

**THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN LEADING AND MANAGING  
TEACHING AND LEARNING IN LESOTHO: A CASE STUDY OF  
DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP IN TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE  
DISTRICT OF BOTHA-BOTHE**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,  
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FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF  
EDUCATION.**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment for the Degree of Master of Education at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examinations at any other university. I have used books, journals, and the internet as a source of information and all have been carefully referenced through the required referencing conventions.

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Litlhaka Sefeane

July 2013

## ABSTRACT

Education in Lesotho was not available to all children until the year 2000 with the introduction of the Free Primary Education policy. Since then, the huge rise in enrolments, the abolition of school fees, the effects of new policies and the problems of HIV/AIDS have expanded the demands on the principal while limited human and financial resources threaten the quality of education.

This study investigates the role of two principals in the Botha Bothe district in the leadership and management of teaching and learning as well as the strategies they employ to overcome the difficulties. Special attention is given to *distributed leadership* so that accountable, effective and efficient leadership and management can take place.

Qualitative methodology has been used through instruments such as questionnaires, follow-up interviews and observations to obtain data from the principals at the schools, one deputy principal and three to four teachers each.

The findings indicate that the perceived main role of the principal at both these schools is managing and leading teaching and learning to the required standard. In both schools, it has been found that principals share their complex managerial duties with teachers and deputy principals, that most teachers willingly give of their time to contribute to the success of the school in this way and understand the need for doing so.

By incorporating and respecting teachers' contributions to leadership, the study shows how both principals cope with their particular leadership challenges. While the strategies used can serve as a guide to others within similar contexts, the researcher suggests that the education authorities in Lesotho need to be more aware of the problems facing schools, should make sufficient human and physical resources available to help principals manage the schools properly, and provide for AIDS orphans adequately.

In addition, support for quality education in the form of ongoing professional development for both principals and teachers is needed, and more research needs to be conducted related to education issues in Lesotho.

*Key words*

*Leading and managing, Distributed leadership, Instructional leadership, Teaching and learning, the role of the principal.*

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## **DEDICATION**

This report is dedicated to the entire Sefeane and Pholo family, especially my mother, the late Mrs Mats'epo Sefeane and my father Mr Sefeane Sefeane for their inspiration and for believing in me.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS**

**FPE** - Free Primary Education

**HoD** - Head of Department

**MoET**- Ministry of Education and Training

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## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

**Distributed leadership:** 'Leadership practice', which involves the daily interaction of the school principals and the teachers with their social and material situation (Spillane, 2005)

**Free Primary Education:** Education Act that has legalized the right to free and compulsory education.

**Instructional leadership:** Management and leadership of teaching and learning.

**Leading and managing:** Two complementary functions essential for success and for building schools as organisations (Kotter, 2001).

**Teaching and learning:** Daily process of imparting and receiving knowledge, taking place in the school classrooms.

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# **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This study examines the role of principals in leading and managing teaching and learning in Lesotho primary schools. Lesotho gained its independence from British colonial rule in 1966, and remains a hereditary monarchy. It is a landlocked country, encircled by South Africa. As the second-smallest country in Southern Africa, with a population of 2.1 million people, it is one of the least developed in the world. Mountains make up almost three-quarters of the country while the lowlands, where the capital city Maseru is situated, cover the rest. About 80 per cent of the population live in the lowlands and foothills. Maseru is highly populated, with the highest number of schools (Magau, 2005). Administratively, Lesotho is divided into ten districts, each headed by a district administrator. The district of Botha-Bothe, in which the study will be conducted, is the fourth one.

## **1.2 Background**

Access to basic education for all and the provision of adequate numbers of people with appropriate occupational, technical and managerial skills (to cater for manpower needs in the modern education sector) are the two most important aspects of education policy in Lesotho (Lerotholi, 2001). As Lerotholi (2001) indicates, basic education for all is intended to develop people's skills and competence, as well as giving continuous opportunities for education to youth and adults and increasing access to education for disadvantaged groups of people such as disabled children. Primary education, however, remains one of the first priority areas for the Ministry of Education.

In Lesotho, the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy was implemented in January 2000<sup>1</sup>. It was viewed by the government as a step towards achieving universal basic education and

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<sup>1</sup> The removal of school fees contributed to poverty reduction by ensuring universal access to basic education (Avenstrup, Liang and Nellemann, 2004). Initially FPE was for those entering Standard One, but it was planned to increase so that all primary schooling would be free from the beginning of 2006.

contributing to poverty reduction. As a result of the initiative, children in primary schools have dramatically increased in number. The programme's policy objectives were as follows:

- making basic education accessible to all pupils, relevant to their needs;
- making education equitable in order to eliminate disparities and inequalities;
- providing basic and necessary resources to enable every Mosotho child to enter and complete the primary cycle of education;
- ensuring that education is affordable for the majority of the Basotho;
- providing and maintaining quality education as a basis for promoting human resources development, economic development and societal advancement, thus fulfilling the government's broad policy of eradicating poverty and illiteracy, and
- Equipping every Mosotho with basic skills

(Magau, 2005, p. 35)

As Avenstrup et al. (2004) point out, the public response to FPE was overwhelming, creating 'access shock'. Enrolments increased by 75 percent in the first year (Grade 1 only), leading to overcrowded classrooms and shortages of teachers, textbooks and materials. Many of those who enrolled were over-age pupils, more suited to Adult Education. Given that the system was not 'geared up' for the logistical implications of FPE, the Ministry of Education, supported by international agencies, put in place in-service teacher and para-professional distance training and re-trained teachers to cope with large classes (Avenstrup et al., 2004).

Since the introduction of FPE, more female learners have enrolled in primary schools than males<sup>2</sup>. Pupil-teacher ratios also have increased, ranging between 45:1 and 50:1 as compared to the official ratio, which is 40:1 (Lerotholi, 2001). However, pupil-teacher ratios do not present an accurate reflection of class size:

They are derived by dividing the number of teachers in a school by the number of pupils... this does not take non-contact time into account and assumes that all of the teachers are teaching all of the time.

(O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 26).

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<sup>2</sup> The net enrolment rate of female learners was 73.9 and 70.8 males.

Females make up 81 per cent of primary school teachers in the country (Lerotholi, 2001).

The Government of Lesotho believes that providing an equitable basic education to all is a key developmental goal (Lesotho Education Strategic Plan, 2005). Basic education is seen as an essential part of social and economic development and it is regarded as a fundamental human right. Consequently, the government's policy is to move towards the expansion and retention of all educational sectors.

Strategies to improve education quality by equipping schools and education centres, reforming the curriculum, ensuring the provision of teaching and learning materials, investing in teacher training and professional development, and providing cost-effective and efficient teacher supervision and support were formulated by 2005<sup>3</sup>. However, the problem of overcrowding in primary school classrooms is a persistent and key negative factor that impacts on schools and the quality of teaching and learning (Lerotholi, 2001).

