense and character (Tsukudu & Taylor cited in Bush et al, 2006, p16). In addition there was evidence that political considerations influenced the principal selection process, leading to appointments of staff that were incompetent, creating a rift between principals and their staff (Johnson, 1995, p224).

1.4 Role of the principal post 1994

Post 1994, principals have been faced with a wide range of demands and challenges, particularly in establishing a culture of teaching and learning in their schools, improving and maintaining high standards of education, working more closely with parents, coping with multicultural school populations, managing change and conflict, coping with limited resources and ensuring more accountability to the community they serve (Mestry & Grobler, 2004, p3).

The decentralization of power to school governing bodies (SGBs), had major implications for the role of the principal, whose responsibility and function changed radically and who was now expected to lead rather than instruct, to introduce more participatory management structures, to share responsibilities with the School Management Team (SMT), empower others to make decisions about the operation of the school rather than controlling them and create a culture of learning rather than controlling behaviour (Steyn, 2003, p3-4).

The relationship between governing bodies and professional staff headed by the principal is one of the most significant variables in determining the success of both the governing body

and the school (Bush & Heystek, 2003, p136). Generally school policy-making is the responsibility of the SGB whilst operational management remains the domain of the principal. SGB responsibilities are extensive excluding only matters relating to teaching and learning during the school day, purchase of educational supplies and operational management of personnel and finance (Bush & Heystek, 2003, p136). Some governing bodies are not fulfilling their policy-making role and are relying on the principal to do so, because parents feel 'out of their depth', have low levels of literacy or insufficient interest in the school.

Principals have to deal with issues outside their control, for example, unions and the department of education negotiating provisions pertaining to class size, employee discipline, grievances, leave for educators, teaching loads, implementing outcome based education and many more. Principals need to be adaptable and responsive to local circumstances requiring new skills and working styles. They must be capable of providing leadership for teams and be able to interact with communities and stakeholders both inside and outside the system, as well as manage and use information to promote efficiency and support democratic governance. The task is demanding, requiring energy, drive and many personal competencies, such as commitment, dedication, resilience and skills (Mestry & Grobler, 2004, p3).

Principals are required to be aware of and understand environmental demands and have the ability to respond to the defined values in education, access to school, poverty and health and manage learning, safe, diverse, integrated and challenging school environments (DoE, 2006, p2).

Managing external relations with parents, the community and fundraising sponsors has become a key and time consuming activity for many principals, diverting valuable time, energy and resources away from supporting and improving instruction. Principals are feeling the pressure (Lumby, n.d., p27).

In South Africa, Grade 12 results are still used as the measure for success. Many schools find it difficult to dramatically raise pass levels unless they can access learners who start from a higher level of achievement. Primary schools and those in sparsely populated or rural areas therefore have difficulty manipulating their intake, and the likely success of the school

does not bear a direct relation to the skill of the principal but more to historical, political and social factors in the wider community (Lumby, n.d., p27). For schools in impoverished rural areas it will be unrealistic to expect the expertise and dedication of the principal to manage external relations sufficiently to grow the school out of difficulty or to build up community support and involvement. These schools cannot revolutionise the community. They reflect it. A wider solution, empowering and educating the whole community must be the essential precursor to improving the education of the next generation in these local schools. (Lumby, n.d., p28).

The impact of all these changes and new expectations placed on principals, has resulted in low morale amongst teachers and mangers, lack of trust and respect, lower productivity, lack of commitment, lack of a culture of teaching and learning, lack of effectiveness and efficiency, poor understanding of transformation issues related to curriculum development, massive movement of children from the townships to urban schools, lack of confidence by parents in the schooling system, a lowering of standards, the mushrooming of private schools and a mass exodus of highly skilled managers (Mestry & Grobler, 2002, p22).

1.5 Rationale for the study:

The plethora of new educational policies since 1994 has required different leadership and management styles and practices, of which none is as important as the leadership style and training received by the school principal (Botha, 2006, p352). The wide-ranging changes in the education system have rendered many serving school principals ineffective in the management of their schools (Van der Westhuizen et al, 2004, p1). Managing change of this magnitude within our socio-economic climate will only be effective if our principals have the required knowledge, values, skills and competence.

Training and development of principals can be considered the strategically most important process necessary to transform education successfully (Mestry & Grobler, 2002, p22).

Given the available evidence from international research of the impact effective principals have in bringing about school change, and the learnings and proliferation of literature on leadership professional development worldwide, this study aims to explore the nature of principal development programmes in the South African context in order to assess whether

they are contributing to the formation of leaders who can transform our schools and improve teaching and learning for all our pupils.

A focus on the professional development of educational leaders and managers has been slow to emerge in South Africa compared to developed countries across the world. It was only in 2003, that the National Department of Education released a draft policy framework, proposing the professionalisation of education managers and leaders by introducing a national principalship qualification for aspiring principals (DoE, 2004, p3).

A national ACE (Advanced Certification: Education (School Management and Leadership)) is currently being introduced by the Department of Education as a pre-service qualification targeted at developing aspiring principals in South Africa. It is a professional qualification, focusing on skills development, applied competence and on-site assessment and aims to improve education management and leadership in our schools and contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning. The decision to make the ACE a mandatory qualification is still under consideration by the Minister of Education.

Some of South Africa's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are currently delivering and field testing the ACE implementation using a common framework agreed by the DoE. This raises questions around how HEIs have interpreted the delivery framework and whether a degree of standardization is being attained using independent and autonomous HEIs as service providers. Have HEIs adapted the curriculum content and programme components to suit their own requirements or approach? Are HEIs embracing and implementing the process-rich components such as mentoring, networking and on-site assessment? What assessment criteria are being used to accredit a national programme? What were the attitudes of the HEIs towards the implementation of a national qualification? Do the schools of education in Gauteng universities have staff with previous principalship experience? What level of diversity, in the approach and implementation, is acceptable for a national accreditation programme?

These questions formed the basis of the enquiry and are addressed during the research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Although the knowledge base about effective educational leadership is constantly growing and there is a plethora of information available to guide leadership practice, policy and research, much of it is normative (Davis et al, 2005). This review summarises and critiques the essence of some of the pertinent theory and empirical evidence in the educational leadership development field.

The literature review is divided into three sections. Section 2.1 covers a broad overview of research conducted in the school leadership field, examining the relationship between principal leadership and student achievement, the qualities and attributes of effective principals and the implications for professional development, as well as the forms or types of leadership described in the literature and predominating educational leadership theory. It includes a discussion of the critical relationship between leadership and school context and reviews the research defining the stages of headship and their associated professional development requirements

The second section contains a review of the research on leadership development programmes, commencing with a comparative discussion of international principal preparation programmes in different countries around the world and followed by a discussion of the programme design components that currently define and constitute international best practice, including a review of the curriculum and learning elements.

The third section includes a discussion of research that documents current limitations of some international development programmes and highlights the critical success factors supporting effective programme design.

The final section takes a look at the South African literature and reviews the findings of research on current principal development programmes.

Before commencing the review, it is important, as a frame of reference, to provide a working definition of the complex concept of leadership and to distinguish it from the terms, management and/or administration. Although there appears to be no agreed or correct

definition, among the hundreds of definitions of leadership that exist in the literature (Bush & Glover, 2003, p4), for the purposes of this research 'leadership' is defined as "a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. It involves inspiring and supporting others towards the achievement of a vision for the school which is based on clear personal and professional values" (Bush & Glover, 2003, p10). On the other hand, 'management' refers to the efficient coordination, organisation and control of information, people and work processes to achieve the vision and goals set by the organization (Hallinger & Snidvongs, 2005, p5). Management therefore incorporates the implementation of school policies and the efficient and effective maintenance of the school's current activities" (Bush & Glover, 2003, p10).

Distinguishing between the terms 'training' and 'education' is also important as strictly speaking they have different meanings. 'Training' can be viewed as a practical activity, designed to enhance skills and to educate about current issues, whilst 'education' enables principals to think creatively about and through difficult issues, therefore preparing them for the unknown (Wright, 2001 in Stroud, 2005, p92). 'Professional development' incorporates both training and education (Stroud, 2005, p92). This research focuses on the professional development of principals, but in certain instances, especially when quoting other research, the word 'training' has been used but needs to be interpreted synonymously with professional development.

'Leadership preparation' includes the formal policy intent, structures, frameworks and programmes designed and implemented to provide an articulated set of activities for both the preparation and ongoing development of potential and serving school leaders (Walker & Dimmock, 2006, p125), whilst 'leadership learning' is conceptualized as the processes, context and mechanisms within particular courses or programmes which target how school leaders best learn (Walker & Dimmock, 2006, p125). Both these concepts, leadership preparation and leadership learning, will be examined and explored in this research, often referred to collectively as leadership development.

2.2 Effective principal leadership and student achievement

Numerous research studies have been undertaken investigating the relationship between principal leadership and student achievement. Hallinger and Heck (1998) in a review of empirical research conducted during 1980-1995 conclude that principals exercise a

measurable, though indirect effect on school effectiveness and student achievement, supporting the general belief among educators that principals contribute to school effectiveness and improvement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998, p157).

Later research has focused on the means by which principals achieve an impact on school outcomes and how contextual forces influence the exercise of leadership in the school. Much of the school improvement focus in the US and later in the UK has been on low performing schools facing challenging circumstances, although few empirical studies are available (Harris, 2002, p16). An in-depth, qualitative analysis of 10 case studies of schools facing challenging circumstances and yet showing improved results, revealed that headteachers adopt leadership approaches that match the particular stage of a school's development (Harris, 2002, p17). The study revealed a number of common themes:

- Vision and values: Heads communicated their personal vision, built around core values of respect, fairness, equality, integrity, honesty and care for the well-being and development of the potential of their staff and students. Their vision and values had primarily a moral purpose.
- Distributed leadership: Heads used teams and individuals throughout the school in their management of change. They tried to bring out the best in staff, using formal development opportunities and involving them in collective problem solving and decision making, empowering them with professional autonomy.
- Investing in staff development: The heads were consistently concerned with maintaining staff morale and motivation and constantly promoted staff development through in-service training, visits to other schools or peer support schemes. The heads set high standards for teaching and teacher performance with their main focus and emphasis being on improving teaching and learning.
- Relationships: The heads were all people-centred, developing and maintaining relationships with staff, students and the community. Human needs were placed above organizational ones, with an emphasis on cultural rather than structural change.
- Community building: All the schools displayed a climate of collaboration and a commitment amongst colleagues to work together. The heads also emphasized the need to establish an 'interconnectedness of home, school and community'. Heads created opportunities for lengthy discussions, development and dialogue between those working within the school as well as between staff and parents.

A study of principals from the state of Virginia in USA revealed that principal quality is linked statistically to student achievement (Kaplan, et al, 2005, p43). The researchers suggested that as principals are increasingly being held accountable for their school's performance, they need to be frequently evaluated and assessed for their own professional growth and school improvement.

Effective principal leadership

Using a multi-perspective methodology, Day et al. (2001) defined effective leadership as being a values led contingency model that is achievement oriented and people-centred and is beyond transformational leadership. Successful leaders have the ability to be simultaneously people-centred whilst managing a number of tensions and dilemmas (Day et al, 2001, p36). The study showed that there are no neat solutions to situations which hold so many variables; that successful leadership is defined and driven by individual and collective value systems rather than instrumental, bureaucratic, managerial concerns. The leaders were reflective, caring and highly principled people who emphasized the human dimension of management. They placed a high premium on personal values and were concerned more with cultural than structural change.

They had the ability to read and adjust to the particular context or set of circumstances they faced, such that their leadership behaviour was contingent on context and situation. The choices they made related directly to their own beliefs, values and leadership style. Centrally important in post-transformational leadership is the co-operation and alignment of others to the leaders' values and vision (Harris, 2005, p80).

What then are the implications for the leadership training and development of aspiring and serving school leaders? Worldwide leadership development and training is a focus of most educational systems, underpinned by the widely recognized concept that leaders are 'made not born'.

"If schools are to become 'knowledge creating' in which 'the knowledge of all the school's members and partners is recognised' and shared, (Hargreaves, 1998, p2 cited by Day et al, 2001, p37) if teachers are to continue to be committed to making a difference in the learning lives of their students through skilful teaching combined with the ethics of 'care, justice and

inclusiveness' (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998, p35 cited by Day et al, 2001, p37), then effective headteachers may themselves be justifiably expected to demonstrate these qualities through the kinds of leadership which they exercise." (Day et al, 2001, p37).

Leadership programmes need to focus on developing leaders that portray the attributes and qualities of effective leaders described above. Since values would appear to be central to successful leadership, reflection upon these must be central to training (Day et al, 2001, p36). Professional development must focus not only on managerial but rather leadership functions and qualities. It needs to include building the range of intra- and interpersonal qualities and skills of effective people-centred principals as well as critical thinking abilities, both emotional and cognitive, and recognize the link between the personal and professional, the development of the individual and organization.

Forms or types of leadership

Different forms of leadership are described in the literature using adjectives such as "instructional", "distributed", participative", "managerial", "transformational", "moral", "strategic" and so on. These labels primarily capture different stylistic or methodological approaches and although important, Leithwood et al. (2004, p6) caution that too often these adjectives mask the important underlying objectives of what they're all trying to accomplish, namely helping the organization set a defensible set of directions and influencing members to move in those directions. Harris (2005, p77) in a discussion of the dominant leadership theories in education, uses them as a framework to present and evaluate different leadership theories. She emphasizes that they must be seen as artificial boundaries that attempt to analyse and describe rather than categorise or constrain.

Bush and Glover (2003, p11-23) review eight of these leadership types using a typology adapted from Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999), who identified six 'models' from their review of 121 articles in four international journals. A brief summary of these leadership styles is provided below, with a more detailed discussion on those styles that have predominated educational leadership theory.

A narrow definition of instructional leadership focuses on those actions directly related to teaching and learning such as classroom supervision, whereas a broader view incorporates all leadership activities that affect student learning (Sheppard, 1996, p326 in Bush and

Glover, 2003, p11). Instructional leadership models typically assume that school leaders, usually principals, have both the expert knowledge and the formal authority to exert influence on teachers and emphasize the principal's role in coordinating, controlling, supervising and developing the curriculum and instruction (Leithwood et al, 1999, p8 cited in Bush and Glover, 2003, p11). Hallinger and Murphy (1985) state that instructional leadership comprises three broad categories: defining the school mission, managing the instructional programme and promoting school climate (Bush and Glover, 2003, p11). Although instructional leadership is important because of its heavy classroom focus, it does not address "second order changes", such as organization building, and according to Leithwood (1994, p499) instructional leadership, developed during the effective schools movement of the 1980s, is showing signs of being a dying paradigm (Bush and Glover, 2003, p12). Despite these comments, Bush and Glover (2003, p12) maintain that instructional leadership is a very important dimension of leadership because it targets the school's central activities, teaching and learning.

The transformational leadership model became popular during the restructuring reforms of the 1990s (Leithwood, 1994 cited in Hallinger, 2003, p330) and Leithwood has substantially increased our understanding of transformational leadership in an educational context (Hallinger, 2003, p 335). His conceptual model of transformational leadership describes seven components: building school vision, establishing school goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualised support; modelling best practices and important organizational values, demonstrating high performance expectations, creating a productive school culture and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions. Unlike instructional leadership there is less emphasis on the principal, leadership is shared, change is stimulated through bottom-up participation and focuses on second-order changes - building a shared vision, improving communication and developing collaborative decision-making processes.

Hallinger (2003, p343) depicts the similarities between both instructional and transformational leadership. In both models the principal focuses on creating a shared sense of purpose, a climate of high expectations and culture of improvement, implementing a reward structure to reflect the goals of staff and students, encouraging staff professional development and visibly living the values fostered by the school. The concepts differ in their target of change – instruction versus developing the capacity of others, the extent to which

the principal co-ordinates and controls versus empowering others (transformational), the degree to which leadership is located in an individual or is shared (transformational) and the extent to which leadership is regarded as top-down control versus bottom-up shared participation (transformational).

Hallinger (2003) theoretically proposes a model of integrated leadership for organizations to learn and perform at the highest levels and for change to be sustainable. He advocates that strong transformational leadership is needed by the principal in supporting the commitment of teachers and that substantial participation is required by the teachers in sharing leadership functions, taking on the role of strong instructional leaders themselves.

The contemporary policy climate within which schools have to operate raises questions about the validity of the transformation model, despite its popularity in the literature. In some countries, school leaders are required to adhere to government prescriptions which affect aims, curriculum content and pedagogy, as well as values. This centralized, directed and more controlled educational system has dramatically reduced the possibility of realising genuinely transformational education and leadership (Bottery 2001 in Bush & Glover, 2003, p15).

Distributed leadership has become the object of recent research (Gronn, 2002 in Leithwood et al, 2004, p28) and overlaps substantially with shared, collaborative and participative leadership concepts. Distributed leadership assumes a set of practices that “are enacted by people at all levels rather than a set of personal characteristics and attributes located in people at the top” (Fletcher and Kaufer, 2003, p22 in Leithwood et al, 2004, p28). Successful leaders develop and count on contributions from many others in their organizations. However the practical application of leadership distribution may easily get confounded with the mere distribution of management responsibilities. There is a need to move beyond its commonsense meaning and for a clearer understanding of the actual impact it has on schools and students to evolve (Leithwood et al, 2004, p7).

The notion of Managerial leadership may appear to be a contradiction, given the definition of leadership above. It assumes that the focus of leaders ought to be on functions, task and behaviours and that if these functions are carried out competently the work of others in the organization will be facilitated (Leithwood et al. 1999 in Bush & Glover, 2003, p19). Although

it is seen as limited and technicist, it is an essential component of successful leadership, ensuring the implementation of the school's vision and strategy. Moral leadership is similar to the transformation model, but with a stronger emphasis on values and beliefs. The participative model stresses the importance of team work, but does not constitute a distinctive approach to leadership. Postmodern leadership focuses on individual interpretation of events while the interpersonal model emphasizes the need for good relationships between staff, students and other stakeholders. The contingent model outlines an approach that recognizes the significance of situational leadership, with heads and other senior staff adapting their approach to the unique circumstances of their schools. (Bush & Glover, 2003, p32).

Research on the forms and effects of leadership is becoming increasingly sensitive to the contexts in which leaders work and how, in order to be successful, leaders need to respond flexibly to their contexts. Impressive evidence suggests that individual leaders actually behave quite differently (and productively) depending on the circumstances they are facing and the people with whom they are working. This questions the common belief in habitual leadership "styles" and the search for a single best model or style. Rather the focus should be on developing leaders who have a large repertoire of practices and the capacity to choose one where appropriate. Further research should be conducted on how such flexibility is exercised by those in various leadership roles (Leithwood et al, 2004, p10).

Bush and Glover (2003, p32) recommend adopting an integrated model of leadership types, starting with a contingent approach because a specific vision for the school, a hallmark of the transformational model, cannot be independent of the context. Transformational leadership then provides the basis for articulating and working towards this vision. Instructional leadership will indicate the main priority of the learning organization. Managerial leadership is important as it is necessary to ensure effective implementation of policies arising from the outcomes of the transformational approach.

Relationship between leadership development and leadership style

It is not clear to what extent leadership development programmes influence leadership practices, and, through these, organisational performance. However, research by Muijs et al. (2006, p103) suggested that there is a relationship between leadership development and leadership behaviours, with the type of leadership development experienced related to the

respondents' views of leadership. Their research showed that experiential leadership development appears to be related to transformational leadership, course-based leadership development to distributive leadership and individual-based leadership development to transactional leadership. The authors highlighted that although they found a relationship it does not prove causality and the results cannot be generalized due to the small sample size, the type of organization selected - successful organizations in the further education providers sector – and the perceptual and non-observational nature of the data and possible non-response bias (Muijs et al, 2006, p103). They recommended further research to determine the best configuration of content and delivery in terms of leadership development that would build on and extend these findings.

Leadership and school context

Each school is unique and the following contextual factors are likely to be significant in influencing approaches to leadership in schools: school size; level of schooling (elementary, primary, secondary, special); school location (urban, suburban, rural); socio-economic factors; governance, including the policy context, the nature and level of activity of the school management body; parents, the nature and level of activity of the parent body; staffing: the experience and commitment of teachers and other staff; school culture, that is the way things are done, incorporating the values, beliefs and customs of the school. Limited evidence is available on the impact of each of these variables. (Bush & Glover, 2003, p29).

Bush & Glover (2003, p29) propose that culture may be the most important variable, both at the societal and organizational level. Dimmock & Walker (2000, p144) argue that as a result of globalization, western paradigms tend to be adopted uncritically and unquestioningly by academics and practitioners in societies and cultures that bear little similarity to those in which the theories originated. Somehow the imported policy gives it international legitimacy, with the result that it is often just implemented without reformulation for the context of the host society. They call for cultural sensitivity when borrowing policies and management concepts in education.

Hallinger and Leithwood (1998) developed a framework for cross-cultural study of educational leadership and highlight the need to understand the indigenous meaning of concepts and cultural concepts of principal leadership and school outcomes, which are intimately associated with the cultural norms that predominate within a given social culture.

For example, Chinese principals are expected to play a strong instructional leadership role compared to American principals, and conflict management in Asian organizations is not a key skill required by their principals, in contrast to that in American schools. They also highlighted how school outcomes and the goals of a 'good' education vary across cultures. Student achievement is important in America but not Canada, student retention in school, teacher or parent satisfaction, student discipline or conduct in China, whilst a sense of community is important in Malaysia.

Since context is important to the types of competencies and situational knowledge required of school leaders, generic leadership programmes are being replaced by more contextualized notions of leadership.

Further research is required in understanding how successful leaders create the conditions in their schools which promote student learning. School-level factors other than leadership that explain variation in student achievement include the school mission and goals, culture, participation in decision making and relationships with parents and the wider community. These are variables that school leaders have considerable potential influence over, and more understanding must be developed around how successful leaders exercise this influence. (Leithwood et al, 2004, p23).

Stages of headship

Studies suggest that principals move through a series of developmental stages as they experience a complex process of socialization which involves both experiential and formal learning (Weindling, 2003, p10). A number of models have been developed to describe the various stages of school leadership development. Weindling's (1999) model is based on empirical data from a 10-year longitudinal study of over 200 new secondary school headteachers:

- Stage 0 – Preparation prior to Headship
- Stage 1 – Entry and encounter (first months in post)
- Stage 2 – Taking hold (3 to 12 months)
- Stage 3 – Reshaping (Second year)
- Stage 4 – Refinement (Years 3 to 4)
- Stage 5 – Consolidation (Years 5 to 7)
- Stage 6 – Plateau or regeneration (Years 8 and onwards) (Weindling, 2003, p10)

The NCSL framework identifies five stages of school leadership:

- Emergent leadership – when a teacher takes on management and leadership responsibilities for the first time
- Established leadership – experienced leaders, such as assistant and deputy heads, who do not intend to pursue headship
- Entry to headship – a teacher's preparation for and induction into a senior leadership post in the school - the NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship)
- Advanced leadership – mature school leaders (after 3-4 years in the role)
- Consultant leadership – able and experienced leaders taking on the training, mentoring and coaching of other headteachers

(NCSL, 2005, p9)

These five stages present possible progression routes throughout the profession for teachers aspiring to headteachers posts, although the framework is not designed as a linear system (Hartle & Thomas, 2003, p14). The NCSL maintains that that there are still gaps and are evaluating whether they are offering the right provision and focus.

Stroud (2005, p101) reports on the huge lack of literature relating to experienced headteachers in general, and in particular to their professional development. Through a qualitative research study of 14 long serving headteachers, in a single region in the south west of England, Stroud (1995, p100) makes a number of recommendations on how to professionally stimulate and update experienced headteachers. All headteachers interviewed thought there was a need for something different for experienced headteachers. They all thought they had been neglected and most found other avenues for their professional stimulation.

The recommendations from Stroud's (2005, p100) interviews and focus groups include the following:

- Training providers should consider the development of a programme for experienced headteachers that would include ways of continually developing the head, staff and school, with an understanding of improving relationships, curriculum and procedures from the point of view of maintenance rather than initial development.
- Providers should offer appropriate professional development allowing experienced headteachers to choose their own direction.

- Universities may want to look at a course for experienced headteachers as part of a degree.
- Experienced headteachers want more coaching and mentoring and bespoke opportunities for professional development.
- Headteachers need to provide input into the development of these courses.
- More personalized types of training and professional development should be offered catering for principals' varying needs.
- Facilitators of courses need to have experience of headship.
- Providers should offer more development in the area of strategic planning.
- Maintaining staff motivation and the school vision over an extended period is a potential area for course development, as well as the professional development of others.
- Breakfast courses are a more suitable time to be away from the office.
- National standards should differentiate between the competencies required by the new and experienced headteacher.

From the comparison of international leadership development centres (discussed in section 2.3 below), it appears that programmes are differentiated for a particular stage of leadership, with England offering the greatest variety of courses. Few countries offer a 'one size fits all' solution to professional development. It is essential that there is coherence between all programmes offered.

2.3 Leadership development programme components

It is widely accepted that teachers require both initial training to be effective classroom practitioners and continuing professional development throughout their careers. This is usually achieved by a combination of pre- and in-service approaches (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p418).

International comparison of leadership development programmes

Worldwide, recognition of the need for specific preparation for aspiring and practicing school leaders, in order to improve school effectiveness, has been slow to emerge. In 1980, no country had a clear system of national requirements, agreed upon frameworks of knowledge and standards of preparation for school leaders. Training in many countries has not been a requirement for appointment to principalship and it was assumed that good teachers can

become effective managers and leaders without specific preparation. (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p418). Today however interest in leadership development and learning programmes has become an international phenomenon and there is much debate on leadership development philosophies and programmes (Walker & Dimmock, 2006, p127).

The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) was established in England in November 2000, with the aim of ensuring that England's current and future school leaders developed the skills, capability and capacity to lead and transform the school education system into the best in the world (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p419). In order to inform its strategy, policies and decision-making, the NCSL undertook an exploratory study in 2001 of some of the best international leadership centres (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p419). The study examined centres in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden and the USA. (Refer to Appendix 1 for a list of the names of actual centres reviewed and their location.)

The findings of the study are summarized in an article by Bush & Jackson (2002). The study included both researchers and school leaders and entailed site visitations to all the centres. The visits were comprehensive, incorporating a number of research elements, including scrutinising centre materials, interviewing providers and participants, visiting schools and observing training activities (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p419).

A similar analysis of headteacher/principal training programmes in England, Australia, Hong Kong and Sweden was conducted in 2000 for the National Centre for Education and Economy (NCEE) in Washington, DC, in order to inform the design of leadership programmes in the USA. Caldwell et al (2003) documented the findings of this research which are incorporated into the discussions below.

Walker & Dimmock (2006) address the preparation and ongoing learning of school leaders in Hong Kong, describing a model of best practice that has been founded on and derived from a body of international research-based evidence of successful principal leadership programmes (Walker & Dimmock, 2006, p125).

A study examining the profiles and perspectives of Australian and Japanese school principals, including obtaining information on their pre- and in-service training programmes

was undertaken by Gamage & Ueyama (2004), the findings of which are also incorporated into the discussion below.

Preparation for aspiring principals

All the centres reviewed by the NCSL researchers, except Sweden, offered programmes for aspiring principals. The main distinction between centres is that some of the programmes are mandatory whilst other courses are available but not compulsory (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p420). Most American states have compulsory programmes. In the USA, it is mandatory for principals to attain an educational masters degree and 35 of the 50 states have adopted or adapted the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards which define and guide school leaders' practice, in their principal preparation programmes. The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), founded in 1956, is regarded as a major influence in shaping the study of educational administration in the US, but there are few equivalent bodies in other countries. (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p418). In Canada, aspiring leaders must complete the Principals' Qualification Programme (PQP) before being appointed as a principal or vice-principal (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p420).

In Singapore, a national programme was introduced in 1984, but it is not mandatory for appointment. However inclusion in the programme is by invitation, and successful completion of the course is expected to ensure promotion. The course differs from that in other countries, in that it is full time for six months, with candidates receiving full pay during the training.

Prior to 2000, leadership development in Hong Kong was peripheral, ad hoc, policy-and provider-led, competency based and built around perceived deficits (Walker & Dimmock, 2006, p127). The few centrally supported programmes for education leaders pre-2000 appeared overwhelmingly classroom-based, were tendered out to universities, rarely involved practicing leaders and were largely detached from school life (Walker & Dimmock, 2006, p128). A new policy for developing principals was adopted by the Education Department in 2002. It was a landmark policy in that it had differentiated levels of leadership, mandated pre-principalship certification, introduced a set of principalship beliefs and 'standards' and a time-regulated structure for development. Requirements were differentiated for aspiring principals, deputy principals and department heads, newly

appointed principals - for principals during their first two years in the post and serving principals– principals with over two years of experience.

There are no courses for aspiring principals in Sweden, where provision focuses on newly appointed leaders, whilst in New Zealand the leadership centres offer a range of programmes which are not mandatory. In Japan, most principals have no pre-service training as the systemic authorities or an individual's peers decide whether a person should be appointed to a principal position (Gamage & Ueyama, 2004, p74). In Australia, most prospective principals enrol in university-level courses, however there are no pre-service requirements except being a good practicing teaching (Gamage & Uleyama, 2004, p72).

Until the 1990s, principals could be appointed in the UK without specific training, no minimum length of service and no other qualification than to teach. In 1995 the Headteacher Leadership and Management Programme (HEADLAMP) was introduced by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) to address the training needs of newly appointed heads followed by the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) in 1997 for aspiring heads (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p419). It adopted the English National Standards for headship. The NPQH became mandatory for all first-time headteachers in March 2004 (Stroud, 2005, p93). Until 31 March 2009 there is a transitional arrangement allowing those with a place on the programme to be appointed to a first headship. However, from 1 April 2009 only those who have successfully completed the NPQH will be able to be appointed to their first substantive headship position (NCSL (a)).

The NCSL has been given responsibility for the NPQH and the full range of leadership development programmes offered in the UK (NCSL (a)). Training centres and providers have been established in ten NPQH Training and Development Centres in England, Wales and Regional Assessment Centres (Caldwell et al, 2003, p113). Training is provided by accredited trainers of the NPQH (Caldwell et al, 2003, p113).

Although Caldwell et al (2003, p114) describe the stages of the NPQH, information describing the programme has been extracted from the NCSL website (NCSL (b)) which reflects a more current and updated version. The NPQH is a personalized programme based on the individual's development needs, taking between 4-12 months to complete, depending on the candidate's closeness to headship. The structure of provision entails four stages.

During the pre-entry stage, the candidate accesses resources to consider their readiness for headship and NPQH. At the entry stage, the candidate completes an online application form, providing evidence of their experience and expertise across the six areas of the National Standard for Headteacher. If the online application is successful, the candidate completes online self-assessment activities and a 360° diagnostic before attending a two-day entry event, where they undertake a range of assessment and development activities designed to reflect the role of a headteacher. This culminates in a one-to-one feedback session where the individual's strengths and areas for development are agreed upon and the candidate becomes an NPQH trainee headteacher.

During the development stage (4-12 months) candidates attend a regional introductory day to meet other trainee headteachers and find out more about the provision as well as determine their individual development plan, which will include, undertaking a placement in another context (5-20 days); peer learning with other trainee headteachers; work-based learning in their current school or organisation and attending national, regional and local development events, such as conferences, seminars and master classes. Candidates are provided with support including one-on-one coaching (up to seven hours), NCSL learning materials, research and online activities and access to NCSL's online communities where trainees can engage with other school leaders.

Candidates are required to build a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate their learning in relation to their identified development needs.

When candidates are ready, they present their portfolio of evidence for graduation assessment, the final stage. The assessment takes the form of a panel interview with assessors including serving headteachers. If successful, the trainee is awarded the NPQH on behalf of the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families.

(NCSL (b))

Professional development for newly appointed principals

The NCSL research revealed that very few of the centres studied (Appendix 1) have established programmes for newly appointed principals (Bush & Jackson, p421). Chicago offered the most comprehensive programme for principals during their first year in the post, which consists of a number of elements – a four-day orientation course, full and half day workshops and five 'retreats' followed by coaching. The 'master principal' coaches are trained and receive payment for their role (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p422).

Walker & Dimmock's (2006) research in Hong Kong, reported that newly appointed principals undertake a programme called *Blue Skies* – a professional learning programme for beginning principals, which starts at the end of their first year in the post. It is designed to fit coherently with programmes for aspiring and serving principals and a centralized induction programme. *Blue Skies* was designed after ongoing evaluations, formal review and other studies into the original newly appointed principal programme. It was also informed by international research and insights.

In New South Wales and New Zealand there are principal induction courses whilst in Ohio entry-level principals undergo a two-year curriculum where the aim is to nurture, guide and develop their knowledge, dispositions and leadership skills. In England in 2000, the Headteachers' Leadership and Management Programme (HEADLAMP) provided a budget of 2500 pounds for each new principal to spend on their personal professional development during their first two years in the post. Participation is not mandatory and the programme focus is left up to the principal's discretion. (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p422).

Professional development for experienced principals

In Sweden, the National Agency for Education has designed a programme for serving principals, which is the main professional development provision. The course has a limited intake and operates over three years, with two four-day residential units per year. Participants also receive in-school consultancy. (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p422).

The NCSL research reported that the Principal Development programme in New South Wales includes courses delivered by university centres leading to a qualification – the Certificate of School Leadership and Management. It includes peer-assisted leadership, mentoring, coaching and shadowing, seminars and study leave (Bush & Jackson, 2002,

p422). In England the Leadership Programme for Serving Heads (LPSH) is a shorter programme than in other countries, and consists of pre-workshop preparation, a four-day residential workshop, post-workshop activity with a senior business leader and a follow-up one year after the workshop (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p422). It is available for principals that have been serving for at least four years (Stroud, 2005, p93).

Although a number of courses exist for aspiring, beginning and experienced principals, there were few examples of a coherent programme for all three stages (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p426).

Walker & Dimmock (2006, p127) highlighted that many of the development programmes emerging from centralised initiatives are not without their problems or critics. Their research revealed that these initiatives are often contested at formulation, implementation and evaluation stages, as was the case in Hong Kong where formal requirements for serving principals were 'loosened' in response to practitioner concerns.

Funding leadership development programmes

The study by Bush and Jackson (2002, p423) of leadership programmes in 9 countries and 15 centres, revealed considerable diversity in the ways that leadership development programmes are funded. In Singapore's fulltime programme, the cost is paid by the government and candidates still receive their salaries. North Carolina's masters' candidates receive a loan that is repayable if they leave the state within four years. In Sweden the state funds the programme, including the costs of stand-in teachers and in Chicago all programmes are free, their commitment to educational regeneration through leadership development.

In Ontario candidates pay their own fees, although they are tax deductible. In New South Wales, candidates receive grants to assist with fees but these do not cover the whole cost. The masters and certification programmes in Hong Kong are also provided on a self-funding basis.

Selection for programmes also tends to be linked to the funding model. Where governments provide funding there is an explicit selection process, whereas selection for programmes that

are self funding is independent of state sponsorship. In Ontario there are tough prerequisites to be accepted, such as a masters degree or equivalent 'additional qualifications'.

National College for School Leadership (NCSL)

The NCSL is a principle source of advice to government and policy-makers on school leadership issues (Hartle & Thomas, 2003, p14). It has set out a national framework for leadership development which provides a professional development route for the preparation, induction, development and regeneration of school leaders. The NCSL is a government-funded non-departmental public body (NDPB). The government provided 10million pounds for building the headquarters in Nottingham. The NCSL receives notification of their targets and objectives through an annual remit from the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (NCSL (c)).

National Standards

Today the use of standards is becoming an international trend and with similarities in the standards across the USA, the UK, Australia and New Zealand (Leithwood and Steinbach (2003) in Weindling (2003, p12)).

In the US, the 1996 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for school leaders have recently been updated. The new standards, Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008, were adopted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) in November 2007 after a two-year nationally collaborative review process. They incorporate what has been learned about education leadership in the past decade and address the changing policy context of American education. They aim to provide guidance to state policymakers as they work to improve education leadership preparation, licensure, evaluation and professional development. They are the foundation and should inform all components of an aligned and cohesive system. (CCSSO, 2008, p1-4).

The six ISLLC 2008 standards are themes organizing the functions that define strong leadership. The standards are listed below:

"An education leader promotes the success of every student:

1. By facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders

2. By advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional programme conducive to student learning and staff professional growth
3. By ensuring management of the organization, operations and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment
4. By collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources
5. By acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner
6. By understanding, responding to and influencing the political, social, economic, legal and cultural context"

(CCSSO, 2008, p14)

In the US, Standards and other guidelines have been shown to be essential tools in developing effective pre-service training programmes for principals. In the US exemplary pre-and in-service development programmes for principals have many common components, including a comprehensive and coherent curriculum aligned to state and professional standards which emphasise instructional leadership (Darling Hammond et al, 2007, p18). The standards document clear expectations about what education leaders need to know to enable every child to meet academic achievement standards, and provide a framework for evaluating the skills and disposition of a candidate or a continuing education programme or a school leader. They are predominantly policy standards and are not to be confused with programme or practice standards. The NPBEA and other organizations are engaging to make recommendations regarding how these policy standards can be used to influence leadership practice, programmes and policy (CCSSSO, 2008, p6).

In England the revised National Standards for Headteachers were published in September 2004 following widespread consultation within the profession. It reflects the evolving role of headship within the 21st century and incorporates current government thinking and guidance. The Standards recognise the key role that headteachers play in engaging in the development and delivery of government policy and in raising and maintaining levels of attainment in schools in order to meet the needs of every child (NCSL (d)).