Principals' roles in Lesotho involve the allocation of tasks to teachers, supervising the work in order to ensure that set objectives are met as well as providing support and guidance where necessary (SAQMEC<sup>4</sup> 2009-2010). Principals must also ensure that a large number of learners who are orphans due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic have their educational and basic needs catered for<sup>5</sup>. Despite the loss of caregivers, FPE is keeping children in schools, ensuring they are taught life skills and HIV/AIDS education and are given two meals a day through the World Food Programme's school-feeding initiative<sup>6</sup>. Principals and teachers ensure that children become the bridge between the school and the community by teaching the community about HIV/AIDS.

The above-mentioned responsibilities of principals create a need for all members of the school community to collaborate in bringing about quality education, because it is becoming too complex for the principals themselves to shoulder all these responsibilities on their own.

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<sup>3</sup> Lesotho Education Strategic Plan, 2005

<sup>4</sup> Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Education Quality

<sup>5</sup> Statistics show that about 25 percent of children under the age of eighteen have lost one or both parents due to the pandemic, and many are themselves heading households (UNICEF's State of the World's Children, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF's State of the World's Children, 2005

However, the education system in Lesotho, being highly centralised<sup>7</sup> (Magau 2005, p.45), creates limited opportunities for autonomy of the schools. The established district offices of the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) and local management bodies have very limited influence in the schools.

### **1.3 Aims and objectives of the study**

The broad aim of this study is to investigate the role of principals in managing teaching and learning in Lesotho primary schools. The objective of this study is to examine the extent to which school principals use their leadership role to involve other members of the staff into the management of teaching and learning and to identify the challenges that are facing principals, specifically in the leadership and management of teaching and learning in schools that have implemented FPE.

In Lesotho, the introduction of free primary education has increased the responsibilities of principals. All principals in Lesotho work under pressure due to lack of textbooks and sufficient classrooms to accommodate the increasing number of learners. This is compounded by a shortage of skilled teachers and the added responsibility of caring for HIV/AIDS orphans' needs (Avenstrup et al., 2004 & UNICEF's State of the World's Children, 2005). But principals should still establish a system of quality teaching and learning under these circumstances while ensuring a clear educational direction reflecting the school's aims and values (Earley & Weindling 2004).

### **1.4 Problem statement**

With the increasing number of learners enrolling in Lesotho primary schools as a result of the implementation of free primary education (FPE) and an increasing number of vulnerable HIV/AIDS orphans, the role of principals in leading and managing teaching and learning becomes more significant and more complex. Principals find it very difficult to perform their duties effectively due to scarcity of resources, lack of infrastructure and under-skilled teachers, and therefore require the assistance of other members of the staff to deliver quality

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<sup>7</sup> The overall management of the education system is still centrally operated. Almost all major decisions are made at National level (e.g. the payment of teachers' salaries, the choice of schools to receive new buildings).

education. McNeil and McClanah (2005) state that a single person on his/her own cannot lead a school to success and provide the necessary leadership on all issues. They emphasise that leadership requires the utilisation of many people's skills in order to be successful.

Avenstrup et al. (2004, p .12) report that the introduction of FPE has led to a sudden flood of pupils, swamping available resources, and that a *critical* view of FPE in developing countries raises questions about its sustainability, the lack of time allowed for planning, the slowness of delivery and the quality of education. The challenge faced by these countries is to reform their educational systems to accommodate the increase in enrolments, so that schools can provide good-quality primary education to all. This calls for the collaboration of principals and teachers in order to bring about change.

Research by Bush and Oduro (2006) show that most principals in developing countries are unaware of their full responsibilities and lack leadership skills. Lesotho principals are not an exception. Bush (2009) indicates that there is a growing realisation in the research community that school leadership is a specialist occupation needing special preparation. Informed and appropriately trained leaders are advantaged by utilising the skills acquired in leadership preparation programmes. The reasons for this paradigm shift in educational thinking [Bush (2008) cited in Bush (2009, p. 376)] include the following:

- The expansion of the role of school principal.
- The increasing complexity of school contexts.
- Recognition that appropriate preparation for leadership is a moral obligation.
- Recognition that effective preparation and development make a difference.

## **1.5 Research questions**

This study will focus on exploring the role of Lesotho primary school principals in leading and managing teaching and learning and will be guided by the following main question and sub-questions:

## **Main research question**

What is the role of the principal in leading and managing the provision of teaching and learning?

## **Research sub-questions**

- What are the challenges facing principals in Lesotho primary schools?
- To what extent do principals distribute leadership to ensure that teaching and learning takes place effectively in Lesotho primary schools?

## **1.6 Conceptual framework**

The researcher's experience and theoretical understanding leads her to agree with Webb (2005) who argues that school leadership per se is becoming more complex given the 'multiplicity' of tasks principals have to perform and more difficult daily as new policies are introduced, although policy-makers often fail to understand the realities of principals' work (Rayner, 2008). These increasing demands require principals to let go of their old leadership approaches and empower teachers to become aware of their potential.

Many writers<sup>8</sup> are of the view that principals need to distribute their leadership in order to lead schools successfully. Fullan (2002, p. 20) states, "an organisation cannot flourish on the action of the top leader alone...schools need many leaders at many levels." Leithwood and Mascall (2008, p. 544) concur that there is a need for leadership to be demonstrated at all levels in an organisation and not just at the top. Leadership 'resides' not only in the figurehead but potentially in every person at every level who acts as a leader to a group of followers (Earley and Weindling, 2004). Group members, therefore, need to take on the responsibility for leadership (MacNeil and MacClanah 2005, p. 1).

## **1.7 Rationale of the study**

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<sup>8</sup> As well as the present researcher.

The large increase in the numbers of learners in Lesotho primary schools due to the introduction of Free Primary Education makes it difficult for teachers to teach in the classrooms. Principals also find it very difficult to manage teaching and learning with this ever-increasing number of learners in their schools (Avenstrup et al, 2004). Although teaching and learning is at the heart of every school, unrealistic numbers of learners lead to ineffective teaching and learning. This is due to the fact that each learner needs individual attention to learn effectively. As Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) point out, class size and other physical environment factors affect the nature of learning and teaching occurring in the classroom, and as principals are, finally, responsible for the quality of work in their schools, they should work collaboratively with the members of school community to manage class sizes.

International research shows primary principals to be powerful, controlling and ‘pivotal players’ in their schools (Webb, 2005, citing Southworth, 1998b), which is why the researcher has chosen to examine the principals’ role in leading and managing teaching and learning. As there is limited literature on leadership in Lesotho, or research on the role of the principal in managing teaching and learning, the researcher intends that this study will add to this existing body of knowledge.

## **1.8 Limitations of the study**

Small scale case studies such as this one are, by their nature, limited in scope (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Opie (2004, p. 74) describes a case study as “an in-depth study of interactions of a single instance in an enclosed system”, limiting the data to that of the participants and the setting. In addition to these implicit limitations of the approach, the researcher was constrained by the particular logistics connected with the study.

- Travelling costs associated with the field research.
- The necessity of collecting data in Lesotho during term-time (when the schools were open) from Johannesburg.
- The limited time frame of one month.
- The limited time allowed at the site (around the school timetable and meetings) and the unwillingness of sufficient participants to participate

Further, as this research was conducted in only two primary schools, the findings may not necessarily represent the rest of primary schools in Lesotho, but they could provide an insight into how principals, as educational leaders, play a role in managing teaching and learning, and how they collaborate with teachers in sharing leadership roles.

The literature that will be reviewed for this research will address the following issues in detail; principals and their roles in managing teaching and learning, the involvement of teachers in performing their leadership roles towards improved outcomes and the specific challenges facing primary teachers in the Lesotho context in relation to leadership and management of teaching and learning. The relevant international literature as well as Southern African literature will be reviewed to address the above central issues.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Literature on school effectiveness indicates that the educational success of a school is largely due to the quality of leadership. As development is ongoing, constant improvement is necessary while the principal needs to be the driver of ongoing change. Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2009, p. 377) argue that *distributed* leadership is at the core of instructional leadership, and student achievement depends on *how* leadership is distributed (Spillane, 2005).

This view of leadership holds that, in order for school principals to manage and lead schools effectively, leadership roles should be shared amongst other members of the staff. Arrowsmith (2007, p. 22) describes distributed leadership as “an emerging form of power distribution in schools which extends authority and influence to groups or individuals in a way which is at least partly contrary to hierarchical arrangements.” The concept of distributed leadership enjoys growing attention today in many countries.

### **2.2 Leading and managing**

Schools, as highly complex organisations, need to be managed and led in various ways with regard to the two important functions of the principal: namely, leadership and management. It is therefore important to define more clearly these two necessary and complementary functions of principals, and to identify those which relate to management and those which relate to leadership (Day et al., 2000). Bush and Glover (2003) make a clear distinction between leading and managing:

Leadership is 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. Management is the implementation of school policies and the efficient and effective maintenance of the school’s current activities. Both leadership and management are required if schools are to be successful. Bush and Glover (2003, p. 10)

The importance of both leadership and management is becoming globally significant. As Bush (2008) attests, the concepts of management and leadership cannot be separated because they both relate to the notion of administration and are supportive of each other: Sterling and Davidoff (2000, p.12) refer to leadership and management as two sides of the same coin because they work together, while Kotter (2001) shows that leadership and management may have different functions but both are essential for success and for building organisations. It is up to organisational leaders to combine strong leadership and management and use them to bring about improvements in the organisation.

The interactive nature of management and leadership is strongly supported in School Effectiveness literature. Schools need to be led and managed for them to operate effectively (Christie et al., 2007). Bush (2008, p. 272) views leadership and management as the 'heart and mind' of the school as an organisation as they 'hold' each other. For example, on one hand, a principal cannot lead effectively if he/she is an incompetent manager; but on the other,

Organisations which are over-managed but under-led eventually lose any sense of spirit or purpose. Poorly managed organisations with strong charismatic leaders may soar temporarily only to crash shortly thereafter.

(Bush 1998, p.328)

Sterling and Davidoff (2000, p.12) indicate that, in reality, it is very difficult to separate the two. Bush (1998) points out that the challenges of modern organisations need managerial skills as well as the commitment which good leadership provides.

### **2.3 Identifying leadership approaches**

In the literature, there are many leadership approaches (which can be quite confusing to the would-be manager and leader<sup>9</sup>), which need to be understood but cannot all be applied

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<sup>9</sup> Huber (2004, p. 672) has identified the following leadership skills as some of the important: "transactional leadership," in which the principal manages the school's transactions which are important for an effective and efficient work flow in the organisation; "transformational leadership", fundamental where rapid and extensive processes of change need to be viewed and performed and "instructional leadership" which focuses on the learning progress of the learners. Huber (2004) further points out leadership styles such as "consultative leadership", "delegative leadership" and "participative leadership" and their importance in the organisation.

simultaneously. A combination of two or more approaches may help principals to perform their duties effectively, in particular by incorporating teachers into certain roles in the school. However, Huber (2004, p.672) argues that, given the increasing responsibilities in the role of principals, a new type of *mindset* is required. Different approaches to leadership should be considered to bring about successful leadership and school leaders should have the capacity to ensure that the school as organisation operates effectively and smoothly (ibid). Research carried out by the Hay Group for NCSL (2004) identified five ‘pillars’ on which distributed leadership should be built in schools: self-confident and self-effacing headship, clarity of structure and accountability, investment in leadership capability, a culture of trust and a ‘turning point’.

There is much evidence to suggest that these skills are at odds with those of “traditional” leaders. Instructional and distributed leadership approaches are used in this research because they are directly related to the role of principals in management of teaching and learning in schools, but the researcher will put more emphasis on distributed leadership.

## **2.4 Instructional leadership**

Different scholars have different views about instructional leadership and define it differently. Blasé and Blasé (1999, p. 350) use Smith and Andrews’ (1989) definition to define instructional leadership as “a blend of several tasks, such as supervision of classroom instruction, staff development, and curriculum development” whereas, Earley and Weindling (2004, p.5) define it as ‘promoting and developing schools as learning organisations in order to help bring about the school’s learning goal for its pupils’. Marks and Printy (2003, p. 373) refer to the broad view of instructional leadership as ‘encompassing all the work the principal does to support student achievement as well as teachers’ teaching’. What they do have in common, though, is that they all refer to the necessary instructional role of principals.

The instructional leadership model was established during the early 1980s, drawn from School Effectiveness research which identified the following characteristics of effective principals: “strong, directive leadership focused on curriculum and instruction...” (Edmonds,

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Moreover, he maintains that efforts to improve schools in many countries have shown that neither top-down measures nor bottom-up approaches alone “have the effects desired” (p. 670).