The Standards define the core purpose of headship and six key non-hierarchical areas that, when taken together, represent the role of the headteacher.

Within each key area, the knowledge requirements, professional qualities (skills, dispositions and personal capabilities headteachers bring to the role) and actions needed to achieve the core purpose are identified. The six key areas are:

- Shaping the future
- Leading learning and teaching
- Developing self and working with others
- Managing the organization
- Securing accountability
- Strengthening community

The standards are generic and applicable to headteachers irrespective of phase and type of school. The standards are meant to have a range of uses, such as assisting with recruitment and performance management processes. They also provide guidance to all stakeholders what should be expected regarding the role of the headteacher as well as being used to identify threshold levels of performance for the assessment framework within the NPQH (Department for Education and Skills, n.d.).

The standards underpin the NPQH.

Features of leadership development programmes

There is little empirical research demonstrating whether and how the kinds of learning opportunities provided by programme features enable principals to become more effective in their practice. As a result, programmes are experimenting with various combinations of curriculum, methods, and program structures hoping to enhance principal practices. (Davis et al, 2005 p7). Walker & Dimmock (2006, p125) argue that corroborative evidence of what works in leadership training and development - to influence principals' knowledge, skills, values and behaviours - is emerging.

<u>Program design: Leadership theory, research and practice</u>

There is widespread recognition that preparation for school leadership should be pitched at postgraduate level and Bush & Jackson (2002, p424) argue that the complexity of the leadership role requires higher order intellectual skills. In certain countries and states the educational leadership courses are equivalent to a masters level, but with a more applied

focus (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p424). Advanced study and practice require the ability to develop understanding as well as knowledge and skills and to go beyond description to analysis and synthesis (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p424).

If courses are aligned with a masters level, Bush & Jackson (2002, p424) raise the question around what constitutes postgraduate work for aspiring and practicing school leaders. While leadership and management have been regarded as practical activities, Bush & Jackson (2002, p424) argue that an appreciation of relevant theory and research is vital if decision-making is to be informed by publicly available knowledge about the issue and not to be constrained by the boundaries of the leader's personal experience. Theory has been deeply unfashionable in British education although it appears that recognition is now being given to theory, which will act as a frame of reference to guide decision-making (Bush & Jackson, 2002, p424).

In their study of international leadership centres, Bush & Jackson (2002, p424) found that a number of the centres (in Pittsburgh, Sweden, Victoria, North Carolina and Singapore) built links between theory, research and practice. Ken Leithwood, director of the Ontario leadership centre, emphasized three theoretical aspects of particular significance for schools:

- Leadership and context: policy, district and school
- Transformational leadership: direction setting, individual support, redesigning the organization
- Distributed leadership, teacher leadership, team leadership development

(Bush & Jackson, 2002, p424)

The translation of theory into practice arises through the relationships between Ontario staff, current principals and aspiring principals. The current principals are usually masters students or doctoral graduates who become familiar with theory through their postgraduate work. They tutor the aspiring candidates and provide the links between theory and practice.

In England, the NPQH is a professional rather than an academic qualification, such as a masters' degree, as it emphasizes the acquisition of measurable competence, paying less attention to research, theory and academic literature. Although it is not explicitly research oriented, NPQH candidates carry out school-based inquiries and many leaders also take masters degrees.

Programme design: curriculum content

Hallinger & Snidvongs (2005, p4) argue that the capacity for moral leadership and management are not mutually exclusive and any development programme should include developing capacity for both leadership and management. Given the widely accepted distinction between leadership and management, Bush & Glover (2004, p7) also argue that both aspects are necessary for successful schools and that training should include elements of both. While a clear vision is essential to establish the nature and direction of change, it is equally important to ensure that innovations are implemented efficiently (Bush & Glover, 2003, p10). They point out that from their review of the literature there is no consistent approach and that it is not accepted by all educationalists and debatable whether leadership development should also include the training of management skills (Bush & Glover, 2004, p7).

Day et al (2001a, p37) criticized many of the training models of principals stating that they focus upon managerial rather than leadership functions. They therefore fail to build the capacities of heads to reflect upon their own values and those of the whole school community and do not provide sufficient emphasis upon building the range of interpersonal qualities and skills necessary and appropriate to effective leadership. Headteachers need to be knowledgeable and skilled in managerial techniques but also people-centred leaders who are able to combine the management of internal and external change with a strong development and achievement orientation. Their practices need to be based upon clear and communicated values to which all in their community subscribe. (Day et al, 2001a, p37). Critical thinking, both emotional and cognitive and intra-and interpersonal skills development must be part of their professional development. Recognition of the link between the personal and the professional, between the development of the individual and the organization, and problem solving and management of 'competing forces' must be key components of leadership training. (Day et al, 2001a, p36).

From their study of international leadership centres, Bush & Jackson (2002, p 420) found that the *content* of programmes for aspiring leaders has many similarities, leading them to hypothesise that there is an international curriculum for school leadership preparation. They identified the following common elements

- Leadership: including vision, mission and transformational leadership
- Learning and teaching or "instructional leadership"

- Human resource management and professional development
- Financial management
- Management of external relations

(Bush & Jackson, 2002, p421)

Table 2.1 compares the programmes in North Carolina, Ontario and England (NQPH). There appears to be an overlap in the structure and content of the courses but there will be differences in the learning experienced by the participants.

North Carolina (LPAP) Leadership Preparation for Aspiring Principals	**Ontario (PQP) Principals' Qualification Prog**	**England (NPQH) National Professional Qualification for Headship**
Leadership	Leadership	Strategic direction and development
Communication and public relations	Communication strategies	
Personnel management	Human resources	Leading and managing staff
Self knowledge	Interpersonal skills	
Curriculum	School programme	Teaching and learning
Students	Students with exceptionalities	
Technology	Resource management	Resource management

Table 2.1: A comparison of the content of leadership programmes for aspiring principals

(Bush and Jackson, 2002, p421)

A recent study in the United States examined what candidates are taught in their principal preparation courses and whether graduates are being equipped for the challenges and opportunities posed by the era of accountability (Hess & Kelly, 2007, p254). They examined the syllabi of a stratified sample of 31 different programmes and evaluated the number of course weeks allocated to each of the following areas of leadership, which they believed are critical skills and knowledge for the role of a principal in the contemporary world of schooling:

- managing for results (including the crucial role of interpreting data, target setting, monitoring, analysis, reallocating resources and managing the school programme)
- managing personnel (hiring, recruiting, inducting, evaluating, conflict management and terminating staff)
- technical knowledge (including school law, finance and facilities management)
- external leadership (includes dealing with external constituencies and school board relations, school community partnership and school politics)
- norms and values
- leadership and school culture

- managing classroom instruction (emphasising pedagogy, curriculum and classroom management)

(Hess & Kelly, 2007, p254)

The findings showed that there is considerable consistency across the variety of institutions. The preparation programmes devoted more than 25 percent of their time to technical knowledge, about 15 percent to managing for results and managing personnel and less to the other areas (Hess & Kelly, 2007, p254). The subject of using data, technology and research in relation to managing school improvement received very limited attention in the principal-preparation programmes (Hess & Kelly, 2007, p257) and scant attention was paid to teaching new principals to hire, evaluate and reward staff in a systematic way or terminate employees (Hess & Kelly, 2007, p260).

Although the above study provides some insight into what is intended to be taught, it must be stated that it is not a reflection of what actually takes place inside the classroom and it is debatable whether syllabi can serve as valuable proxies for what concepts are being taught (Hess & Kelly, 2007, p269). Other weaknesses of the research are that it cannot address the actual topics discussed, type of work assignments given, and measure how performance is assessed (Hess & Kelly, 2007, p269).

Hallinger & Snidvongs (2005, p28) reviewed innovations in curricula offered for the education and training of business leaders and maintain that some of them have relevance for educational leaders, although they were not aware of any widespread implementation in schools. These included, amongst others, the use of management information systems and tools, knowledge management, change management, project management, quality management and CRM, where the learner is the centre of the school and the school's role is to build loyalty and long-term support among stakeholders.

In today's complex, rapidly changing society, a focus on managing educational change is imperative in the quest for continual school improvement and creating the conditions for sustained educational reform. Fullan (2002) uses the term, the Cultural Change Principal, as the sophisticated conceptual thinker, who will transform the organization through people and teams. Apart from their palpable energy, enthusiasm and hope, Cultural Change Principals are characterised by five essential components:

- A moral purpose – where they aim to make a difference and are socially responsible to others and the environment
- Understanding the change process especially resistance to challenging the accepted and established ways of doing things
- A high emotional intelligence with implied self awareness and the ability to motivate and energize disaffected teachers
- Belief in, and encouragement of, the sharing of knowledge and learnings
- Striving for coherence, focusing their energy and achieving greater alignment between all parties

Leadership succession is imperative in bringing about sustainable change, as change must outlive individuals. Continuity is essential and planned succession is essential for perpetuating change (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003).

Program design: leadership learning methods

Perspectives on leadership learning from writers such as Eraut (2000), Goleman (2002) and Kotter (1996) highlight self-awareness and self-learning as an essential path to improved leadership practice (Walker and Dimmock, 2006, p136). “Leaders learn from insights that emerge and accumulate through simultaneously applying intuition and collecting and analyzing knowledge and evidence in specific leadership situations” (Dimmock, 2000 in Walker & Dimmock, 2006, p136).

A 15-country international comparative study into development programmes specifically for school leaders, reported the following findings: the most effective programmes had centralized guidelines for quality assurance, but decentralized implementation to allow greater flexibility and contextualization; effective programmes focused on long-term skill development, not just on-the-job training, and actively involved participants through emphasizing the central role of collaboration (so that collaborative learning networks could continue beyond the ends of the programme); it’s essential to relate learning opportunities to school context, find a balance between theory and practice, involve trainers and facilitators with appropriate backgrounds and systematically evaluate the programmes especially whether they make a difference to improving leadership and student learning outcomes (Huber, 2003 in Walker & Dimmock, 2006, p137).

In a similar review of school leadership programmes internationally, Hallinger (2003) quoted in Walker & Dimmock (2006, p137) identified a number of themes describing current best practice in 12 societies (Asian, European and North American). The themes included the movement from passive to active learning, creating mechanisms and learning processes that connect training to practice, crafting an appropriate role and tools for using performance standards, supporting effective transitions into the leadership role, evaluating leadership development programmes and developing and validating an indigenous knowledge base across cultures.

Bush et al. (2007) proposed a set of polar models of leadership learning (quoted in Lewis & Murphy, 2008, p17):

Traditional leadership learning	**21st century leadership learning**
Prescribed	Emergent
Standardised	Personalised
Offsite	On site
Classroom based	Work based
Content-led	Process-rich
Scale	Depth
Leader development	Leadership development

The range of leadership learning methods that will be effective extends across the continuum between the two models, but evidence suggests that development opportunities in the right-hand column will produce better and more sustainable leadership learning and will more likely be transferred into leadership practices (Lewis & Murphy, 2008, p17).

Synthesising more than 20 years of their work into headship and leadership development in the UK, Earley and Weindling (2004) cited in Walker and Dimmock (2006, p138) found that principals believe the most valuable 'on-the-job' learning activity was working with others, especially effective headteachers. The most useful off-the-job activities included attending courses, visiting other schools, networking with other heads, working on specialist tasks and meetings/contact with non-educationalists. Headteachers supported the idea of using experienced heads as mentors/coaches. Research by Gamage & Uleyama (2004, p77) revealed that principals recommended closer links between universities and schools.

Using the above findings, the following approaches, some based more on beliefs than research, are being used.

Work-based learning

'Learning by experience' and learning 'on the job' are significant factors in the development of a school leader. There is a substantial amount of research suggesting that most adults learn best when exposed to situations requiring the application of acquired skills, knowledge and problem-solving strategies within authentic settings and when guided by critical self-reflection. Experiential learning has been proven to increase a leader's ability to contemplate, analyse and systematically plan strategies for action (Davis et al, 2005, p9).

Field-based internships are often linked to mentoring programmes and require the leader spending time in the mentor's school (Bush & Glover, 2004, p14). They have become a requirement of most certification programmes in the US (Davis et al, 2005, p9). Internships provide candidates with an ideal opportunity to grapple with the day-to-day demands of school administrators, guided by an expert mentor. The mentee is required to reflect on practice and link this back to theoretical insights covered in the related coursework (Daresh, 2001 in Davis et al, 2005 p9). Internships differ across a range of dimensions, including duration, characteristics of the host school and balance of outside and inside influences (Crow, 2001 in Bush & Glover, 2004 p14). A major variable in their success is the status accorded to the mentee. Empowerment increases both their learning and socialization.

Internships must be managed by professional practitioners who have the knowledge, time and commitment to determine whether aspiring principals are engaged in a rich set of experiences that enable them to develop their leadership competencies (Gray et al, p11). Good mentors provide daily feedback and coaching that help interns transition from the role of classroom teacher to that of school leader. They know how to structure opportunities for interns to solve a range of school problems, first through observing and participating and then by actually leading teams in identifying, implementing and evaluating improvement interventions. Skilful mentors help shape interns beliefs about whole-school change, students' capacities to learn, relationships with staff and community members and ethical leadership practices. The Southern Regional Education Board in the USA recognizes that "Good principals aren't born – they mentored" but that their current mentorship programme for interns is failing and focusing on the wrong things. To improve this, mentors need

resources, incentives, accountability and structures to help them support and manage the challenging real-school situations and experiences. They need to play a vital role in evaluating the potential of interns to lead schools effectively. (Gray et al, p27).

The Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) involves collaboration between universities and partner-employing authorities in providing a programme that combines academic coursework with work-based learning demonstrated via a portfolio and supported by a colleague (usually the head) within the participant's school. The results of a comprehensive survey showed that this work-based programme had moved management and leadership forward and was having an impact on schools. (Bush & Glover, 2004, p14).

Problem based learning (PBL)

Over the past decade the use of PBL has become popular in principal preparation programs (Bridges and Hallinger, 1993 in Davis et al, 2005, p9). PBL activities simulate complex real world problems and dilemmas, promoting the blending of theoretical and practical knowledge and improving participants problem-solving capacity.

Mentoring

Mentoring has become increasingly important as a mode of leadership development in many countries, including Australia, England and Wales, Singapore and the USA (Bush & Glover, 2004, p16). Typically mentors are practicing principals within the school in which the candidate works. The primary role of the mentor is to guide the learner in his or her search for strategies to resolve problems, to boost self-confidence and to construct a broad repertoire of leadership skills. Other roles performed by mentors include acting as a catalyst or sounding board, providing linkage to people or resources, discussing various topics relating to school management and offering solutions to the new head's problems (Hobson, 2003, pii). Competent mentors do this through coaching, questioning and probing, providing feedback and counsel, gradually removing support as the mentee's competence increases (Lave, 1991 in Davis et al, 2005, p10).

Evaluative studies suggest that the mentoring of new principals can result in a wide range of benefits, to both the mentee and mentor. The potential benefits for new principals include: reduced feelings of isolation, reduced stress and frustration/therapeutic benefits, increased confidence and self esteem, the opportunity to reflect on the new role, an accelerated rate of

learning, improved personal skills, including communication/political skills, improved technical expertise/problem analysis and friendship. Benefits experienced by mentors include: benefits to their own professional development, improved performance/problem analysis, insights into current practice, awareness of different approaches to the principalship, increased reflectiveness and improved self esteem. (Hobson, 2003, piii).

Factors affecting the success of mentoring programmes include the availability of sufficient time to undertake the mentoring process effectively, the matching or pairing of mentors and mentees, the qualities and attributes of the mentor and whether or not the mentors are trained (Hobson, 2003, p18).

Mentoring and support underpins personalizing learning where it is seen as the most effective way to support deep learning, to secure understanding and to bring about personal change. It is characterized by focusing on high level interpersonal skills and supporting the learner's personal effectiveness, with a blend of challenge and support (West-Burnham, 2008, p16).

There is some recognition among school leaders that developing higher order capacities including balanced judgement, wisdom, reading the situation, intuition and political acumen, as well as the so-called soft skills around interpersonal relationships and motivation of individuals, are best developed through intensive peer interaction, guided by an experienced and skilled mentor from outside the group (Lewis & Murphy, 2008, p19). Skilled facilitation needs to promote accurate analysis and diagnosis, drawing out those skills and approaches which participants might then apply and practice in other situations (Cave & Wilkinson, 1992 in Lewis & Murphy, 2008, p19).

Although the inclusion of mentoring in so many programmes suggests it is worthwhile, and feedback from those who have participated in the process (i.e. mentors and mentees) suggests that it provides a range of benefits, it is recognized that further research needs to be conducted to establish the impact of mentoring on the performance of heads (Hobson, 2003, piv).

Coaching

Coaching differs from mentoring in that it is focused on specific skill-building (Weindling, 2003, p18). It entails a “mutual conversation between manager and employee that follows a predictable process and leads to superior performance, commitment to sustained improvement and positive relationships” (Kinlaw, 1989 in Bush & Glover, 2003 p17).

Portfolios and journals

The learning journal helps the writer record their developmental progress over time and can be a means to encourage reflection.

The learning portfolio has become useful in formative evaluation and leadership development. It is a “structured documentary history of a carefully selected set of coached or mentored accomplishments, substantiated by samples of student work and fully realised only through reflective writing, deliberation and serious conversation” (Wolf et al., 1997 in Bush & Glover, 2004, p 17).

Research on the use of portfolios in principal evaluation in a school district in New York indicated that the portfolio process facilitated leadership effectiveness and enhanced student achievement (Marcoux et al, 2003, p11). The portfolio process facilitated leadership effectiveness by promoting communication, a common vision, ongoing self-assessment, visibility, documentation of accomplishment and professional reading and book studies. It also enhanced the reflective practice of the principal by facilitating collaboration and communication. (Marcoux et al, 2003, p11).

Cohort groups / teamwork

In this method, candidates are grouped into cohorts or teams, which meet regularly over a period of time. Cohorts are known to promote adult learning, through the socially cohesive activity structure. Cohorts emphasise shared authority for learning, opportunities for collaboration and teamwork in practice-oriented situations. The benefits of cohort structured learning experiences include enhanced feelings of group affiliation and acceptance, social and emotional support, motivation, persistence, group learning and mutual assistance.

e-learning

There was only limited evidence of the use of e-learning, teleconferencing, interactive discussion communities and online mentoring in the NCSL research study (Bush & Jackson, 2002), although many of the centres indicated that they would be increasingly using ICT technology in delivery and support of their programmes and activities.

The NCSL online learning portal, called the Learning Gateway, enables users to access resources, track their learning and apply for NCSL programmes as well as provide access to online communities and experts. It has enabled the NCSL to reach a far wider audience for the promotion of leadership skills and its flexibility provides users the opportunity to fit their work around work, home and family commitments.

Reflection

Effective leadership is not a job but a complex interaction between a range of personal and professional qualities and experiences. At the heart of effective leadership is a model of learning that is rooted in personal reflection to enable and enhance understanding and so inform action. Structured reflection enables sustained and fundamental questioning and analysis. Any expression of personal artistry or mastery is rooted in reflection (West-Burnham & Ireson, 2008, p5).

The NCSL has produced a resource entitled '*Leadership Development & Personal Effectiveness'* for use by the leader to support self-directed learning and a personal review using Boyatzis five-stage process. This self directed learning approach involves five discoveries to be used as a tool for making the changes needed to become an emotionally intelligent leader. The learning is meant to be recursive, with the intention that the results of practicing new habits over time enable them to become part of the new real self. This cycle of learning continues as a lifelong process of growth and adaptation. (West-Burnham & Ireson, 2008, p7).

In summary, the methods used in leadership learning need to be well suited to the purpose. Programmes should be rich in process experiences and structured networking opportunities, avoiding excessive content. Leadership development activities should be well planned and have high quality, experienced facilitation and support. (Lewis & Murphy, 2008, p22).

2.4 Limitations of leadership programmes and critical success factors

Despite strong advocacy for leadership development of principals, critics in the US, including principals themselves, have raised numerous concerns about the quality and effectiveness of the leadership preparation typically provided by university-based programs and elsewhere. This section highlights the findings of research conducted in the US and serves as a warning to countries around the world of how provision can so easily become ineffective. However, it also reports on the findings of a study conducted by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, to examine how exemplary preparation and professional development programmes develop strong school leaders.

The findings of a four-year study and candid assessment of 28 of America's education schools revealed that educational administration programmes are the weakest of all the programs at the nation's education schools (Levine, 2005, p13). The results showed that the mission of leadership programmes is unclear, their curricula are disconnected from the needs of leaders and their schools, the programmes pay insufficient attention to clinical education and mentorship by successful practitioners and their research is detached from practice. Although most schools had an internship or practical component that met state guidelines for principal certification, it was ineffective.

89% of principals who responded to the principal questionnaire said that schools of education programmes have an irrelevant curriculum and fail to adequately prepare their graduates to cope with classroom realities, complaining that there was too much theory and not enough practice. The programmes have low admission and graduation standards. Students appear more interested in earning credits and obtaining salary increases than in pursuing rigorous academic studies. Institutions were capitalizing on the students' desire for 'ease of access and ease of programme'. Faculties in leadership programmes were found to be distressingly weak with very few faculty members having had experience as school administrators. Faculty involvement in schools in their region is generally low, chiefly through a lack of time to get involved (Levine, 2005).

Levine (2005, p61) concludes that the field of educational administration in the US is deeply troubled. "Its purposes are muddled and have been since its inception. In a search for greater acceptance within the university, it has turned away from professional education in

favour of the arts and sciences model of graduate education, and it has attenuated its ties with practitioners and practice, hoping to win the approval of the scholarly community. The result is a field rooted neither in practice nor research, offering programmes that fail to prepare school leaders for their jobs, while producing research that is ignored by policy makers and practitioners and looked down on by academics both inside and outside of education schools".

The researchers could not find a model in the US that was exemplary, recommending England's National College for School Leadership as the most promising model, providing examples of good practice and programmes worthy of emulation (Levine, 2005, p54).

Despite the weaknesses, many schools of education in the US have continued to deny the problems and resist improvement (Levine, 2005, p68), with the resulting consequence that states have developed alternative routes for individuals to enter school leadership careers and new providers have sprung up competing with universities and replacing university-based educational leadership programmes. As Levine (2005, p68) points out, the irony is that university based programmes have inherent advantages over the alternatives, in that they bring connections with key fields ranging from teacher education and child development to business and law. They have relationships of long standing with school systems and their leaders. In addition it is unrealistic for alternative programmes to be able to provide for the extraordinary number of school administrators that are needed. Levine (2005, p69) concludes that it would be best if education schools and their educational administration programmes took the lead in bringing about improvement.

Exemplary leadership development programmes

A recent study in the US aimed at examining how exemplary preparation and professional development programmes develop strong school leaders was conducted over the past three years (2003-2007) by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute (SELI) (Darling-Hammond et al, 2007, p5). The study confirmed the effectiveness of many of the design features discussed in section 2.3 above and uncovered other important programme components and facilitating conditions, especially the importance of recruitment and financial support (Darling-Hammond et al, 2007, p5).

The findings of the SELI study revealed that all the pre-service programmes shared the following elements:

- A comprehensive and coherent curriculum aligned with state and professional standards, which emphasised instructional leadership.
- A philosophy and curriculum emphasising leadership of instruction and school improvement.
- Active, student-centred instruction that integrated theory and practice and stimulated reflection. Instructional strategies included problem-based learning; action research; field-based projects; journal writing and portfolios that feature substantial use of feedback and assessment by peers, faculty and the candidates themselves. While specific programme features can be important, more important are how these features are integrated and how the programme reinforces a model of leadership.
- Faculty who are knowledgeable in their subject areas, including both university professors and practitioners experienced in school leadership and administration.
- Social and professional support in the form of a cohort structure and formalized mentoring and advising by expert principals. The cohort groups became the basis of a peer network that principals relied on for social and professional support throughout their careers.
- Vigorous, targeted recruitment and selection to seek out expert teachers with leadership potential.
- Well designed and supervised internships that allowed candidates to engage in leadership responsibilities for substantial time under the tutelage of expert veterans. All of the programmes worked hard to ensure that internships were productive and integrated with coursework. Two of the programmes even offered full-year, paid and financed administrative internships with expert principals.

(Darling-Hammond et al, 2007, p6).

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The SELI study's findings revealed that the exemplary in-service programmes offered a well connected and high quality set of learning opportunities, grounded in both theory and practice with a clear focus on curriculum, and instruction. The practices included developing shared, school-wide goals and direction, observing and providing feedback to teachers, planning professional development and other learning experiences for teachers, using data to guide school improvement and managing a change process. In addition, the programme

offered support in the form of mentoring, participation in principals' networks and study groups, collegial school visits and peer coaching. (Darling-Hammond et al, 2007, p9).

Compared to a national random sample of principals' perceptions of their leadership preparation, the SELI study found that, on average, graduates from the exemplary programmes produced better leaders, in that the principals:

- felt significantly better prepared for virtually every aspect of principal practices, ranging from leading instruction and organizational learning to developing a school vision and engaging parents and the community
- had a more positive attitude about the principalship
- spent more time on instructionally focused work
- were more likely to report that their school gained in organizational functioning and in teacher effectiveness and engagement in the last year
- reported more participation in a broader range of learning opportunities and
- made developing and supporting their teachers a priority

(Darling-Hammond et al, 2007, p9).

The study highlighted three facilitating conditions in the exemplary programmes:

- The existence of dedicated programme champions and leaders, including district superintendents, college deans, university and district programme directors
- The political will and capacity to build university-district partnerships. These collaborations helped prepare principals for specific district and regional contexts and ensured that leaders continue to receive relevant and consistent support and professional development
- The provision of significant financial support for principals to attend the programme, although the amount of support varied widely across programmes.

(Darling-Hammond et al, 2007, p13)

2.5 Leadership development of principals in South Africa

Turning to South Africa, the literature review aimed to establish 'what is known' and being conducted in the principal development arena in South Africa and whether these programmes follow international best practice with regard to the curriculum content and learning methods used, but adapted to the SA context.

A review of the South African literature reveals that a focus on the professional development of educational leaders and managers has been slow to emerge in South Africa compared to developed countries across the world. It was only in 2003, that the National Department of Education released a draft policy framework, proposing the professionalisation of education managers and leaders by introducing a national principalship qualification for aspiring principals (DoE, 2004, p3).

This entry level qualification for principalship, called the Advanced Certificate: Education (ACE) (School Management and Leadership) (DoE, 2008, p2) was introduced in 2007 and is intended to provide aspirant principals with a professional qualification focusing on skills development, applied competence and on-site assessment. Its purpose is "to provide structured learning opportunities that promote the development of education leaders who can apply critical understanding, values, knowledge and skills to school leadership and management within the vision of democratic transformation and contribute to improving the delivery of quality learning and teaching in schools, having impact across the whole school culture and operations" (DoE, 2006, p2-4).

The South African ACE is believed to be the 'first' national training programme in Africa (Bush et al, 2008, p7). The programme is a two-year part-time course at NQF Level 6, and comprises 120 credits.

This ACE is currently in the second phase of the field test and being delivered by 16 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across South Africa. A total of 1667 candidates are currently enrolled in either their first or second year of the programme. A two-year longitudinal study of the ACE is currently being conducted for the DoE by a team of researchers led by Professor Tony Bush of the University of Warwick and funded by the Zenex Foundation (Bush et al, 2008). The second interim report documents the research and findings, providing a comprehensive evaluation of the field test, in order to inform the development of the course and to provide advice to the Minister of Education about the suitability and sustainability of the qualification (Bush et al, 2008, p4). In particular, the research seeks to establish whether the programme is enhancing leadership learning, has led to improved management and leadership practice in schools and enhanced learner outcomes (Bush et al, 2008, p4).

The researchers were confident that the ACE design is highly appropriate for the development of school leaders (Bush et al, 2008, p150). Both the curriculum and design are aligned with international practice, focusing on traditional classroom based 'content' and leadership development process dimensions, such as mentoring, networking and site-based assessment (Bush et al, 2008, p15). The following discussion documents some of the key findings of the Zenex research regarding the ACE programme and its learning methods.

Curriculum content

The core modules of the ACE curriculum are listed in Table 2.2 and mapped and compared to the 'international curriculum for school leadership preparation', proposed by Bush & Jackson (2002, p 420) from their study of international leadership centres around the world (refer literature review section 2.3, p36).

'International' curriculum	National ACE core modules
Leadership: including vision, mission and transformational leadership	1. Understand school leadership and management in the South African context
Learning and teaching or "instructional leadership"	2. Manage teaching and learning
Human resource management and professional development	3. Lead and manage people
Financial management	4. Manage organizational systems, physical and financial resources
Management of external relations	5. Manage policy, planning, school development and governance
	6. Demonstrate effective language skills in school management and leadership

Table 2.2: National ACE core modules compared to 'International' curriculum

The SA ACE curriculum is therefore similar to curricula offered by other leadership programmes around the world, but specifically contextualized for the South African environment. Both the curriculum outline and materials provided by the DoE, are infused with the theme of how to manage schools to support the transformation of South African schools

within the broader national democratic agenda and provide specific examples of how the content needs to be applied to the SA context. Specific focus is given to this in module one listed in Table 2.2 above. It provides principals with an understanding of the legislative and policy frameworks and broader social demands such as aids, poverty and gender, so that they can make the necessary decisions for their school environment. Examples and exercises in the materials include examples applicable to SA schools across the range of urban, township, privileged elite and rural contexts.

The programme has four elective modules listed in Table 2.3 below, and students are required to successfully pass one or more of the electives. The programme however, does allow for additional modules to be registered by individual HEIs to address specific contextual realities, such as 'Managing HIV and AIDS in schools' (DoE, 2008, p7).

The principal's ability to communicate effectively with their community, teachers and learners, through a variety of methods, such as chairing meetings, making presentations, in written correspondence or in expressing their views, is developed and evaluated during one of the two fundamental modules. The other one focuses on the benefits of ICT and how IT can be used to manage the school. (DoE, 2008).

Elective modules
Lead and manage a subject, learning area or phase
Mentor school managers and manage mentoring programmes in schools
Plan and conduct assessment
Moderate assessment
Fundamental module
Develop a portfolio to demonstrate school management and leadership competence
Additional module
Leading and managing effective use of ICTs in South African schools

Table 2.3: National ACE electives (DoE, 2008, p7)

In examining the content of the ACE programme, Bush et al (2008, p8) used the written materials, represented by the modules and supporting materials. The South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) managed the process of developing the course materials, which was funded by one of the DoE's social partners, the Shuttleworth Foundation.

A documentary analysis of the content was undertaken during the preliminary phase of the ACE evaluation. Some of the key recommendations were:

- provide a stronger focus on the management of learning as opposed to learning and curriculum theory in the 'manage teaching and learning' module
- combine the two assessment electives
- include the elements relevant to principals from the 'lead and manage a subject, learning area' elective, into the 'manage teaching and learning' module
- provide a stronger focus on school-level implementation, rather than policy analysis
- focus more on the learning needs of principals and aspiring principals, rather than those of middle managers, educators and learners
- ensure that the 'language skills module' caters for the needs of students with more limited English language skills
- ensure that all candidates have convenient access to ICT facilities, training and support to provide equity

(Bush et al, 2008, p9).

These recommendations are being addressed by a review group set up by the DoE and the National Management and Leadership Committee (NMLC) (Bush et al, 2008, p156).

The evaluation found that the ACE is content 'heavy' and that many principals are overwhelmed by the content, to the detriment of their leadership learning (Bush et al, 2008, p10). According to international research leadership behaviour is unlikely to change significantly simply as a result of enhanced knowledge (Bush et al, 2008, p10). The 'process' elements of the ACE, including mentoring, networking, portfolios and site-based assessment are likely to be more powerful in influencing leadership practice (Bush et al, 2008, p10). They recommended that the 'content' in the ACE be reduced to enable more time for these process elements to be effective.

It must be stated, that although the curriculum and materials provide some insight into what is intended to be taught, it is not a reflection of what actually takes place inside the classroom and what concepts are being taught.

Assessment

HEIs have all adopted a fairly similar assessment process, adopting many common features, namely, that it is practice-based, measures competence and is integrated through the portfolio and research project (Bush et al, 2008, p140). The main assessment tool employed by the HEIs is the portfolio, which is intended to include all the assignments, as well as school-based documents, student reflections and a research project (Bush et al, 2008, p140).

The portfolios showed little evidence of reflection and it was clear that candidates were finding it difficult to go beyond description to adopt a reflective approach (Bush et al, 2008, p141).

The research highlighted that the ACE is over-assessed and based primarily around the prescribed content of the course (Bush et al, 2008, p158). In a number of provinces the heavy ACE workload has led to principals giving precedence to completing their assignments rather than applying their learning to school management, contrary to the aims of the programme (Bush et al, 2008, p141). The research recommended that the number of assignments be reduced and that they focus more strongly on school management practice (Bush et al, 2008, p158).

An important feature of the ACE is the provision for site-based assessment, linking leadership learning to school practice. This is a critical part of the assessment strategy and is subject to an on-site verification process. However in practice there was little evidence of on-site verification taking place (Bush et al, 2008, p17). There was even some evidence that candidates were dividing up the work at the networking sessions, with the result that similar assignments were being submitted. On-site verification is critical to ensure that the submissions reflect the candidates own work and practice (Bush et al, 2008, p141).

Work based learning

'Learning by experience' and learning 'on the job' are significant factors in the development of a school leader. The ACE is a practice-based course, underpinned by the value of 'applied knowledge'. There therefore should be strong emphasis on all forms of practice, site based activity, a school focus, the candidate being actively involved in leadership, management and organizational behaviour, working in relationships with teams and within multiple structures (DoE, 2007, p19).

Although the assignments and exercises in the materials include work related examples there is no guarantee that the principals are putting this into practice. More concerning was the finding of the mid term evaluation that some principals were fabricating the content of their assignments and had not implemented the practice in their schools (Bush et al, 2008, p153). In addition, assignments were found to be taking precedence over running and managing the schools as principals were completing their ACE coursework requirements during school hours.

The ACE does not incorporate an internship as part of its work-based learning programme.

Mentoring

Effective mentoring provides the potential for personal engagement with the candidates and their schools, acting as the conduit between the HEI theory and school-level practice and provides the potential for deep learning (Bush et al, 2008, p138). In many provinces, mentors were involved in a two-stage process: group 'facilitation' as part of, or separate from the formal teaching sessions at the HEI and visits to candidates' schools to provide on-site support (Bush et al, 2008, p138).

The mid term evaluation reported that the small group sessions involve networking rather than mentoring and that the mentors' role is mainly that of facilitation.

Candidates' in some provinces criticized the process saying that the mentors do not visit the schools and only discuss issues telephonically. They suggested that there should be professional mentors and more mentoring sessions. The mentors stated that it was not possible to visit schools because of the geographical distance between schools and the lack of time as they were busy with their own schools. (Bush et al, 2008, p118-119).

The group sessions were also leading to mentors determining the agenda and dominating the discussion. In situations where the mentors do work directly with the candidates, they often provide ‘solutions’ and specific advice rather than asking questions and providing support and encouragement to enable candidates to make the decisions themselves. Although this is welcomed by the candidates it serves to reinforce a dependency model rather than providing a means to develop the candidate’s confidence and skills. (Bush et al, 2008, p157). This could lead to the reinforcement of traditional role expectations rather than the rethinking of approaches and innovative leadership practice.

Although commending the inclusion of a mentoring process, the researchers recommended that the current mentoring process be remodelled, to provide one-on-one support and an extensive training programme to develop genuine mentors rather than people who guide or tell candidates how to run their schools (Bush et al, 2008, p157). Two major constraints that would need to be resolved in enabling this include the funding of the cost of mentor provision and the limited availability of well-trained and motivated professionals with good experience in leading township and rural schools (Bush et al, 2008, p139).

Networking

Most of the HEIs have some form of network activity, usually initiated by the mentors or the candidates themselves. However the evidence revealed that groups meet rarely and that the sessions are often informal and voluntary with variable attendance levels (Bush et al, 2008, p139). The DoE envisaged the formation of clustering and learning networks around particular areas of work which students wanted to address, as one of the levels of support for candidates. However the mid term evaluation highlighted that students are using these sessions to work together to complete assignments and not to share professional experiences in order to improve their schools (Bush et al, 2008, p139). It is therefore unlikely that these peer networks will be sustainable as this motivator will cease when the ACE programme ends (Bush et al, 2008, p139). The GDE mentioned that if the department had a suitable process in place they could officially encourage and monitor principal collaboration and school visitation.

The portfolio

One of the core modules of the ACE includes the development of a portfolio where students are required to compile a comprehensive record of all completed assignments, written tests

and work-based projects that they completed in the modules, as well as including relevant evidence from the execution of their regular school management or leadership functions so as to demonstrate their competence in school management and leadership (DoE, 2008, p14)

Students are required to include journal articles where they critically reflect on their learning experience, reporting on their personal growth and any insights developed. However the mid-term evaluation revealed that the portfolios were more descriptive accounts of what they had done and contained little evidence of reflection (Bush et al, p141). Reflective practice is aimed at enabling and enhancing understanding through fundamental questioning and analysis and thereby informing future actions (West-Burnham & Ireson, 2008, p5). It is a core learning principle included in the ACE curriculum but requires a high level of self awareness, one of the hallmarks of a high EQ. Mentors could assist students in developing reflective practice, provided they have the requisite competence and capacity.

Going to scale

The mid-term evaluation reported that approximately 2700 principals would need to be recruited and trained in SA per annum (Bush et al, 2008, p152). The 16 HEIs currently delivering the programme do not have the collective capacity to provide this, unless the intake is increased from 100 to 170 per HEI per year. This may not be feasible due to capacity issues at some HEIs (Bush et al, 2008, p152).