1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982 cited in Hallinger, 2003). Evidence based on research findings from this model indicates that the school level and socio-economic status influences the need for exercise of instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003). He (ibid p.332) further attests that the most used model of instructional leadership proposes three dimensions of instructional leadership<sup>10</sup>, namely: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme and promoting a positive school-learning climate. In reconceptualising the instructional leadership model, he (ibid, p.233) indicates that the literature that has emerged over twenty-five years shows that the instructional leader focuses on:

- Creating a shared sense of purpose in the school, including clear goals focused on student learning.
- Fostering the continuous improvement of the school through cyclical school development planning that involves a wide range of stakeholders.
- Developing a climate of high expectations and a school culture aimed at innovation and improvement of teaching and learning.
- Coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student learning outcomes.
- Shaping the reward structure of the school to reflect the school's mission.
- Organizing and monitoring a wide range of activities aimed at the continuous development of staff.
- Being a visible presence in the school, modelling the desired values of the school's culture.

His research reveals that school principals contribute indirectly to school effectiveness and student achievement through their influence on what happens in schools and in the classroom (ibid, p. 333). Other studies<sup>11</sup> show that talking with teachers to promote reflection and promoting professional growth contribute to effective instructional leadership. As an instructional leader, the principal has to perform several roles to ensure effective teaching and learning. Taylor (2006) outlines some of these, such as directing/guiding the school to effective teaching and learning as well as creating conditions conducive to better instruction. Hallinger (1992, p. 37) defines the role of an instructional leader as: high expectations for teachers and learners, close supervision of classroom instruction, co-ordination of the school's curriculum and close monitoring of student progress. Moreover, Blasé and Blasé (1999,

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<sup>10</sup> Developed by Hallinger (2000).

<sup>11</sup> Blasé and Blasé (1999, p. 130).

p.350) show that research carried out by Pajak (1989) indicates the functions of planning, organizing, facilitating change, and motivating staff as part of instructional leadership.

Southworth (2002) further shows that an instructional leader should provide support to teachers to ensure that teaching and learning takes place effectively, by indicating that instructional leadership is more concerned with the school's core activities, as well as the ongoing development of learning of teachers' and learners' growth. Bush and Glover maintain,

Instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning and on the behaviour of teachers in working with learners. Leaders' influence is targeted at student learning via teachers. The emphasis is on the direct impact of the influence process itself.

(2002, p. 10)

As an instructional leader, the principal is expected to be knowledgeable about the curriculum and instruction in order to help teachers in making instructional improvements (Webb, 2005). As the primary source of knowledge for development of school programmes, s/he should know that the content being delivered to all learners is appropriate. In Robinson's view, the leader's direct participation in curriculum planning and co-ordination as well as teacher learning and professional development increases learner achievement (Robinson, 2007).

However, the instructional leadership model, however important and useful it is in schools, like any other model, has its own limitations. As (Bolman & Deal, 1992; Cuban, 1988) cited in Hallinger (2003, p.334) state, the instructional leadership role cannot be the only role principals play in school: principals play managerial, political, instructional, institutional, human resource and symbolic leadership roles. Hallinger (2003, p. 334) further emphasises this view by pointing out that "instructional leaders must adjust their performance of this role to the needs, opportunities and constraints imposed by the school context." Deducing from this criticism of this model, it is clear that instructional leadership on its own cannot bring about the required school success; however, with the inclusion of distributed leadership the standard of education in schools can be improved. Ridden (1992, p.68) states, 'The increasing complexity of school management requires knowledge, skills, experience, perception and time-well beyond the capabilities of any one person'.

## **2.5 The role of the principal**

The core purpose of principalship is to provide leadership and management in all areas of the school to enable the creation and support of conditions.... which promote the highest standards of learner achievement (Bush and Glover, 2009, p. 4).

In terms of the roles principals play in managing teaching and learning, Bush and Glover identify these as: setting the framework for effective teaching and learning, developing policies to address the issues, and ensuring that curriculum delivery is effectively implemented (ibid). More specifically, a principal in South Africa would engage her/himself with the availability of appropriate teaching and learning material, developing the curriculum across the school, ensuring learner performance, monitoring HODs and arranging a programme of class visits with teachers.

Results of case study research carried out by Webb (2005, p. 86) in six schools provides evidence that the central role of primary principal is to “provide leadership that brings about continual improvement in teaching and learning.” According to Bush et al (2010), principals should: develop a vision for the school that places teaching and learning at the centre, set out clear expectations of their learners and teachers and demonstrate good practice in their teaching and leadership activities.

One of the main roles of principals is to establish schools as professional learning communities. As Muijs & Harris (2003), reveal, the ability of the organisation to improve and sustain improvement depends on its ability to promote professional learning communities. Harris and Lambert (2003) define a professional learning community as a community where teachers actively participate in leadership activities and decision making, have a shared sense of purpose, engage in collaborative work and accept joint responsibility for learners’ achievement. Hargreaves (2002) adds that the growth of professional learning communities leads to a sustained improvement in learners’ learning because it builds and fosters professional skills.

## 2.6 The changing role of the principal

School leadership roles have changed significantly over the years, with new reforms and innovations in education increasing principals' responsibilities to such an extent that there are calls for new leadership approaches. Huber (1997, 1999d) cited in Huber (2004, p. 671) views the managing and leading tasks of the school leadership to be both so complex and interrelated that there is no clearly defined, single role of the school leadership. Huber defines the leader's role as,

A coloured patchwork of many different aspects, some areas or role segments relate to working with and for people, others to managing resources like the budget. All are part of the complex range of tasks the school leader faces in the 21st century.

Huber (2004, p.671)

He further indicates that the changing structures of the school system bring about an additional load for school leaders in performing their tasks and new demands and challenges (ibid).

Some of these recent demands are identified by Otunga et al. (2008, p. 374) as human resource engagement, infrastructure development, educational material provision and development of the educational institution<sup>12</sup> In general, principals should be "resource mobilisers and collaborators for the progress of the school" (ibid p. 375) despite fiscal constraints (ibid p. 377). Moloji, Morobe and Urwick (2008, p.613) emphasise that oversized classes and scarcities of resources in most African countries that provide FPE create a sense of insecurity among principals and teachers with regard to the maintenance of their own 'authority', while the limited resource base has a direct influence on the way principals run and organise the schools (ibid 2008, p. 378). Webb (2004, p.89) states,

...the changing context in which they work and the reality of the demands made by their increasingly complex and continually evolving role call for a different leadership style.

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<sup>12</sup> E.g. supporting staff members and recognising their contribution, searching for opportunities that will result in academic excellence for the school, taking initiative where it is necessary and possible, to expand the school infrastructure, maintaining and improving the existing facilities and carrying out required innovations.

Such change can also be unsettling in traditional contexts. Kumende (2010) believes that the role of principals has become critical due to implementation of new reforms such as FPE in sub-Saharan Africa. As he indicates (ibid), principals are seriously overloaded and lack skills and capacity to implement the reforms. Many challenges like high pupil-teacher ratios, shortage of qualified teachers, poor and inadequate infrastructure and other resource constraints continue to “impinge on quality imperatives” (ibid, p.646).