A short term solution to cater for current capacity issues would be to regard the thousands of educators who hold ACE, BEd (Hons), masters and doctoral degrees as equivalent to the national ACE, subject to a conversion process (Bush et al, 2008, p152). The conversion process could involve the preparation of a portfolio to demonstrate how their management learning has been translated into effective practice (Bush et al, 2008, p158).

Application of learning outcomes

The application of learning outcomes is of paramount importance if the ACE is to contribute to school improvement as well as developing individuals. The mid-term evaluation undertook an interim assessment to establish whether there were any changes to management practice arising from participation in the ACE training. The findings were determined from interviews with 25 of the ACE candidates and represent self perceptions, so need to be interpreted with caution. The next phase of the two-year longitudinal ACE evaluation will

include an impact study where the research team will interview a broader selection of the candidate's school staff. (Bush et al, 2008, 142).

56% of the candidates claimed to be managing their time more effectively, specifically through improved delegation to the SMT, better planning and improving task prioritization. Some of the candidates reported several changes to personal attributes, including enhanced confidence, improved self control and better relationships with educators and SMTs. Some claimed skill's gains, such as ICT, problem solving, financial planning and better team work. (Bush et al, 2008, 142).

The mid-term evaluation concluded that although there have been knowledge gains there is only limited evidence of changes in management practice. "It is too early to judge whether participating in the programme is likely to enhance learner outcomes, although the early evidence is disappointing" (Bush et al, 2008, p147).

A mandatory requirement for principalship?

The decision to make the ACE a mandatory qualification for principalship is still under consideration by the Minister of Education. The research team undertaking the mid term evaluation recommended that the national ACE programme be made mandatory for aspiring principals provided there are sufficient qualified candidates to meet the demand for new principals and subject to three provisos. Firstly, holders of other similar qualifications must be allowed to become principals subject to a conversion process, perhaps through a portfolio to demonstrate the application of theory to school-based practice. This could be an interim arrangement, for say five years, until the supply of national ACE graduates is sufficient to meet the demand for new principals. Secondly, consideration is given to helping potential principals who do not obtain the support of their principals for site-based work and assessment, possibly moving them to another school where they will obtain support. Thirdly, consideration should be given to the selection process with applicants restricted to deputy principals or HoDs, except in very small schools. (Bush et al, 2008, p158).

Evaluating the ACE against exemplary development programmes

Finally, the ACE design was evaluated against the features and elements of exemplary preparation and professional development programmes, identified in recent US research (refer Ch 2.4, p48). The results of this comparison are depicted in Table 2.4 below.

Exemplary leadership development programmes	SA national ACE in School management and leadership
Comprehensive and coherent curriculum aligned with state standards which emphasise instructional leadership	√
A philosophy and curriculum emphasising leadership of instruction and school improvement	√
Active, student-centred instruction that integrated theory and practice and stimulated reflection. Instructional strategies included problem-based learning; action research; field-based projects; journal writing and portfolios that feature substantial use of feedback and assessment by peers, faculty and the candidates themselves. While specific programme features can be important, more important are how these features are integrated and how the programme reinforces a model of leadership.	√ in design but the implementation requires revision
Faculty who are knowledgeable in their subject areas, including both university professors and practitioners experienced in school leadership and administration	To be researched in this study and discussed in Ch 5.
Social and professional support in the form of a cohort structure and formalized mentoring and advising by expert principals. The cohort groups became the basis of a peer network that principals relied on for social and professional support throughout their careers.	√ in design but networking components of the ACE require remodelling (Bush et al, 2008)
Vigorous, targeted recruitment and selection to seek out expert teachers with leadership potential	Will need to be incorporated in the rollout phase when the programme goes to scale
Well designed and supervised internships that allowed candidates to engage in leadership responsibilities for substantial time under the tutelage of expert veterans. All of the programmes worked hard to ensure that internships were productive and integrated with coursework. Two of the programmes even offered full-year, paid and financed administrative internships with expert principals.	Internships have not been incorporated into the ACE. A mentoring model, using retired or practicing principals as mentors, is being implemented, but needs remodelling to derive its full effectiveness and benefits (Bush et al, 2008)

Table 2.4: Comparison of the ACE design against exemplary leadership development programmes identified by Darling-Hammond et al (2007, p6)

The above comparison indicates that the ACE is aligned conceptually with best practice, but the implementation of some of the delivery elements requires revision.

HEI implementation and delivery approach

The Zenex research reported that HEIs are delivering the ACE, using a common framework agreed with the DoE and the National Management and Leadership Committee (NMLC) (Bush et al, 2008, p3). This raises a number of questions around how HEIs have interpreted the delivery framework and whether a degree of standardization is being attained using independent HEIs as service providers.

Have HEIs adapted the curriculum content and programme components to suit their own requirements or approach?

How have HEIs adapted to delivery approaches aligned with 21st century leadership learning models? Have they adapted their conventional traditional academic lecturing approach to embracing and implementing these new radical dimensions? How are they implementing the process-rich components such as mentoring, networking and on-site assessment?

If there is no national exam what assessment criteria are being used to accredit a national programme?

HEIs are autonomous organizations with their own institutional identity and culture, and may react differently to the introduction of a national centralized programme. What were the attitudes of the HEIs towards the implementation of a national qualification?

Given the failure of education leadership programmes in US universities, do the schools of education in Gauteng universities have staff with experience of school practice and in particular, principalship? Are they involved in the schools with first hand knowledge of how schools operate and what is happening on the ground?

What level of diversity in the approach and implementation is acceptable for a national accreditation programme?

These questions informed this enquiry and are addressed during the study.

3. Background: historical context to SA leadership development

3.1 Introduction

The following discussion highlights key initiatives in the educational leadership and management development field in SA, leading to the introduction of the national ACE qualification. It provides a description of the historical context available from a desk review of the literature and research, supplemented by information from discussions with key informants interviewed during the study. The chapter discusses the establishment of a leadership academy in Gauteng, the programmes offered by HEIs, both formal and non formal, the development needs identified for SA principals, the drafting of the South African Standard for School Leadership (SASSL) and the introduction of a draft policy framework for education management and leadership in SA.

3.2 Establishing an academy for educational leadership in Gauteng

In 1996 the National Department of Education established a Task Team on Education Management Development to review South Africa's education system and to make recommendations to improve the management of education. One of the recommendations of the Task Team was the creation of a national education management institute to become the *principal locus* of a focused managed network of researchers, practitioners, policy makers and others (McLennan et al, 2002, p1).

When none of the recommendations were adopted, the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) undertook a feasibility study into the establishment of a provincial institute for education management and governance development. The study undertook comparative research of local and international models of similar institutions. Based on the recommendations in their report "The Road less travelled" (McLennan et al, 2002), the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) was established by the GDE and launched in August 2003.

The MGSLG is a non profit section 21 company, funded primarily by the GDE. Its main purpose is to support the development of principals, other school managers (deputies, heads of department, district officials) and school governors in order to enhance the effectiveness of all schools in the province and to improve learner outcomes (Bush et al, 2006, p3). The institution has had very limited resources in the past, relying on a joint venture with the

University of Johannesburg (UJ), to deliver its 'lecture' contact sessions. During 2008 it introduced a National Curriculum Statement (NCS) directorate and today the institution currently employs approximately thirteen full-time professional staff.

A mid-term evaluation of the institution providing an independent report to its board and the GDE on the operation of the school and on the progress made in addressing management and governance training in SA concluded that the MGSLG had made a good start and highlighted areas for improvement (Bush, Joubert & Moloi, 2006). It was noted that the MGSLG had 'reached' a significant proportion of its target audience, despite one director's claim that its main focus should be on making a difference in a limited number of schools, and focus on 'depth not breadth' (Bush, Joubert & Moloi, 2006, p35). To increase its scale and focus would require employing substantially more resources. England's NCSL which has the objective "*to become a strategically focused, powerful hub of school leadership development, seeking to harness and develop the capabilities and capacities of the very best in the education system and beyond, to develop a high-performing, self-improving education system*", employs a large (200+) and highly qualified staff team to execute and implement its vision (Bush, Joubert & Moloi, 2006, p5).

The evaluation highlighted a number of strengths and development needs but most significantly the need to improve and sustain effective working relationships between MGSLG and the GDE, concluding that the future of MGSLG and the important work that it has pioneered, depends on its relationship with the GDE becoming solid and mutually beneficial (Bush, Joubert & Moloi, 2006, p37).

Although its research wing has been closed down due to a lack of funding and insufficient resources, the MGSLG still commissions baseline research, evaluations and impact studies of their own programmes.

In 2007, the MGSLG was accredited as a Higher Education Institution to provide the ACE School Management and Leadership programme, which effectively makes it a 'competitor' to the universities in ACE provision.

3.3 The South African Standard for School Leadership

From 2003-2005, the DoE, together with various stakeholders, developed the South African Standard for School Leadership (SASSL), which defines the role of the principal and key aspects of professionalism and expertise required in our schools. Surprisingly, no such understanding has existed to-date although limited definitions are included in both the Personnel Administration Measures and Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). In 2007 the South African Schools Act of 1996 was amended by adding the 'functions and responsibilities of principals of public schools" after section 16 via the Education Laws Amendment Act 31. The standard, originally called the Standard for Principalship, is in its sixth revision and not yet officially validated and published.

The standard is comprised of four elements. These are:

1. The core purpose of principalship:

"To provide leadership and management in all areas of the school to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high quality teaching and learning take place and which promote the highest possible standards of learner achievement."

2. The educational and social values, both national and context specific, which underpin all that happens in the school and which inform everything that the principal does in leading and managing the school.

3. The key areas of principalship. These are six interdependent areas that define the role of the principal in any school context but are focused on the priorities of the SA schooling system. Within each area, some typical 'actions' that need to be undertaken, are defined, as well as examples of the types of 'knowledge' requirements that underpin these actions. The six areas are:

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

4. Personal and professional attributes which a principal brings to the role. These will influence the ways in which the leadership and management role is fulfilled and determine the effectiveness in carrying out the role. The development of these attributes, through experience and training, is crucial for principalship in the contemporary South African context. (DoE, 2006b)

The SASSL is closely aligned with the National Standards for headteachers in England. The SASSL creates a common language and the foundation upon which consistent and aligned educational leadership policy can be developed, both at the programme and practice level. The DoE must with urgency adopt and publish the SASSL so that HEIs, schools and all stakeholders have a definition and clear expectations of what the principalship role entails and the key aspects of professionalism and expertise required.

3.4 Provision of professional development to Gauteng principals

Provision of management education and training prior to 1994 was fragmented and patchy, provided by a range of providers, including higher education institutions, state departments of education and to a lesser degree, non-governmental and private sector organizations (Johnson, 1995, p232). Although the number of universities offering courses was increasing, enrolment figures were low and there were problems with scale and relevance (Johnson, 1995, p232). State provision was uneven and in many cases unsound (Johnson, 1995, p232).

The first comprehensive study assessing the extent, nature and quality of school management development and governor training in Gauteng was undertaken in 2003-2004, to provide baseline data for the new MGSLG and generate a body of evidence to inform policy and practice (Bush & Heystek, 2006, p65).

Formal development programmes

The research revealed that the eight universities and technikons in Gauteng provided a ‘ladder of opportunity’ for practicing and aspiring school leaders, ranging from an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) to specialist courses and postgraduate degrees in education management (Bush & Heystek, 2006, p71). The BEd (Hons) degree has historically been the recognized NQF qualification aimed at developing the role and associated competencies of a school principal (Norms and Standards for Educators, 2000). The ACE in Educational

management and leadership was introduced in 2003 as a diploma and offered by universities as a means for unqualified educators to upgrade their skills level, where after they had the option to enrol for the BEd (Hons) degree.

The study showed that the programmes extend over one or more years and cover most of the content required for leaders of self-managing schools providing the potential for long-term sustainable learning (Bush & Heystek, 2006, p71). Human resource management and legal issues were given substantial attention and financial management, educational management theory and research methods were also addressed by several providers (Bush, 2004, p9). Limited attention was given to the issues of teaching and learning, including curriculum studies and classroom management (Bush, 2004, p9).

Non-formal programme provision

The enquiry revealed that a range of short courses were offered providing management training for principals. They were initiated by the GDE but the providers were often non-governmental organizations or consultants often with no teaching or management experience in schools (Bush & Hestek, 2006, p71). Some of these courses specialised in specific topics, for example financial management, leadership, education policy, education law, human resource management, curriculum management, team building, conflict management/discipline, strategic planning, school development and managing change (Bush, 2004, p11). The duration of the non-formal courses varied according to the need, running from a few days up to a week. The mode of delivery often had a practical focus with case studies, videos, group work and role plays. These courses were rarely accredited. The brief and fragmented provision of these in-service programmes may have been suitable for the transfer of information about a new policy but were considered not suitable for extended engagement with theory, research and practice (Bush & Heystek, 2006, p73).

A paper evaluating the in-service training given to school principals in Mpumalanga provides insight into the shortcomings of the quality of in-service training provision. It recommended that the trainers (the circuit and district officials) be trained in facilitation skills, that they needed to be aware of the social and cultural factors of the trainees, which could determine the success or failure of a training workshop and that they needed training on how to manage multi-grade classes making provision for the individual pace or progress of the trainees. Trainees may not find the programme useful if they consider the presenter to be

their equal and trainers needed to establish credibility, persuading the trainees that what they are doing is useful. Formal recognition was required as participants wanted some form of accreditation. Follow up training and support was critical and requested by principals. (Van der Wethuiszen et al, 2004, p716-718).

3.5 Development needs of principals

The comprehensive study undertaken during 2003-2004 to assess the extent, nature and quality of school management development and governor training in Gauteng included a questionnaire survey of all school heads to identify the knowledge areas and skills required for an effective school principal and to ascertain the areas in which further personal development was needed. Although the response rate (27.5%) was disappointing, the information provided valuable insight into the starting point for constructing a curriculum for school management (Bush & Heystek, p71-72).

The knowledge areas required for an effective school principal and the areas in which further personal development was needed are depicted in Table 3.1 below. Financial and human resource management were the two areas identified by the largest proportion of principals (71% and 69% respectively) as essential for the principalship role and for their own personal development (Bush & Heystek, p68-69). The management of teaching and learning was mentioned by only 22% of respondents suggesting that most principals were not conceptualizing their role as ‘instructional leader’ or ‘leaders of learning’ and that curriculum content and teaching methodology have been given a low priority (Bush & Heystek, 2006, p69-74).

The principals were also asked to identify the skills required by principals, depicted in Table 3.2 below. Again financial management was identified as a requirement for principalship and personal development training. Interestingly ‘handling conflict’ was high on the list, relevant to the dynamic context of post-apartheid South Africa (Bush, 2004, p11).

Knowledge area	Required for all principals		Personal development need	
	No.	%	No.	%
Management of finance	370	71	302	58
Human Resource Management eg staff development, conflict management	362	69	301	58
Management of legal, policy or procedural issues	287	55	274	53
Strategic planning (eg development plans)	227	43	226	43
Learner management eg discipline, safety, curriculum	213	41	179	34
Governance and community management	148	28	169	32
Management of teaching and learning	142	27	114	22
Administrative management eg information systems, filing systems	118	23	125	24
Time Management	77	15	88	17
Management of physical facilities eg building maintenance or improvement	64	12	56	11

*Table 3.1: Comparison of the principal's rating of the content knowledge required by all principals and their own personal development. There were a total of 522 (20.9%) responses (*Bush et al, 2004, pp17-18)

Skill	Required by all principals		Personal development need	
	No.	%	No.	%
Budgetary skills	365	70	311	60
Handling conflict	257	49	230	44
Problem-solving skills	235	45	182	35
Inter-personal skills	228	44	157	30
Crisis management skills	208	40	192	37
Counselling and guidance skills	206	39	208	40
Communication skills	189	36	116	22
Delegation skills	148	28	142	27
Report writing skills	118	23	104	20
Presentation skills	73	14	86	16
Chairing meetings	63	12	57	11

Table 3.2: Skills required by all principals and their personal development needs. There were a total of 522 (20.9%) responses (Bush et al, 2004)

The researchers highlighted that as the principal's role shifted from a routine administrator to visionary leader and strategic manager they needed much more, and more effective training if they were to carry out their responsibilities successfully (Bush & Heystek, 2006, p70).

Mestry & Grobler (2002, p22) reported that principals were perceived to lack the capacity to handle multifaceted tasks and basic managerial competencies, including democratizing school governance, building learning programmes, chairing meetings, handling bigger classes, controlling discipline, handling multilingual instruction, the establishment of effective communication, conflict management skills, dispute resolution and labour issues and financial skills.

Today, many schools in South Africa are still faced with severe contextual problems, which would present a serious challenge even for fully trained principals and governors. These include:

- lack of basic infrastructure and facilities, such as running water (11.5%), electricity (16%), ablutions (5.24% have no toilets on site)
- insufficient classrooms
- limited learning equipment and learning materials eg textbooks, overheads, desks, chairs
- lack of libraries (79%), laboratories (60%) and computer centres (68%)
- lack of sports facilities
- under-trained and poorly motivated educators
- illiteracy amongst parents and school governors
- the scourge of HIV and AIDS which is ravaging families, especially in poverty stricken areas. Children are required to look after sick parents and assist with providing some income for the family by working part-time, many taking on increasing responsibilities as heads of households

(DoE, 2007b, p17-44)

Principals need to be adaptable and responsive to local circumstances and this requires managers with new skill sets and styles of working.

In addition to the district or circuit office, principals are accountable and answerable to a range of stakeholders including parents, the SGB, learners and educators (Bush et al, 2008,

p142). Many principals need to develop this understanding of accountability and the interpersonal skills and attributes to interact with communities both inside and outside the system.

During this researcher's interviews, both the DoE and GDE mentioned the lack of a professional ethic in many underperforming schools in the country, including - frequent educator absenteeism, lack of punctuality, mismanagement of school funds, a lack of discipline, lack of safe and secure environments, a demotivated teaching staff, poor principal-staff relationships with a lack of respect and trust for the head, and immoral behaviour – as a key consequence of poor and weak leadership by the principal. We need people-centred principals with a vision that has a moral purpose and value system built around respect, fairness, equality, integrity, honesty and care for the well-being and development of the potential of their staff and students.

Recent evidence from the baseline case studies of the ACE mid-term evaluation, reinforced many of the above findings and revealed that the current intake of principals and aspiring principals have plenty of scope to improve their leadership and management practice, specifically in the following areas: ability to delegate to staff, ability to lead staff appropriately by inspiring them and modelling good leadership practice, moving beyond paper-based administration to lead and manage school development, skills in addressing and resolving inter-personal conflicts, skills in the management of teaching and learning and an ability to work closely with their communities and to lead community development. (Bush et al, 2008, p14).

3.6 Policy framework for education management and leadership development

Although the 1996 National Task Team on Education Management Development made a number of recommendations, no national framework was in place to guide education management and leadership development in South Africa until the new draft policy framework was released in 2003. The fundamental objective of the DoE's draft policy framework on effective management and leadership development is the advancement of effective teaching and learning (DoE, 2004, p3).

The policy framework, sets out the DoE's broad strategy for capacity building in management and leadership in South African schools. The framework proposes the

professionalisation of education managers and leaders, through the introduction of professional management and leadership qualifications and ultimately, a national professional certification for principals (DoE, 2004, p3). Integral to this policy framework is the role of national and provincial departments of education, supported by HEIs and service providers, in realising the vision of effective South African schools capably managing and governing themselves within their communities and supported by their cluster groups, networks and districts (DoE, 2004 p3).

The policy framework, developed through substantial consultation with major stakeholder groupings in South African education, advocates that the emphasis in training and development must be on supporting and developing managers and leaders who can lead and manage the process of change to guide improvement, efficiency and effectiveness in their organizations and environment (DoE, 2004, p5).

The national entry level qualification for principalship called the Advanced Certificate: Education (School Management and Leadership) was introduced in 2007.

4. Research methodology

This study was an exploratory investigation into the nature of leadership development programmes for principals in Gauteng. The study entailed collecting qualitative data about past, existing and proposed management and leadership development programmes and initiatives in South Africa**.**

The field study entailed conducting a series of elite interviews with the relevant representatives from a number of organizations involved in the provision of leadership development programmes in Gauteng. The aim of the field study was to obtain a high level understanding of the nature and types of programmes available for leadership development, both formal and non-formal. It was not intended to create a comprehensive list of every leadership development programme

The first group of organizations selected for interviewing, consisted of those responsible for policy or strategic initiatives in the leadership and management field. This included the Directorate for School Management and Governance at the National Department of Education as well as the Gauteng Department of Education's General Education and Training Institutional Development and Support (GET – IDS) department. With a mandate to support the development of school principals, SMT and SGB members, the Leadership Directorate at Gauteng's leadership academy, the MGSLG, was also included in the interview sample.

The head of each area was contacted telephonically, a brief explanation of the project furnished and an interview appointment arranged for a later date. At both the DoE and MGSLG the head of the area was not available for an interview and the project manager and acting head, respectively, were nominated to participate in the research. An email confirming the appointment was mailed to the interviewee, together with the questionnaire.

The second segment of organizations selected for interviews were HEIs involved in the delivery of management and leadership programmes. This included universities and the MGSLG. The following subset of universities in Gauteng was selected:

- University of Johannesburg (UJ)
- University of Pretoria (UP)
- UNISA
- University of the Witwatersrand (Wits)

The course coordinator of the ACE programme at the university's Schools of Education was contacted telephonically. A brief explanation of the project was furnished and an interview appointment arranged for a later date. An email confirming the appointment was mailed to the interviewee, together with the questionnaire, where requested. The project manager of the generic ACE offered by MGSLG was interviewed telephonically. At all universities, the course coordinators were able to speak broadly to the other programmes offered in the leadership and management field. However at UP, the researcher also conducted a telephonic interview with the coordinator of one of the other courses.

Questionnaires were developed to provide a semi-structured guideline for the interviews and to ensure that information gathered across the HEIs was consistent for comparative purposes. The researcher took detailed notes during the face-to-face interviews and all data recorded will be kept for five years before being discarded, in line with best practice.

Elite interviews were elected as the primary research method as they provide rich and in-depth content through the first-hand accounts and insights of the expert informants. The interviews proved to be highly interesting and informative often eliciting subjective viewpoints or the perceptions of the interviewee. This raises one of its limitations in that responses may not always be representative of other individuals within their organization. In addition responses may not always be reliable as people do not always remember the facts and the data should therefore always be checked. It was not possible to confirm all the information in this study, as the interviewee was the primary source and it was not possible to gain access to other experts in the organizations.

During the interviews, specific focus was given to the Advanced Certificate in Education (School Management and Leadership) programme, the threshold qualification for aspiring school principals, being introduced by the Department of Education and field tested by some HEIs. The broad aim of these interviews was to establish how HEIs have interpreted the implementation of the national ACE in delivering a standardised qualification.

In addressing the research questions (p60) that informed this study, the following areas were focused on during the interviews:

- The HEI's history and leadership role within the sector, their faculty experience and attitudes towards the implementation of the national ACE.
- The delivery model, enrolment figures and composition of the target audience per HEI.
- The curriculum content delivered and adaptation of any components to suit the HEI's own requirements or approach.
- The implementation of the new process-rich components such as mentoring.
- The assessment process and criteria

All data and information gathered was tabulated and analysed comparing the delivery approach and ACE implementation of the different HEIs. The findings are discussed under various themes in the next chapter.

It is important to note that since the findings are not representative of the whole population they can be used merely to portray trends currently adopted in practice.

5. Findings and discussion

The following chapter documents the findings of the enquiry which aimed primarily to establish how HEIs have interpreted the implementation of the national ACE in delivering a standardised qualification.

The results have been discussed under the following themes. Firstly the HEI's leadership role and position within the education management and leadership arena is discussed to gain insight into their standing and history in the provision of courses and research in the field. The research then compares the other programmes offered by HEIs in the education management and leadership field in order to determine how the ACE is located within their offering. Section 5.3 reviews the findings of the curriculum content that is being 'taught' by the HEIs, specifically discussing their focus on theory versus practice, use of the DoE materials, development of leadership skills and the incorporation of business-related management disciplines. The next four sections discuss and compare the implementation of various aspects of the course by the HEIs, including enrolment and target audiences (5.4), model of programme delivery (5.5), the assessment process (5.6) and implementation of the mentoring process (5.7). Section 5.8 discusses the tuition fees and funding of the programme whilst 5.9 compares the HEI's attitude towards the introduction and implementation of a national professional qualification. The chapter wraps up with a summary and conclusion of the findings.

5.1 HEI's faculty standing and history in the management and leadership field

In order to gain insight into the HEI's leadership role and position within the education management and leadership field in Gauteng, the coordinators were requested to rate their organisation's leadership role and the quantity of research the institution conducts within the leadership and management development arena in education in South Africa. These ratings are plotted in Figure 5.1 below, indicating the sector leadership position of the different institutions. In interpreting this information it is important to bear in mind that this is the perception of one individual and may not reflect the views of other representatives of their or other organizations.

UP rates itself as a leader in the field. Its Education Management and Policy Studies department is 37 years old and comprises 16 full-time lecturers. UJ also has a fully-fledged

department of Education Management with many of its lecturers having served as school principals, across a range of diverse communities, representing all ex-education departments in the country (Loock, 2008, p32).

Although this research ascertained that there is not much published research in the field of leadership and management development in South Africa, UJ mentioned that research is being conducted by their masters and doctoral students, and in evaluating the effectiveness of their own programmes.

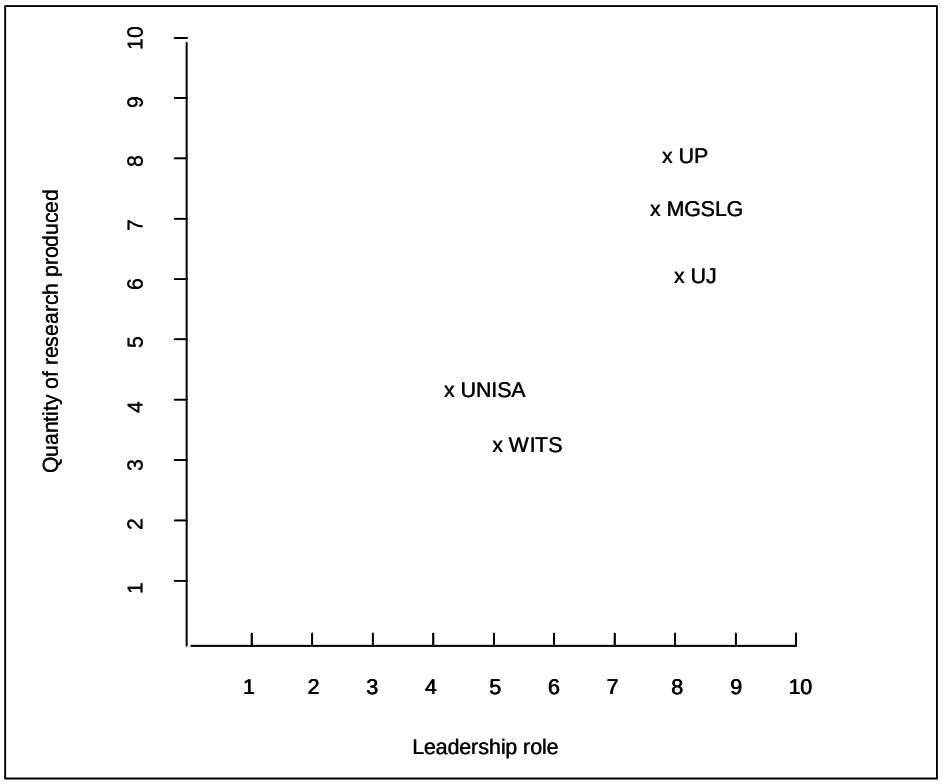


Figure 5.1: HEI leadership role versus quantity of research produced

UJ regards itself as a leader and key initiator in the development of the new curriculum framework and modular structure for the ACE in School Management and Leadership. In partnership with the GDE and MGSLG, and the University of Stirling, who were offering a practice-based qualification for principalship, it used the theoretical underpinnings of the Scottish model to develop an appropriate model for the South African context. This new ACE qualification was aimed to provide existing and future school leaders with a qualification underpinned by professional action, and supported by experiential learning and critical reflection (Loock, 2008, p7). The UJ-MGSLG piloted their new ACE in 2004.

To-date, the total enrolment figure from 2004-2008 is 938 with an average of 85% of the students graduating at the end of the two-year programme (Loock, 2008, p32). The framework, learnings and materials of the UJ-MGSLG ACE were used as input into the development of the national ACE programme, and two lecturers from the UJ Department of Educational Management were part of the National Management and Leadership Committee (NMLC), instrumental in assisting the DoE in the development, implementation and rollout of the national qualification (Loock, 2008, p31).

In contrast, Wits and UNISA are not playing a leadership role in the management and leadership development arena and both schools are producing a very limited amount of research in this field.

5.2 How the ACE is located within the HEI's other leadership & management programme offerings

Universities offer a range of formal programmes with a focus on educational management and leadership, ranging from an Advanced Certification in Education (ACE) to a BEd (Hons) and masters, with the degree of specialization varying one from one HEI to the next (refer Table 5.1). The ACE in Educational management and leadership provision, offered by UP and Wits, has changed from being a customized course per university to the delivery of the national ACE in School Management and Leadership (hereafter referred to as the ACE). UNISA offers its own version of the ACE and is not part of the national ACE field test. (The course coordinator was not available for a discussion around its ACE offering). UJ offers the ACE it developed in conjunction with MGSLG.

The BEd (Hons) (NQF 7; 120 credits) and MEd (NQF 8; 240 credits) degrees vary from one university to the next. UJ and UP offer a BEd (Hons) degree with a specialization in educational management and leadership. UP includes a range of modules and electives in its BEd (Hons) including educational leadership, theories in education management, education law and policy, financial and human resources management. Wits provides no specific stream in educational management and leadership in its BEd (Hons) degree but offers a one semester elective on "School organisational development, management and

leadership". UP, Wits and UNISA offer specific specializations in educational management and leadership in their masters streams.

HEI	ACE in Management & Leadership	BEd (Hons)	MEd
MGSLG	Offer a generic ACE, gender based ACE as well as NCS ACE	None	None
UJ	Offer own programme in conjunction with MGSLG	Educational Management & Leadership specialization	One module offered on Educational Leadership
UP	Field testing national ACE in School management and leadership	Education Management, Law and Policy specialization	Leadership and management specialization
Wits	Field testing national ACE in School management and leadership	No particular specialization but offer an elective on "School Organisational development, management and leadership"	Currently 'Educational policy, planning and management' but changing to "Leadership and Policy" specialization in 2009
UNISA	Offer own ACE	Elective on Education Management including 2 courses – "Managing school as an organization" and "Organisational behaviour in education and education law"	Education Management specialization

Table 5.1 Formal programmes offered by the HEIs in the field of education management and leadership

The BEd (Hons) and masters degrees are not aimed specifically at principals, but are available to the entire spectrum of educators, including teachers, school management teams, heads of department, principals and deputies. They are traditional academic programmes, providing a sound theoretical background, with a far greater emphasis on theory than practical application. Candidates are assessed using exams, exam-equivalents and a research project. In the masters programme candidates are required to undertake a small-scale research project or research dissertation. At some HEIs the BEd (Hons) also includes a fundamental module introducing students to the foundations of educational research and an introduction to quantitative research. The degrees are delivered in a full-time, part-time or distance learning mode, over one or two years.

In Gauteng, more than half of all principals (55%) and deputy principals (53%), and 36% of all HoDs have REQV levels that are higher than the minimum requirement for an educator (Narsee et al, 2006, p19), indicating that they have completed an ACE, BEd (Hons) or masters and doctoral degrees. Of these, 9% of principals, 6% of deputy principals and 3% of HoDs have a doctoral degree, while 21% of principals, 20% of deputy principals and 11% of HoDs have a masters degree.

No research was available on whether these traditional university courses have made a difference to school-level practice, but with such high numbers of well qualified principals and deputies, questions are raised as to whether these management training programmes make a significant difference to the performance, as opposed to the knowledge, of principals (Bush et al, 2006, p19).

In comparison to the universities, the MGSLG is only accredited to offer the ACE. It recently introduced its National Curriculum Statement (NCS) ACE targeted at SMTs (including the principal, deputy principal and three HoDs) in all primary schools in Gauteng. The GDE is providing funding for the programme and the intention is to train the SMTs at all primary schools over five years. During 2008, MGSLG provided NCS ACE training to 472 schools (approximately 1880 candidates). Contact sessions are held during school time, for approximately two days per month, but with only one SMT member out of school at any time. The size of the classes is small, consisting of 25 students. Mentoring and coaching form a major component of the course. The course uses the same materials as the MGSLG's generic ACE in Management and Leadership but the overarching focus of the NCS ACE is on the 'Managing teaching and learning' module which is integrated throughout the modules. The lecturers are contracted by the MGSLG and, as a minimum requirement, must have experience in school management and preferably a masters qualification.

The MGSLG is the only HEI currently offering a number of accredited short courses, depicted in Table 5.2 below. These include a middle managers programme on 'leading and managing a subject, learning area or phase' and a 'managing teaching and learning' course aimed at principals and deputies, and used as an intervention for training in the area of instructional leadership. They also offer a computer literacy course, a core module on the ACE programme. Future provision will provide skills development courses such as project and diversity management, emotional intelligence and managing discipline.

Course offered	Target market	Assessment	Delivery model
Lead and manage a subject / learning area / phase (NQF 6; 12 credits)	Middle Managers Heads of Department	3 assignments 1 portfolio	6 contact sessions 1 portfolio session (6-8 months)
Managing teaching & learning (NQF 6; 20 credits)	Principals Deputy principals	2 assignments 1 portfolio	6 contact sessions 1 portfolio session (6-8 months)
Computer literacy	Module on ACE Currently piloting an e-learning module		
Skills development courses planned but not yet offered:			
Project management	ACE graduates		
Emotional intelligence			
Diversity management			
Managing discipline			

Table 5.2 Short courses offered by the MGSLG

Historically, women have been under-represented in senior management positions in South African schools (Bush & Heystek, 2006). In order to address this, the GDE has designed a short gender-focused course entitled “Women in and into leadership and management”. It is being provided by a third party service provider. The course is offered to small groups of 20, and runs for three days. To-date 240 candidates have been trained.

The focus of the GDE’s General Education and Training department is on capacity building of educators often, in non-functional or under-performing schools. They are responsible for designing courses where needs arise and outsourcing the provision of such courses to a service provider. The MGSLG is one of their preferred suppliers and is currently responsible for delivering the ACE in leadership and management and the ‘Managing teaching & learning’ short course.

5.3 How HEIs are interpreting and delivering the ACE curriculum and content

As a leadership development programme for principals the national ACE is aligned with international practice in being positioned at postgraduate level - candidates are required to have a formal professional teacher qualification at REQV level 13 or above. Unlike some international courses in the US, which are equivalent to a masters level with a more applied focus, the South African ACE is positioned as a professional programme. It is intended to be

a radical departure from previous university courses by including significant practice-based elements, such as mentoring, networking and site-based assessment. International studies show that successful leadership programmes assist in translating theory into practice.

The ACE curriculum includes the teaching of relevant theory which is in line with international thinking. However there was significant variation between the HEIs on the amount of focus given to the teaching of theory versus practice based activities (refer table 5.3 below). UJ criticized the curriculum materials for containing too much theory and focused predominantly on the practice-based elements of the programme in their delivery (70%). Wits was the only HEI that emphasized the acquisition and importance of the theoretical component (60% focus) and one questions whether this programme is more in line with a traditional academic programme where there is less emphasis on the acquisition of measurable competence.

HEI	% of course focusing on theory	% of course focusing on practice-based elements
MGSLG	30	70
UJ	30	70
UP	40	60
Wits	60	40

Table 5.3: Percentage of ACE focusing on theory vs practice per HEI

There are clearly different viewpoints between the HEIs on how much theory to include in the course. As Bush (1995, p153) argues, the ultimate test of theory is whether it improves practice. Theory that is removed from practice will not improve school management or help to enhance teaching and learning, which should be at the heart of the educational process. Theory provides the analytical basis for determining the response to events and helps in the interpretation of management information. Facts cannot simply be left to speak for themselves. They require the explanatory framework of theory in order to ascertain their real meaning. Often no single theory is sufficient to guide practice. Managers in all organizations can increase their effectiveness through exposure to alternative perspectives. (Bush, 1995 p153-154).

Although international thinking advocates the inclusion of theory, it is the weighting given to the theoretical components that is in question, especially when it takes priority over the practice based learning in a professional programme. The midterm evaluation found that the ACE is content 'heavy' and that many principals are overwhelmed by the content, to the detriment of their leadership learning, recommending that the content be reduced to enable more time for the process elements to be effective. (Bush et al, 2008, p10).

Materials use

HEIs are required to pilot the materials provided by the DoE during the two-year field testing phase.

Wits was highly critical of the materials citing poor conceptualization and insufficient focus on the knowledge required by principals. The 'law & policy' module in particular, did not provide a rigorous and thorough understanding of the laws, regulations, policies and rights governing educational practice in SA. They use all their own materials in the contact sessions, modifying the curriculum where they believe appropriate and provide the DoE's materials as additional reading for students to work through in their own time.

UP has rewritten the section on 'Education law' creating a separate module for it, as it was integrated within each module in the national materials, which they found unacceptable. They have also rewritten the 'Understand school leadership and management in the South African context' module, renaming it 'Leadership and management'. They criticized the materials for their lack of structure and poor layout.