Webb (2005) further points out that there has been a consistent expectation at the level of national policy that principals are key players, even though the context in which they manage their schools and the nature of their responsibilities has changed dramatically. Principals are required to be “exemplary by exemplifying” their vision of what the school might become (Webb, 2005, p. 71).

## **2.7 Accountability for teaching and learning**

The changing role of principals has put more pressure on principals, as organisational leaders, in relation to school accountability. Both ‘external’ and ‘internal’ accountabilities are considered key responsibilities of school leaders in most countries as Pont et al. (2008) indicate:

School leaders play a key role in integrating external and internal accountability systems by supporting their teaching staff in aligning instruction with agreed learning goals and performance standards.

Pont et al, (2008, p. 51)

Ballard and Bates (2008) show that, throughout the United States, school evaluation is based on learners’ performance on a state-mandated test given every year, together with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. But there are several ways to hold schools and teachers accountable other than learners’ academic performance. Ballard and Bates (2008, p. 561) indicate that teacher evaluation methods are also important in ensuring teachers’ accountability because they assure teacher quality and facilitate improvement in their work. They give an example of an elementary school that evaluates teachers in ten ‘domain areas’ to ensure quality education and accountability. Many countries use self-evaluation and

measurements of student performance to develop additional means to measure school success (Pont et al., 2009).

However, whilst there is a global trend towards school based management, schools are, simultaneously, becoming more subject to national or local guidance and are required to be accountable through published results, inspection and stakeholder involvement, and constrained to ‘produce results’ (Bush and Glover 2009). Regardless of the measures used to ensure accountability, principals play an important role in ensuring that all measures for accountability are in place and that all teachers are accountable.

## **2.8 Distributed leadership**

Spillane (2005) and Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2001, p. 27) define distributed leadership as a ‘leadership practice’, which is the daily interaction of the school principals, the members of the staff and their social and material situation. Leadership practice is not only a function of an individual leader’s ability, skill, charisma, and cognition: it is co-defined by further agency of other school leaders and followers in the school (Spillane et al., 2001, p. 27). To these authors, the most effective use of human resources is when the staff works collectively towards common strategic goals.

Huber (2004, p.669-70) further defines distributed leadership as “professional school leadership”, since it involves purposeful sharing of leadership roles, involvement in classroom activities and true empowerment in terms of real delegation of leadership power. Muijs and Harris (2003) show that distributed leadership incorporates distribution of leadership where the leadership function is accomplished through the interaction of various leaders, and implies leaders’ interdependency rather than dependency, as well as embracing how leaders of different kinds, in various roles, share responsibility. For Spillane (2005, p. 145), “distributed leadership involves an array of individuals with different tools and structures to lead the school to greatness.” He further emphasises that the principal cannot ‘single-handedly’ bring about change in the organisation: s/he needs the help and co-operation of other members. Furthermore, distributed leadership is concerned with the idea that all organisational members can lead, and that leadership can be distributed or shared (Muijs & Harris, 2003).

Copland (2003) views distributed leadership as redistribution of power and authority to those who hold expertise rather than privileging those with formal titles. Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2009, p. 377) argue that “leadership is a property of a number of actors at the school level, and it is not invested in the principal solely.” Deducing from the above definitions, distributed leadership is all about the principals letting go of old leadership styles, and applying new styles that encourage teachers to demonstrate/exercise their own skills while helping the principal to manage teaching and learning in the school. It is also about how leaders interact with teachers to make distributed leadership work.

Two case study research projects, carried out by Day et al. (2000) and Harris and Chapman (2002) on successful leadership revealed distributed leadership as significant in securing school improvement and empowering teachers to lead (Harris, 2006, p.16). In another recent study, carried out by King et al. (1996), distributed leadership was found to have positive benefits which “resulted in positive effects on pedagogy, on school culture and on educational quality” (Harris, 2006, p. 20)<sup>13</sup>. Harris (2004, p. 15) further points out that, in the study carried out by Louis and Marks (1996), it was found that in schools where leadership roles were shared by teachers, “there was a positive relationship with academic performance of learners”. The most recent literature on change and school improvement shows that the form of leadership identified with improved learning outcomes is the one that is distributed or shared. Evidence has further shown that distributed leadership contributes to school effectiveness, improvement, development and change (Harris, 2005; Muijs & Harris, 2003). As Harris (2004) argues, leaders who distribute leadership are more connected to people and networks than ‘traditional’ leaders and distribute leadership for the generation of organisational development and change.

Due to increase in the number of learners in most southern African countries, schools such as those in Lesotho require the optimal use of human resources. Angelle (2010) points out that the sizes of schools and the complexity of principals’ roles increase responsibility and accountability for school principals, but also the need for distribution of leadership within the school (Pont et al., 2008). As (Huber 2004, p. 672) argues,

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<sup>13</sup> The researcher has a view that distributed leadership does not only benefit the principal but the whole school, therefore it forms an essential part of schools.

given the manifold tasks and responsibilities of school leadership, as well as the necessary competences, school leaders might be propagated as “multifunctional miracle beings”, but, nobody can safely assume that they are or will or should be the “superheroes of school.”

Grant (2006) further indicates that given the rate at which policies are drastically changed in every school system, distributed leadership is crucial. For schools to be transformed, principals require teachers’ assistance through distributed leadership (Grant, 2006). As Barth (1990), cited in MacNeil and McClanah (2005) remarks, organisational problems are ‘too big and too numerous’ for an individual to address them alone. Real school leadership comes from principals who empower teachers to become effective leaders as well as from teachers who together take responsibility for the well-being of the school.

## **2.9 Benefits of distributed leadership in schools**

Distributed leadership is not only necessary for decreasing the work load of principals: it is essential for utilising teachers’ skills for the benefit of the whole organisation, enhancing the opportunity for the organisation to benefit from the capacities of its members, and increasing ‘on-the job’ leadership development experience (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Pont et al. (2008, p. 87) point out that, as well as making the position more manageable, it also promotes leadership capacity throughout schools, essential for succession planning and management.

Evidence from the organizational development and improvement literature indicates that distributed leadership has the potential to influence organizational change and student learning outcomes positively (Harris, 2012, p. 13; Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 31).

## **2.10 Conditions necessary for successful distributed leadership**

Academic writing does not look for conformity of opinion, but rather welcomes a variety of views through a different lens or analysis, so enriching the argument. In relation to distributed leadership, this is not different. Murphy et al. (2009, p. 186), for example, outline two conditions necessary for successful implementation of distributed leadership and collaborative work: first, the school context and structures should be conducive for implementation, and secondly, the principal’s leadership should be assertive in reshaping structures, “the lifeblood” of distributed leadership (p.188), for the development of more leaders.

As Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) state, the core purpose and function of the school should determine the kind of structures that are developed, and the way in which they are arranged, in line with an accountability system that fosters the fundamental aims of the organisation (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002, p. 28). Principals should ensure that mechanisms which facilitate decision-making processes, through which the voice of every member of the school community can be heard are in place. Also important is that appropriate information is facilitated, in order to establish transparency in the school.

Copland (2003, p. 379) further highlights three preconditions that must exist for distributed leadership to flourish in the organisation: first, the development of a school culture that embodies collaboration, trust, professional learning, and reciprocal accountability; secondly, strong consensus concerning the important problems facing the school and thirdly, a need for rich expertise in approaches to improving teaching and learning among all staff members. Murphy et al. (2009) further point out that, principals must create opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership and provide them the opportunity to get involved in the work of distributed leadership, and, above all, secure trust between teachers and administrative leaders.

Research evidence shows that, without the support of the principal, distributed leadership may not be sustainable, and evidence from the same research shows that effective leaders play an important role in distributing leadership and in building leadership capacity (Harris, 2012, p. 8).

Murphy et al. (2009) believe that professional development is one of the elements of successful distributed leadership. In their recent study, it was found that teacher-led and teacher-directed professional development, in particular, was effective. High quality staff development, according to Guskey (1986, p. 5), is a central component of every proposal for improving education. He maintains that staff development brings about change in the classroom practice of teachers, their beliefs and attitudes and change in the outcomes of learners.

The study carried out by Letsatsi (2009) on staff development in Lesotho shows that there is little empirical knowledge on the status of teacher professional development in the country. While she does not generalise, she indicates that most schools still perceive professional

development as ‘attending workshops’. However, the study has shown that there are different types of professional development, and that attending workshops and occasional in-service training programmes do not improve teachers’ careers and the schools’ core business to any marked degree. In relation to the study carried out by Letsatsi (ibid), the researcher believes that principals in Lesotho have major roles to play, not only in incorporating teachers in their leadership but also in organising staff development programmes within their schools to enhance distributed leadership.

### **2.11 Who participates in school leadership?**

All members of the staff have the potential to participate in school leadership as long as they are provided the opportunity by the principal. In an environment conducive to distributed leadership, teachers are, in most cases, willing to perform tasks that develop the school. A distributed perspective on leadership takes into consideration the work performed by all individuals in the organisation who contribute to leadership practice, whether or not they are organisational leaders (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 31). Research conducted in 13 Chicago elementary schools shows that in effective leadership, tasks are always distributed among multiple leaders (Spillane et al, 2001. P. 25).

As Pont et al. (2008, p. 75) indicate, across countries it is common for schools to be headed by an individual known as a principal, head teacher or director. The principal bears the school operational responsibilities which depend on the country’s government structures (Pont et al., 2008, p. 75). Bush and Glover (2009, p. 7) also affirm that, “the head teacher, working with staff and governors creates the conditions and structures to support effective learning and teaching for all.”

In most primary schools the principal is responsible for all leadership and management functions and these functions are often conducted while the principal is teaching full-time or with a reduced load (Pont et al., 2008, p. 76). However, the principal is not the only individual responsible for school leadership: the deputy principal, middle management and teachers are responsible for leadership roles in the school. Pont et al. (ibid, p. 78) state,

Greater size and complexity usually is accompanied by a more elaborate leadership structure, where there are more layers of leadership and each layer is horizontally differentiated.

Pont et al. (ibid) show that, in most countries, the accepted role of the deputy principal is to perform administrative or managerial tasks delegated by the principal, but not the direct supervision of teachers. In practice, in many schools some aspects of the principal's functions are delegated to one or more deputy principals with the approval of school board, and this is done depending on the number of learners and the school size (ibid). In Chile for instance, leadership teams must involve the principal and a team of leaders within each educational unit (ibid).

However, “within (the) middle management role, more than any other, is the real potential of organisational change and improvement” (Busher & Harris 1999, p. 315). HODs, for example, are particularly well placed because of their proximity to the core work of the school and their relationship with teachers<sup>14</sup>. Teachers also have formal roles and responsibilities: as Muijs and Harris (2003) point out, in the more successful schools, teachers are allocated more time to collaborate with one another. Increased collaboration and increased responsibility benefits schools as organisations and helps “diminish teacher alienation” (Muijs & Harris 2003, p.443), while, if teachers are not empowered to become leaders, it will be difficult to improve schools, learners and the community (McClanah, 2005).

## **2.12 Distributed leadership and shared decision making**

Principals who share decisions with teachers do this in order to share a common goal for the school. As Davidoff and Lazarus (2002, p. 105) argue, shared decision making in an organisation empowers teachers and allows them to actively participate in the control of their

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<sup>14</sup> In countries such as Lesotho, middle management refers to heads of department (senior teachers in primary schools) and classroom teachers. Busher and Harris (1999) indicate that, heads of department have four major roles to play in managing teaching and learning in the school. According to Busher and Harris (1999, p. 307-8) these roles are as follow: Managing and allocating resources, fostering collegiality within the group by shaping and establishing a shared vision, improving staff and learners performance and helping departmental colleagues to keep in touch with others in their subject areas and with other colleagues from other schools.

own lives. They further point out that the successful implementation of any decision making depends on the extent to which teachers feel they have some sense of ownership and control. Teacher decision making has been proven to increase on-the-job satisfaction, due to the fact that teachers feel as part of the organisation (Taylor & Bogotch, 1994).

### **2.13 Distributed leadership and school improvement**

Involvement of more teachers in performing leadership roles may result in an improved standard of education in schools. A recent study carried out by Harris (2012, p. 9) in England reveals that distributed leadership results in higher performance and gains in achievement. He further indicates that in all the cases, principals deliberately shared leadership responsibilities in order to extend and build leadership capacity within the schools. However, just distributing leadership is not enough: what matters is how leadership is distributed, as distributed leadership depends on the purpose of the distribution and above all the role played by principal in the distribution (Harris, 2012).

The most recent research has revealed that distributed leadership is most important within the organisation, and that distributed leadership practice is more likely to be associated with improved organisational performance and outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2004, 2007; cited in Harris & Spillane, 2008).

### **2.14 Organisational culture change and distributed leadership**

The issue of school culture is key to every school as an organisation. Different schools have different cultures which are made up of the values and norms of the school community and the principal has an important role to play in managing this. Murphy et al. (2009, p. 192) show that “school culture has a good deal to do with how willing and able teachers are to assume the mantle of teacher leadership.”

Dimmock and Walker (2005, p. 71) define culture as “the enduring sets of beliefs, values, ideologies and behaviours that distinguish one group of people from another.” They maintain that culture forms the circumstance within which school leaders exercise their leadership and exerts an influence on why and how school leaders think and act as they do. Moreover, culture is a constructed reality and, as such, demands considerable thought, skills, integrity,

and consistency on the part of the leader to build and maintain it in a way that connects all members of the school community (Dimmock & Walker, 2002).