UJ uses the materials it developed in conjunction with MGSLG and references the national materials as a guide to stimulate debate. It criticized the DoE materials for focusing too much on theory in a practice-based programme, especially for repeating some of the theory covered in undergraduate educational courses.

This research considered the materials to represent more of a workbook. The theoretical or content discussions were very high level summaries or overviews and lacked academic rigour. The layout and structure of the materials needs to be vastly improved. Activities and reflections are interspersed amongst the theoretical discussions and 'comments' sections

with readings inserted at the end of each module. The language of the materials is simple, addressed to the student, where relevant. Materials are only provided in English.

Since the HEIs have rewritten some or all of the modules, supplementing or removing content and / or practice based activities where they see fit, one questions whether the course can still be regarded as a standardised programme, which has implications for the notion of a national qualification.

Leadership development versus management skills training?

The ACE content includes the development of both management and leadership skills. West-Burnham (2008, 4) states it is wrong to draw an absolute divide between management and leadership as they have a symbiotic relationship, but that it is probably helpful to distinguish between those activities that are mainly operational and embedded in the daily life and practice of the school versus those which are primarily concerned with broader, strategic issues. There is no specific distinction in the ACE curriculum between leadership and management activities. All the HEIs interviewed stated that it was difficult to specify the percentage focus on management versus leadership development and that the two were integrated throughout the curriculum.

Leadership values, attributes and personal and inter-personal skills development

Effective leaders are values-led, people-centred, reflective, caring and highly principled people who emphasize the human dimension of management (refer section 2.2). A clear development need of our principals is strong moral leadership, a range of intra- and inter-personal qualities and skills for interacting with all stakeholders including educators, learners and the community, as well as developing higher order capacities including balanced judgement, wisdom, reading the situation, intuition and political acumen.

An analysis of the materials contained within the ‘Lead and manage people’ module established that it contains some theory and reflective exercises dealing with leadership qualities and EQ, values, leadership styles, invitational theory, the moral purpose, self management and setting life goals, etcetera. The content of these sections will assist in generating awareness but the question raised is how it assists in changing behaviour and developing leadership attributes and personal and inter-personal skills?

When HEIs were asked how they assist in developing these softer skills a range of responses was received. One HEI mentioned that they cover the theory and give examples during the contact or facilitation sessions, but that there is insufficient time for them to evaluate principals putting them into practice offsite. Another HEI responded that they generate awareness of the appropriate qualities and skills through the contact sessions and participants are encouraged to reflect on how they would incorporate these into their behaviour.

None of the HEIs assess the practice or acquisition of these softer skills. One HEI remarked that it is not the role of the HEI to evaluate this. Another HEI responded that the way to assist in developing these skills is through observation of the principal in practice, but there is insufficient capacity to undertake this. The MGSLG and DoE mentioned that these skills could be developed during debates, role plays and discussion in the cohort / mentoring / facilitation sessions as well as through reflective practice during the candidates' journalling. Internationally there is recognition that the growth of soft skills around interpersonal relationships is best developed through intensive peer interaction, guided by an experienced and skilled mentor from outside the group (Lewis & Murphy, 2008, p19).

In contrast to the thinking ten years ago, business schools, recognize the importance of developing leadership and personal intra-and interpersonal attributes and have expanded their MBA curriculum, placing emphasis on self mastery and growing the whole person - intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual. To achieve this, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) offers a module called LEAD that is facilitated by an external psychologist. It includes an assessment phase prior to commencement of the course and a mid term evaluation half way through the programme. During the assessment phase data is gathered about the individual's leadership skills through (1) 360-degree evaluations (2) self assessment and reflection through formal and informal assessment tools and (3) functional competency assessments. Based on their assessments, students are required to reflect on their capability and draw up a personal development plan detailing the changes/steps that will enable them to grow and achieve their personal and career goals, during and after the MBA.

Corporates too have recognized the importance of growing the leadership capability of their employees. One SA corporate, in its commitment to the leadership development of its staff

has created its own global leadership academy. In addition to providing a two week full time leadership course for its entire managerial staff, it provides a range of electives that focus on developing leadership competence and personal growth of the individual. Some of these courses include “authentic leadership: ego & self-esteem; personal and interpersonal mastery; time & stress management; assertiveness and managing conflict to build effective relationships; thinking with your gut personal leadership; performance coaching; leader as coach; leading teams; executive innovation and lateral thinking personal leadership”.

It is evident from this research that HEIs are not conceptualizing their role as facilitators in the development of leadership soft skills of its candidates. It is questionable whether the lecturers have the requisite skills for enabling this and if not, they should consider using psychologists, possibly from the university’s psychology department, or specialists in the field. The mentors also need to be part of this process so that they can re-enforce concepts and assist in providing feedback and referrals for coaching where required. In order for these behavioural changes to be sustained and incorporated into practice on a long term basis some form of continuous professional development needs to be provided after completion of the ACE. It is recommended that the DoE or GDE, make provision for a range of voluntary short courses, offered by specialist suppliers in the field that would assist in growing an individual’s leadership attributes and soft skills, post completion of the ACE.

Incorporation of business-related management disciplines

HEIs were asked to indicate if any of the innovations included in the educational and training curricula of business leaders, such as Information management; Knowledge management; CRM; Change management; Project management and Quality management, are being incorporated into the ACE curriculum. HEIs confirmed that information management tools and change management concepts are being discussed and covered during the lectures, with change management concepts integrated throughout the course. One HEI mentioned that project management was touched on, but insufficiently.

The researcher’s review of the materials determined that the concepts are integrated within the content of the existing modules, in an applied manner where relevant, but not offered as separate electives, as occurs in the training of business leaders. The disciplines of quality management, knowledge management and CRM were not covered in the materials. The change management content lacked depth and is covered inadequately. It needs to be

expanded to include change models, concepts, diagnostic tools and frameworks for problem solving, as change is inevitable in the educational field where there will always be new attempts at improving practice.

Similarly, without needing to adopt some of the more complex project management tools, school leaders can benefit from some simple project management approaches. There are useful frameworks for clarifying the processes and stages of any new plan, for identifying the risks and contingencies, constituting the project team and managing the project within agreed timeframes and budget.

5.4 ACE implementation: enrolment figures per HEI

The current enrolment figures and designation of the target audience per HEI are listed in Table 5.4 below. UP is running two separate cohorts of the ACE programme. Contact session 'lecture' sizes range from 25 at UJ to 164 students at Wits.

Although the MGSLG-UJ enrolment numbers are high they have managed to create smaller groups of 25 for the 'lecture' contact sessions. In the researcher's interview with the DoE it was mentioned that guidelines for 'lecture' contact sessions were based on a student:lecturer ratio of 30:1. Since the programme is positioned primarily as a practice-based course, it is therefore questionable whether such large class sizes of 100 and 164, enable students to be actively involved and engaged in the contact sessions. These large numbers are not conducive to participation and debate between lecturers and candidates and are more a vehicle for delivering knowledge. Although Wits uses tutors to facilitate activities and smaller group discussions and interactions during the 'lecture' contact sessions, using educational doctoral students or law students, one questions whether these tutors have the requisite facilitation experience and subject expertise.

Candidates were selected to attend the respective HEIs by both the DoE and GDE. The composition of the cohort participants varied from one HEI to the next, with some groups consisting of practicing principals, others only aspiring principals and some containing a combination of both aspiring and practicing principals (SMT members). The original intention was that the target audience should comprise aspiring principals, namely SMT members at Post Level 2 or above, but the field test is experimenting with mixed cohorts. Wits mentioned that the composition of their classes is a major issue and that a mixed class of aspiring and

practicing principals was not effective. They will not be offering the ACE to a new intake in 2009, until there is more clarity around the positioning of the ACE and target audience.

HEI	Enrolment figures of pilot (2008)	Contact session class size	Target audience
MGSLG-UJ	223 ~135 1st yr ~ 88 2nd yr	25-30	67% practicing principals
UJ	60	25-30	Practicing principals
UP	100 100	100	100 principals from Mpumalanga 50 SMT from Mpumlanga + 50 SMT Limpopo
Wits	164	164	Aspiring principals Practicing principals

Table 5.4: National ACE pilot enrolment and target audience by HEI

5.5 Implementation of the model of programme delivery

Two different modes of structuring the timetable have been adopted by the HEIs. MGSLG, UJ and Wits have all used the block release mode during the school holidays to conduct 'lecture' contact sessions. UJ and Wits mentioned that they do not have capacity for mentoring and have outsourced this to MGSLG. The mentoring sessions are conducted one Saturday per month during term time where the mentors, appointed by MGSLG, facilitate the small group sessions. The mid-term evaluation reported that the mentoring groups do not always meet this frequently as there are cancellations and extensions due to unforeseen problems (Bush et al, 2008, p118).

UP conducts its lecture and contact sessions over five Saturdays per semester. Each core module is delivered across ten one-hour sessions. Lectures are held in the morning with a three hour facilitated group discussion by the mentors in the afternoons.

This research was unable to ascertain if one mode of delivery is more effective than the other. Examining attendance figures and obtaining the candidate's perceptions and preferences would be useful indicators for investigating this.

UJ differentiates itself from the other universities in running all five core modules concurrently over the two year period, a decision underpinned by the principle that

leadership is an holistic concept and hence the course content must be integrated, with all modules interdependent upon the others.

With regard to electives, the MGSLG has developed its own gender-focused elective which Wits candidates will be experiencing. UJ and MGSLG are offering the assessment elective whilst UP is not offering any electives.

All the HEIs interviewed have allocated senior staff to lecture students during the contact sessions. At UJ the core lecturing team are all previous principals with experience across the range of communities in the country. UP has eight senior lecturers delivering the ACE programme of which one is a previous principal, but almost all have experience as heads of department or deputy principals. Wits has two professors in its core lecture team of six. It has only one ex-principal who practiced in the UK and another lecturer who was the head of a teachers training college. It uses tutors to facilitate small groups during its lecture sessions. These are either educational doctoral students or law students. MGSLG outsources the lecturing to its partner university, UJ, as it does not have the lecturing capacity to undertake this.

5.6 Assessment process

The ACE framework stipulates that continuous assessment should occur with the student attaining two summative marks, for the first and second year. The DoE emphasizes that the key difference between the assessment of the ACE and any other academic programme is that it should aim to ascertain how much of the course learning the candidate has internalized, made meaning of and applied in practice in the school (DoE, 2006, p8).

All HEIs have adopted a fairly similar assessment approach, using a variety of options to demonstrate evidence of applied knowledge. The key components assessed per HEI are depicted in Table 5.5 below and include assignments, a project and portfolio. UJ, MGSLG and UP have no exams, but students are required to complete a number of assignments per module. Wits is the only HEI that still uses the traditional approach of exams, although open book, for assessing some of its modules, especially where it regards a thorough knowledge of the subject content an essential requirement for demonstrating competence. The lecturers at all the HEIs are responsible for marking/assessing all elements including the assignments and final portfolio, which should include evidence of practice for all the modules.

HEI	Assessment forms
MGSLG	No exams 3 Assignments per module School project Portfolio
UJ	No exams 3 Assignments per module School project Portfolio
UP	No exams Assignments – Number varies per lecturer ranging from 5 short assignments to 3 or 4 longer assignments Research project Portfolio
Wits	Variety of exam (open book) or exam equivalents per module Initially 3 but revised to 2 assignments per module (1 included as part of school project) School project Portfolio

Table 5.5 Assessment components per HEI

A document provided by UJ, described their assessment process in more detail and includes the following components. :

- A project plan for personal development and school improvement, based on using the outcomes from a critical self-assessment (where candidates complete a questionnaire and career summary) as well as a 360^{o} assessment by seniors and colleagues). The project plan should contain the rationale, objectives and action plans specifying the tasks to be completed to meet the objectives and targets.
- A work file demonstrating acquired knowledge in relation to the core management functions of the learning programme. The work file is developed on a continuous basis and included in the portfolio.
- A commentary containing a reflective analysis of the impact of the introduction of the project plan, the key issues and strategies and a discussion of their interpersonal qualities and professional growth over the duration of the project.
- Field based or site assessment to verify evidence of the work in the portfolio, and observation of the candidate's professional abilities and performance.

- The final assessment comprises evaluating the portfolio and proven competency against the standard for principalship, assessing the impact of the project.

(Loock, 2008, p12)

Although the document accessed provided a description of the theoretical process, the researcher was unable to establish if the self-assessment and 360^{o} assessment actually occur in practice.

Site-base assessment

The site based assessment entails on-site verification and validation, where field assessors are required to comment on the design, rationale and implementation of project plans as well as observe and verify the evidence supporting change-related activities in the portfolio. They are supposed to validate that the assignments are not fabricated by interviewing staff and learners at the school. They are required to assess and comment on the competency of the candidate in relation to acquiring the required level of leadership and management competencies.

Since HEIs are not adequately resourced to undertake site based assessment, they have elected to either outsource this component or bring in someone from outside the organization to undertake the school visits. MGSLG is responsible for the site-based assessment at UJ and Wits. They have outsourced this function to the IDSOs who are required to provide feedback to the MGSLG verifying the application of the portfolio and project content. Once MGSLG has received validation, the portfolio is submitted to the university lecturers for final assessment. The mid-term evaluation revealed that there was little evidence of on-site verification by the IDSOs (Bush et al, 2008, p17). It appears that MGSLG is not properly managing this essential component of the programme.

At UP the mentors are responsible for school based assessment and are required to submit three site-based reports undertaken at different stages of the programme. The first report entails a baseline evaluation of the school and principal, followed by a mid term evaluation and the final assessment. UP has developed a rubric detailing the specific criteria for use by its mentors when undertaking site-based assessment, evaluating the three areas of competence – growth of the principal, development of the school and the attitudes and values portrayed by the principal, across all core areas – managing staff affairs, the instructional programme, administrative affairs, school finance, community relationships and

the physical facilities. It is a comprehensive document and ensures standardization of the candidates' assessment by its mentors. In addition, UP has developed its own rubric for assessing the portfolio which examines the student's acquisition of the fundamental, practical, applied and reflective competencies covered during each lecture per module.

Lecturers from UP have also undertaken some visits to schools in their intake. The course coordinator visited five schools with the respective mentor and two other lecturers visited six schools to monitor school improvement. None of the lecturers from the other HEIs have undertaken school based visits. UP reported that the ACE training had made a clear difference to the management of one of the so-called non-functional schools in its cohort. The coordinator had seen signs of a disciplined and orderly school on his visit.

Although the DoE provided suggested assessment rubrics for the modules, the HEIs have all created their own. No rubric was provided by the DoE for site-based assessment and it is doubtful that one exists for MGSLG if the site-based visits are not even happening. UP had spent a considerable amount of time and effort in composing their rubrics.

It is evident that the lecturers at UJ and Wits are too far removed from the practice components and not in touch with whether and how the theory is being applied and implemented in the schools.

5.7 Implementation of the mentoring process

All HEIs interviewed mentioned that they do not have the capacity and time for mentoring, especially with the high enrolment numbers. They had all elected to bring in someone from outside to undertake the mentoring process.

At UP the mentors act as facilitators running the small group sessions after the lectures and also perform the site-based assessment. The ACE coordinator has the responsibility for managing and selecting the mentors. He sourced retired principals, selected on the basis of their experience and effectiveness when they were practicing heads in post 1996 schools. UP has a total of 30 mentors supporting the two cohort intake, of which six of the ex-principals have a doctoral qualification. The downside of using retired principals is that they may not be up-to-date with the latest leadership thinking and education practice. UP aims to circumvent this by ensuring that its mentors/facilitators/assessors attend all lectures with the

candidates. UP also holds orientation and training sessions for its mentors, including full day workshops to discuss progress and issues. Its mentors are required to visit the schools three times per semester to undertake site visits and verify and validate that candidates are putting into practice what they have learned, and provide personalized feedback and support to the candidates, where required.

UJ and Wits have outsourced this entire function to the MGSLG.

MGSLG selects mentors who are either practicing or ex-principals and were either previous MGSLG ACE or MEd graduates. All must have a proven track record of running effective successful schools. In some cases they use IDSOs, who are ex-teachers with at least four years experience. They work for the GDE and have responsibility for managing 20 schools in their district. One advantage of using IDSOs is that they understand the context of the schools, which are normally based within their district and can carry out monitoring and support as part of their normal course of work with the school. However one HEI commented that tensions exist between the IDSOs and schools, and questioned whether they are the right individuals to perform this role, as the mentoring relationship needs to be built on a foundation of confidentiality and trust.

The mentoring sessions organized by MGSLG are conducted one Saturday per month during term time where the mentors facilitate the small group sessions. The mid-term evaluation reported that the mentoring groups do not always meet this frequently as there are cancellations and extensions due to unforeseen problems (Bush et al, 2008, p118). The MGSLG mentioned that scheduling sessions on a Saturday is problematic in that some candidates were unable to meet the Saturday commitment.

The sessions are structured to have a plenary in the morning, which involves an address but can also be used for an interactive session where those principals who have good practices share their experiences. After the plenary, candidates meet in their groups with their mentors who facilitate the rest of the day. The intention of these smaller group sessions is for principals to share their progress and challenges with their peers, obtaining peer support and solutions for practical experience. Participants are encouraged to reflect and evaluate their own practices.

At MGSLG the mentors are not required to undertake site-based visitations and assessment. This is the responsibility of the IDSOs.

The ratio of student:mentor at UP is 6:1. This is considerably lower than MGSLG (including Wits and UJ) where the ratio is 25:1. The DoE recommended a baseline of 10:1.

The research and literature on mentoring speaks of a one-to-one relationship, which allows for more personalized support and interaction compared to the responsibility of managing 6 or 25 candidates. As mentioned in Ch 2.5, the mid-term evaluation revealed that the group sessions are leading to mentors determining the agenda and dominating the discussion. In situations where the mentors do work directly with the candidates, they often provide 'solutions' and specific advice rather than asking questions and providing support and encouragement to enable candidates to make the decisions themselves. Although this is welcomed by the candidates it serves to reinforce a dependency model rather than providing a means to develop the candidate's confidence and skills. (Bush et al, 2008, p157).

Although both MGSLG and UP indicated that the mentors had received initial training it is not known what type of training and whether it was sufficiently comprehensive and geared specifically towards the mentoring process, roles and responsibilities. Research indicates that both the mentor and mentee should receive identical information on expectations for the process and programme (Hobson, 2003, p20).

International research reveals that the matching or pairing of mentors and mentees is a key factor in the success of the mentoring process. There is no evidence from the mentor selection process used by HEIs that there is selective pairing between mentor and mentees. This is partly a result of the very small pool of potential ex-principals with successful experience in the types of school represented on the ACE programme.

All HEIs and the DoE identified the mentoring process as the critical success factor for the ACE programme. Mentoring however is also one of the greatest challenges in the programme provision, in that HEIs have insufficient capacity or capability to undertake the mentoring process and therefore rely on either outsourcing this function and incurring the associated costs or managing the selection and co-ordination themselves bearing the responsibility of sourcing adequately experienced and successful mentors, training and

remunerating mentors for their time and expenses such as travel costs, including petrol and accommodation.

The choice of using principals or ex-principals as mentors is effective, especially where the HEI staff have limited headship experience. Since the mentors also need to assist in the development of leadership attributes and soft skills, careful consideration needs to be given to the selection process in ensuring that the mentors are sufficiently competent and experienced to enable this kind of support and personal learning interaction and growth.

5.8 Tuition fees

During the ACE field test, the DoE is paying the fees for students enrolled on the programme, allocating R12 000 per annum per student (R24 000 for the two year qualification) to the HEI. This amount has received criticism for being insufficient and not covering the costs of the programme, which are high as HEIs are required to remunerate mentors / facilitators and tutors, and possibly the verifiers undertaking site-based assessment. UP has students attending its programmes from Mpumalanga and incurs substantial travel costs (petrol and accommodation) for the site based visits, some of which involve driving vast distances. Wits reckons the cost of training will be high, between R20 000 – R30 000 per student per annum and all HEIs were concerned about the budget for the practice-based components of the programme, which would result in the fees being expensive. The tuition fees at UP will be R13 750 per annum in 2009. The MGSLG fees, which will be funded by the GDE, are R10 000-R12 000 per annum. Wits and UJ are not offering the programme in 2009.

Once the field test is completed, and should the ACE become a mandatory qualification and prerequisite for principalship, students will need to fund themselves or obtain bursaries from their respective provincial departments of education, schools or relevant institutional funder. Requiring candidates to pay their own fees may be an inhibitor to taking the qualification resulting in an insufficient supply of candidates and some high quality leaders not becoming principals (Bush et al, 2008, p147). Careful consideration of the funding model is required, and it may be appropriate for the national or provincial departments to pay for the expensive parts of the programme, such as mentoring and site-based visits, whilst candidates pay for the university-based elements (Bush et al, 2008, p147).

According to international research, the provision of significant financial support for principals to attend the programme is one of the three facilitating conditions of exemplary preparation and professional development programmes (Darling-Hammond et al, 2007, p17). It is therefore imperative that the funding model is reviewed by the DoE, GDE and HEIs to ensure that the majority of principals have access to the programme and to safeguard use of the expensive learning methods in the design.

5.9 HEI's attitude towards the introduction and implementation of a national professional qualification

Universities have their own institutional identity and culture, and hence reacted differently to the introduction of a national centralized professional programme. Stemming from its anti-apartheid history, Wits has contested government interference in their programmes. In ensuring their autonomy is not compromised, they were highly critical of the specificity in the curriculum framework which does not allow for flexibility to accommodate institutional agency and innovation and were not prepared to be part of the initial field test. They agreed to be part of the pilot in June 2007 and began offering the programme to their first intake in March 2008. They have dropped the national materials preferring to use their own and modified the curriculum to what they believe is appropriate. They appear to be resistant to move away from an academic approach, still focusing 60% on content and 40% on practice-based elements. They have decided not to offer the ACE to a new intake in 2009 until there is clarity around the target audience positioning and funding, but are committed to playing a role in influencing the strategic development of the programme going forward. Wits gave the impression that they do not have the capacity to manage this type of programme.

UP appeared to have been far more receptive to the introduction of a national ACE and all lecturers are dedicated to making the programme a success. They positioned their Education Management and Policy Studies department as a leader in the field in SA, and have offered numerous specializations in the leadership and management arena for a number of years, from the ACE distance learning diploma, to a BEd (Hons) and MEd degree with specific management streams. They were critical of the materials and concerned about the high costs of the process components of the programme. They have adopted a unique model of delivery, compared to UJ and Wits, which gives them tighter control, responsibility and management over the mentoring, facilitation and site-based assessment processes and therefore have more 'hands-on' involvement. Three of the lecturers had personally visited

some of the schools. The UP team is committed to improving teaching and learning in all our schools and therefore determined to make this work. They expressed concern about capacity issues and the quality of junior lecturers at some of the other HEIs delivering the ACE in SA. The UP faculty appeared the most organized of all HEIs interviewed offering a well-managed and co-ordinated programme. The lecturers were all committed, dedicating extensive time and effort in ensuring the successful and effective implementation of all aspects of the programme.

UJ has a partnership with the GDE through its relationship with the MGSLG and is committed to working with the department in this arena, recommending that all the universities collaborate with the GDE in delivering the ACE. UJ prides itself, together with MGSLG, on pioneering one of the first professional, practice-based ACE programmes in the country and on the instrumental role it played in advising the NMLC during the national ACE programme design. Two of its lecturers were on the NMLC committee. It is involved with educational projects of the General Motors Foundation Trust, the social responsibility arm of the corporation, and is responsible for delivering the ACE programme to principals in Namibia. It is currently looking into leadership development that affects long term, sustainable change in the candidates. UJ is committed to improving teaching and learning in all our schools and determined to making the ACE a success.

5.10 Conclusion

Although a range of formal qualifications are provided by universities these are traditional academic programmes with a strong theoretical focus, many including a research component and targeted at the full spectrum of educators. Postgraduate degrees include a BEd (Hons) and masters programme, with some HEIs offering specializations in educational management, law, policy and leadership. None of these programmes is targeted primarily at principal development and it is questionable whether they make a significant difference to performance, as opposed to the knowledge, of principals, especially since more than half (55%) of all Gauteng principals have higher qualifications than the minimum requirement for an educator. There is limited provision of informal leadership programme provision, with the MGSLG the only HEI offering a few accredited short courses.

The research established that UP and UJ pride themselves as leaders in the field in the provision of management and leadership development programmes in Gauteng. UP’s large

department, research focus and long standing of provision in the field, and UJ's leadership in pioneering the first professional qualification offered by a university, were key differentiators setting them apart from the other universities in this field.

The delivery and implementation of the new ACE has required a paradigm shift by university faculty in that it is firstly a professional programme, with a heavy practice-based focus and secondly, it is a nationally prescribed programme, leading to a national accreditation. Although the ACE curriculum includes the teaching of relevant theory, in line with international thinking, the weighting given to the theoretical components by the HEIs was too high for a practice based professional programme, especially when it negatively affected the candidate's leadership learning. Wits was focusing 60% on the theoretical aspects of the course during its 'lecture' contact sessions and appeared resistant to move away from its traditional academic approach. It would appear that some of the HEIs have not made the necessary paradigm shift to deliver a professional programme.

Although the course focuses on both management and leadership, it is evident that HEIs are not conceptualizing their role as facilitators in the development of leadership soft skills of its candidates. The HEIs merely draw awareness to the theory contained in the materials around leadership qualities, EQ, personal and interpersonal skills, but do not assess or observe the practice or acquisition thereof. One HEI even questioned whether this is the role of the HEI. Surely, if the objective of the course is to develop managers and leaders, it is the responsibility of the HEI to ensure that this element is incorporated into the programme. Internationally there is recognition that the growth of soft skills around interpersonal relationships is best developed through intensive peer interaction, guided by an experienced and skilled mentor from outside the group. It is questionable whether the lecturers or mentors have the requisite skills for enabling this and if not, consideration should be given to using suitably qualified specialists in the field and providing relevant training to mentors. Mentors need to be part of this process so that they can re-enforce concepts and assist in providing feedback and referrals for coaching where required. In order for these behavioural changes to be sustained and incorporated into practice on a long term basis some form of continuous professional development needs to be provided after completion of the ACE. It is recommended that the DoE or GDE, make provision for a range of voluntary short courses, offered by specialist suppliers in the field that would assist in developing and growing an individual's leadership attributes and soft skills, post completion of the ACE.

All HEIs were critical of the official course materials and have rewritten some or all of the modules, supplementing or removing content and / or practice based activities where they see fit. If the content being taught differs from one HEI to the next, this reduces the standardisation of the programme raising questions around the standardization of practice with implications for the notion of a national qualification.

Two different models of delivering the programme have been adopted by HEIs, including a block release mode during school holidays and weekly 'contact' sessions over 5 Saturdays per semester. Further research, assessing attendance figures and candidate's perceptions, needs to be conducted to determine if one mode is more effective than the other.

The high numbers of students in the 'lecture' contact sessions at Wits and UP are not conducive to active involvement and engagement by the students and inhibit participation and debate between lecturers and candidates. They are more a vehicle for delivering knowledge which is contrary to the aims of a professional programme. The cohort composition also requires review. Wits experienced that a mixed class comprising aspiring and practicing principals, was highly ineffective. Comparative studies of international programmes revealed that they are differentiated for different stages of leadership and few countries offer a 'one size fits all' solution. HEIs need to reduce the number of students in their lecture contact sessions and ensure the cohort composition is tailored specifically for the relevant stage of headship.

HEIs have focused primarily on the delivery of the conventional classroom activities and assignments with UJ and Wits completely outsourcing the 'new' aspects of the programme, namely mentoring, networking and site-based assessment, to the MGSLG. Mentoring is recognized by all HEIs and the DoE as the critical success factor of the ACE programme, and yet its associated constraints - HEI's lack of capacity and time, high travel expenses incurred in visiting schools and costs of mentor remuneration - were concerning and seen as inhibitors to its effectiveness. UP was the only university that has retained ownership of the mentoring function, expending much time and effort in sourcing and training mentors, and co-coordinating their role in group facilitation, site based visits and assessment. UP had the lowest mentoring relationship of 6:1, whilst MGSLG had a student:mentor relationship of 25:1, which cannot be effective in providing the required level of personalized support and

growth. None of the HEIs had given attention to the matching or pairing of mentors and mentees.

The choice of using principals or ex-principals as mentors is effective, especially where the HEI staff have limited headship experience. Careful consideration needs to be given to the selection process in ensuring that the mentors are sufficiently competent and experienced to facilitate and support the development of both management and leadership attributes and skills, through personal learning and growth.

Wits, UJ and MGSLG need to review and revise the mentoring components, paying attention to the mentoring relationship, selection, pairing process and training.

All HEIs have adopted a fairly similar assessment approach, using a variety of options to demonstrate evidence of applied knowledge. The key components assessed include assignments, a project and portfolio. Wits is the only HEI that still uses the traditional approach of exams, although open book, or exam equivalents for assessing some of its modules, especially where it regards a thorough knowledge of the subject content an essential requirement for demonstrating competence. Wits needs to be challenged on their insistence of the use of exams in a professional programme.

Site based assessment was only occurring at UP and failing to be delivered by the MGSLG, on behalf of UJ and Wits. If no on-site verification of the application of the portfolio and project content are occurring, one questions how the university lecturers can perform a final assessment? On-site validation is essential for demonstrating competence in a professional qualification. It is also questionable whether IDSOs have the required competence and experience and whether they are the right individuals to act as assessors. HEIs need to take more responsibility and accountability for this function and ensure that these issues are resolved in order to ensure its successful implementation.

There are no standardised assessment rubrics especially for the portfolio and site-based visitations, and all HEIs had adopted their own versions, although UP was the only HEI that furnished their rubrics to the researcher.

Universities have their own institutional identity and culture, and hence reacted differently to the introduction of a national centralized professional programme. Wits was the most critical of the programme and displayed the greatest reluctance to moving away from a traditional academic approach, still focusing predominantly on theory than the practice based elements and assessing the modules using exams/exam equivalents. The UP faculty appeared the most committed and organized of all the HEIs, offering a well-managed and co-ordinated programme, and dedicating extensive time and effort in ensuring the successful and effective implementation of all aspects of the programme, including the process components.

6. Conclusion

Internationally there is widespread recognition of the need for a pre-service qualification for principals and continuing professional development throughout their careers. Corroborative evidence of what works in leadership training and development – to influence principals' knowledge, skills, values and behaviours – is emerging (Walker & Dimmock, 2006, p125). Leadership learning that is more likely to be transferred into practice, includes process-rich components that are work-based and personalized (Bush et al, 2008).

A national ACE (Advanced Certification: Education (School Management and Leadership)) is currently being introduced by the Department of Education as a pre-service qualification targeted at developing aspiring principals in South Africa. It is a professional qualification, focusing on skills development, applied competence and on-site assessment and aims to improve education management and leadership in our schools and contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning. The decision to make the ACE a mandatory qualification is still under consideration by the Minister of Education, but recommended by the mid-term evaluation research team (Bush et al, 2008, p158).

This research confirmed that the programme design of the ACE is aligned conceptually with international best practice, contextualized for the SA environment, as it focuses on both traditional classroom based 'content' and 21st century leadership development process dimensions, such as mentoring, networking and site-based assessment.

16 of South Africa's HEIs are currently delivering and field testing the ACE implementation using a common framework agreed by the DoE. This raises questions around how HEIs have interpreted the delivery framework and whether a degree of standardization is being attained using independent HEIs as service providers.

Have HEIs adapted the curriculum content and programme components to suit their own requirements or approach? Are HEIs embracing and implementing the process-rich components such as mentoring, networking and on-site assessment? What assessment criteria are being used to accredit a national programme? What were the attitudes of the HEIs towards the implementation of a national qualification? Do the schools of education in Gauteng universities have staff with previous principalship experience? What level of

diversity in approach and implementation is acceptable for a national accreditation programme?

These questions informed the enquiry and have been addressed during the study.

The research found that the HEIs in Gauteng have focused on the conventional classroom elements and the delivery of knowledge to the detriment of the process based elements. One HEI had not made the required paradigm shift to deliver a professional programme, still focusing 60% on the theoretical aspects and using exams/exam equivalents for assessment. HEIs were critical of the official course materials provided by the DoE and have modified the curriculum, introducing their own content for some or all of the modules. HEIs are not conceptualizing their role as facilitators in the development of leadership attributes and soft skills.

The implementation of the new radical learning methods such as mentoring, work-based components and site-based assessment has proved challenging for the HEIs as they do not have the capacity and time to manage these themselves. Two HEIs have relinquished complete responsibility for these components and outsourced the delivery to a third party institution which does not appear to be managing and implementing them appropriately. Mentoring is recognized by all HEIs and the DoE as the critical success factor of the ACE programme, and yet its associated constraints - HEI's lack of capacity and time, high travel expenses incurred in school visits and the cost of mentor remuneration - were a concern for the universities and seen as inhibitors to its implementation and effectiveness.

Site based assessment, an essential dimension for ensuring the application of the practice-based elements, was only occurring at UP and not taking place for Wits and UJ students. The validation and verification of the portfolio, incorporating the work-related assignments, and the project work, is essential to ensure that knowledge is being applied, thereby linking leadership learning to school practice. HEIs need to take more responsibility and accountability for this function, ensuring that it is undertaken by individuals who have the candidate's respect and the required competence and experience, in order to ensure its successful implementation.

There are no standardised assessment rubrics and HEIs have been left to implement their own criteria across all elements including the portfolio, project work and site-based components. Since they have modified the curriculum or content taught, removing or appending both theory and / or practice-based elements, it is questionable whether the outcomes are the same across all HEIs.

The majority of the schools of education lack sufficient lecturers with previous experience as principals and are removed and not involved in what is happening on-the-ground. Most had not undertaken site visits. Universities have their own institutional identity and culture, and hence reacted differently to the introduction of a national centralized professional programme. Wits was the most critical of the programme and displayed the greatest reluctance to moving away from the delivery approach of a traditional academic programme, still focusing predominantly on theory than the practice based elements and assessing the modules using exams/exam equivalents. The UP faculty appeared the most committed and organized of all the HEIs, offering a well-managed and co-ordinated programme, and dedicating extensive time and effort in ensuring the successful and effective implementation of all aspects of the programme, including the process components.

It is questionable whether HEIs, accustomed to delivering traditional academic programmes, are the right institution for delivering a professional qualification. The irony is that currently universities are best suited for delivering the ACE as they have inherent advantages over alternative institutions, such as established departments and facilities with reputable academia in the educational field, the relevant administrative procedures and processes in place; connections with key fields ranging from teacher education and child development to business and law, both domestically and internationally. In addition a university-based certification gives the qualification the necessary stature of an academic course and ensures a degree of quality assurance and governance over the programme delivery. With the distressing state of education in South Africa and a lack of alternative, suitable institutions to undertake the delivery, HEIs cannot afford to be ivory towers focusing purely on the theoretical and research components of the programme. They need to take responsibility and accountability for all aspects of the course, including the practice-based components and site-based assessment to ensure their effectiveness. They need to work with provincial departments in identifying suitably experienced mentors and be more actively involved in

visiting schools so that they have first hand knowledge and an understanding of how schools operate and what is actually happening on-the-ground.

The lack of uniformity in the content and curriculum taught and the use of non standardised assessment criteria and possible outcomes across all HEIs have diminished the notion of a standardized, national accreditation programme. HEIs are autonomous institutions and it is therefore expected that there will be some diversity in approach, as discussed above. The issue, however, is that a national certification requires standardised assessment criteria and grading. Ensuring universities comply with bureaucratic controls or performance based accountability is certainly not a solution. This research recommends that the DoE adopt a similar graduation practice to the UK's NCSL, by constituting a national professional body responsible for the assessment and moderation of the ACE. The body would be independent of the HEIs. It would need to establish assessment centres in different regions across the country. The assessors, including serving principals would undertake the final assessment, assessing the candidate's portfolio as well as conducting final panel interviews. This would allow some degree of diversity in approach but also ensure standardised outcomes as HEIs will need to adhere more closely to the national prescribed curriculum, especially with regard to incorporating the practice based components.

Limitations of this research

The main limitation of this research was not undertaking observation of both the HEI 'teaching' and mentoring sessions. 'Classroom' observation would have provided first hand information on the teaching / learning methods used by the lecturers. Specifically it would have provided insight on whether the contact sessions were interactive with a high level of student involvement and engagement, whether the lecturers encourage debate and questioning and the amount of emphasis placed on the application of theory and practice-based elements.

Observation of the small group sessions would have provided insight into the facilitation and mentoring skills of the mentors.

In addition, the observation sessions would have enabled the gathering of additional information, such as the demographic composition and readiness and preparation levels of the lecturers and mentors.

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Appendix 1

Leadership centres visited by NCSL teams: February/March 2001

Country and State	Centre
Australia: Victoria	The Australian Principals' Centre
Australia: New South Wales	Department of Education
Canada: Ontario	Centre for Leadership Development (OISE)
Canada: Ontario	Faculty of Education, York University
Hong Kong: China	Hong Kong University
Hong Kong: China	Chinese University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong: China	Hong Kong Institute of Education
New Zealand	Massey Principal and Leadership Centre
New Zealand	University of Waikato Educational Leadership Centre
Singapore	National Institute of Education
Sweden	Centre for School Management Training, Uppsala University
United States: Chicago	Chicago Leadership Academies
United States: North Carolina	Centre for School Leadership Development
United State: Ohio	Ohio Principals Leadership Academy
United States: Pittsburgh	Institute for Learning, University of Pittsburgh

Bush & Jackson (2002, p419)