Lakomski (2001) argues that, in order for any change efforts to be successful, the organisational culture should be changed because if it is not changed it can be a main source of resistance. As Hallinger (2003, p. 346) indicates, changing the prevailing culture of the school is the most important but difficult job that principals must do. For principals to manage cultural change, they should influence the practice of teachers, and to do this Leithwood and Jantzi (1999, p. 683) suggest that school leaders should influence the system of shared values, norms and beliefs that will help shape teachers' interpretations of events.

Fullan (2002) supports the idea that principals play a crucial role in changing the school's culture by pointing out that principals have a deep and lasting influence on organisations and provide more comprehensive leadership if they focus on cultural change. Principals have three major interrelated tasks in relation to school culture according to Hargreaves (2002, p. 48), and these are; diagnostic, directional and managerial. Hargreaves (2002) indicates that, the diagnostic task is that of finding the method of diagnosing the present characteristics of the school's culture. The directional task is that of deciding in what way the school culture is to change, and the managerial task is that of devising and implementing a strategy for moving the school culture in a desired direction. However Hallinger (2003) states,

One cannot, of course, change a school culture alone. But one can provide forms of leadership that invite others to join as observers of the old and architects of the new. The effect must be to transform what we did last September into what we would like to do next September.  
Hallinger (2003, p. 347)

Murphy et al. (2009, p. 193) use the study carried out by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), Smylie et al. (2002), and other scholars in the area of distributed leadership to show that teacher leadership is more successful where principals create opportunities for distributed leadership in managing school culture. They further argue that principals should use school goals to create a culture in which teacher's value shared leadership.

## **2.15 Barriers to distributed leadership**

While distributed leadership may be important for quality education in schools, there may be barriers to it. Harris (2004, p. 19) asserts that it is very difficult to ignore the main structural, cultural and micro-politics barriers operating in schools that make distributed leadership difficult to implement. Principals themselves may become barriers if they don't want to change their leadership styles to new and workable styles such as distributed leadership.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007), cited in Pont et al. (2008) points out several barriers to effective distributed leadership, some of which are: lack of resources, lack of suitable skilled staff, school size as a constraint on delegation and lack of ability to match reward to the delegated task. In a study done by Pont et al. (2008, p. 87), human resource constraints were found to be the main issue for primary schools, "where absence of senior staff limited administrative assistance." In this situation, greater distribution within the school itself may be difficult, the possible solution being to distribute leadership beyond school borders (Pont et al., 2008, p. 87). The researcher is of the same view, that in most primary schools, resources are a major constraint on distributed leadership, as is the case in Lesotho. However, although distributing leadership beyond school borders may be a good idea, but it may not be possible in Lesotho, where schools are owned by different churches and the government with limited opportunities for outside help.

The fear of implementing change when teachers are not sure whether new strategies will work or fail may also be considered one of the barriers. Murphy et al. (2009, p. 185) support this view by indicating that it is a norm in schools to favour well-known, easier and more satisfying routines and to abandon new and often difficult activities. Furthermore, principals and teachers tend to favour hierarchical and bureaucratic structures because they allow them to assign blame to others or to the system whenever change efforts fail to materialise. However, the emerging evidence from the organizational development and improvement literature shows that distributed leadership has a greater impact upon the development of the organisation, especially where certain structural and cultural barriers are in place (Harris, 2012, p.13).

## **2.16 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the role of school principals in leading and managing teaching and learning is crucial for the success of schools. While leading and managing the school is an important role

for the principals, how they lead and manage their organisations is vital. Principals need to let go of their hierarchical, traditional leadership styles and start to change their leadership approaches to new and working leadership approaches such as distributed leadership, in order to lead schools to required improvements. Pont (2008) emphasises that distributed leadership plays a major role in instructional improvement, therefore distributed leadership is essential for the sake of the school's key purpose, which is teaching and learning, and for teachers to gain leadership skills on the job.

The use of distributed leadership in schools allows change to take place effectively and helps in implementing reforms easily, with the help of other members of the school community. Implementation of FPE as a reform act in Lesotho has increased the complexity of the education system, and the only way for principals to alleviate the problems could be through delegation and through instilling the sense of belonging in the organisation. This can be done by supporting professional development, increasing teachers' motivation, building a culture of dedicated work between teachers and learners and by allowing structures that encourage teachers to work collaboratively and effectively to shape the goals of the school. Principals should see to it that all teachers are accountable for teaching and learning, and delegation should be done in such a way that all teachers feel that their skills and expertise are valued, thus facilitating the distribution of leadership roles amongst the staff members.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Methodology refers to the theory of getting knowledge, to the consideration of best ways, methods or procedures by which data that will provide the evidence basis for the construction of knowledge about whatever it is that is being researched is obtained (Opie 2004, p.16).

This research project is a qualitative, small scale case study, in which, typically, interviews and questionnaires are appropriate instruments for the gathering of data. Cohen et al. (2000, p. 185) point out that a case study focuses on the observations of a small unit of the population with an aim of probing deeply and analysing thoroughly the “multifarious phenomena” that comprise the daily life of the unit. It is the study of the particular with which, to some degree, one can establish generalisation about the wider population to which that unit belongs. Yin (1994) cited in Merriam (2001, p. 27) further emphasises that a case study is, “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context...”

Merriam (2001, p. 29) shows that a qualitative case study can be characterised as being particularistic, descriptive and heuristic (i.e. focusing on a particular phenomenon). The end product is a rich description of the context and it ‘illuminates’ the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon being studied. MacMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 321) indicate that qualitative research is a study of behaviour as it occurs naturally, considering situational factors, as the researcher collects data directly from the source<sup>15</sup>.

MacMillan and Schumacher (2010) emphasise that qualitative research is a rich narrative which focuses on why and how behaviour occurs as well as participants’ understandings, descriptions, labels and meanings. MacMillan and Schumacher (2001, p. 322) further indicate that the investigator usually acts as an observer in the setting, either silently or as an interviewer. Qualitative researchers spend a considerable amount of time in direct interaction

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<sup>15</sup> In this case, from the teachers.

with the settings and participants they are studying (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001) and try to understand reality from the participants' perspective.

In qualitative research, there is an attempt to *minimise researcher bias*, including pre-determined ideas or expectations about how people will react or think. This helps the researcher to be open to new ways of understanding. Therefore, data is first collected and inductively synthesised to generate generalisations. Conversely, quantitative researchers formulate hypotheses and gather data to prove or disprove them deductively.

In order to minimise bias, the researcher ensured that she did not 'lead' the respondents in answering the questions, as they were given time to fill in the questionnaires on their own without the researcher's influence. Follow-up interviews were used for clarification on participants' responses to the questionnaire. Although the minutes of school meetings were unavailable<sup>16</sup>, the researcher had a chance to observe classroom practice to endorse existing data.

### **3.2 Population and sample**

Principals and teachers were purposefully selected for this study. As Patton (2002, p. 242), cited in McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 325) points out, purposeful sampling is, "selecting information-rich cases for study-in-depth". For McMillan and Schumacher (2010) the 'samples' are chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena the researcher is investigating.

Principals, in this case, were chosen because of their experience in the management of teaching and learning every day at school. Teachers also provided useful information for this study because they face classroom situations on a daily basis and have in-depth knowledge of classroom activities. One deputy principal from school B<sup>17</sup> also provided useful information as she is knowledgeable with regard to managing teaching and learning. Four teachers from

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<sup>16</sup> School meetings minutes would be a useful tool for comparing the responses from the respondents but principals were not will to give them to the researcher as they considered them a private property of the school.

<sup>17</sup> In school A, the deputy principal was not interested in participating in the study.

school A and three from school B provided rich and valid information for this study because of their experience.

### **3.3 The research processes**

Questionnaires and follow-up interviews were developed prior to the actual arrangements for the research<sup>18</sup>. The follow-up interviews were planned to gather more information as an addition to the responses the participants made in questionnaires. Classroom observation instruments were also developed to observe teaching and learning in large classrooms.

The researcher obtained permission from Botha-Bothe District Education Office and the two primary schools to conduct research. The principals of the two schools were contacted to make arrangements for the questionnaires to be administered and dates and times for the interviews were arranged. In each school the questionnaires were left, in order to give participants enough time to complete them, and dates were set for their collection. On the same day of questionnaires' collection, times and dates for interviews were agreed upon. Conducting interviews was difficult in both schools as teachers were very busy with their daily tasks and time for interviews was obtained during school breaks (morning and lunch breaks). In some cases teachers would keep learners busy with work to create time to be interviewed. The principals and teachers were interviewed for approximately one hour each and there was 100 percent rate return of the questionnaires.

In school A, the questionnaires were not yet completed on the agreed date because some of the teachers claimed to be very busy and the researcher had to collect some and come the following day to collect the remaining forms. She was also able to conduct interviews with those participants who had their questionnaires ready on the agreed date. The researcher has become aware that it is not always easy to conduct interviews as originally planned and has realized that data collection is more fruitful when teachers are not that busy. If teachers are too busy they may be inclined to give less information or to participate less fully.

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<sup>18</sup> For the principals, to investigate how they understood and enacted their roles in assisting teachers to cope, particularly, with large numbers of learners in classrooms. Questionnaires were also developed to be administered to teachers in both schools to find out how they managed classroom activities to achieve instructional goals under these conditions.

## *Questionnaires*

Both closed and open-ended questionnaires were used in this study. The questionnaire is the most useful technique used for obtaining data in qualitative studies (McMillan & Schumacher 2010, p. 195), as it is relatively economical, has the same questions for all subjects, and can guarantee anonymity. However, the disadvantage of questionnaires is that they do not allow for probing. For this reason, the two principals in the study were initially given a questionnaire containing a combination of open-ended and closed ended questions, in order to obtain their perceptions and beliefs regarding teaching and learning processes, as well as the practice of distributed leadership. In order to ensure the reliability and validity of principals' responses, triangulation techniques were used. Teachers were also asked to complete a combination of open ended and closed-ended questionnaires<sup>19</sup>.

## *Follow-up interviews*

After collecting the questionnaires from the participants, the researcher went through each questionnaire to find out how the questions had been answered, and noted areas where she needed clarification. The predetermined interview questions, together with the follow-up questions were then utilised (semi-structured as well as unstructured) in the interviews<sup>20</sup>. Interviews were recorded using a voice recorder and notes were taken where necessary. McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 360) comment: "(a) tape or digital interview ensures completeness of the verbal interaction and provides material for reliability checks." The recording of interviews was not predetermined but the researcher found it necessary to record in order to have full responses from the participants rather than noting only part of their responses.

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<sup>19</sup> McMillan and Schumacher (2010) show that it is best to use closed-ended questionnaires with a large number of respondents because they are easier to score.

<sup>20</sup> McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 206) show that the combination of semi-structured and unstructured interview questions "provides a high degree of objectivity and uniformity yet allows for probing and clarification."

In both schools, most teachers were very cooperative and willing to assist the researcher in any way they could, despite their limited time<sup>21</sup>, but although cooperative on the practical level, some were very hesitant in revealing certain information and the researcher had to probe in order to obtain more information. Probing also helped the researcher to get more accurate information from the participants because in some cases they had to change answers they gave on the questionnaires. The researcher also gained confidence and developed probing tactics. As more interviews were carried out, she found out that most of the participants had just filled in the questionnaire without reading the questions properly and just written answers without paying much attention to the demands of the question.

### ***Observations***

Classroom observation was used to collect further data. The researcher observed Class One in each school with the purpose of learning how teaching and learning took place. Observations allow the researcher to ‘discern’ the ongoing behaviour as it takes place and to make appropriate notes about its most important features (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 188).

The classrooms were overcrowded in both schools. In school A, the grade was divided into two streams, but there were 56 pupils/learners in each stream. Learners were streamed according to their ability to read and write, and the observation took place in stream A which consisted of learners who had attended pre-school and were able to read and write.

The classroom was well organised, with colourful teacher-made and readymade teaching aids on the walls. All learners were in full school uniform, although some wore old uniforms. The observation took place during a mathematics lesson, and the teacher used code switching to make it easy for learners to understand the concepts presented. Classroom management was not easy in a class of young learners with short attention spans, even though the teacher was trying hard to keep them all together. Teaching was sometimes interrupted because the teacher had to attend to administrative tasks. While attending to those tasks, she kept them busy by making them read sentences put on the wall, guided by pictures. One learner would be leading others in reading, followed by the next one until the teacher had finished. The researcher really admired the technique used by the teacher to keep learners busy.

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<sup>21</sup> They had to teach and attend to other administrative activities such as filling schemes of work.

In school B the situation was worse because there were one hundred and two learners in one classroom, and teaching and learning was difficult, although two teachers were helping each other to ensure that the classroom processes took place effectively. While one teacher was teaching, the other one was preparing textbooks for the next lesson. However, classroom management was not easy for the single teacher. While she was teaching, some pupils were not paying attention at all and it was difficult for her to control the situation. The teachers claimed streaming would be done after they had ensured that most learners were able to read and write, which might be in the second term.

The classroom was well cared for, with charts on the wall. The furniture was in good condition and sufficient enough to accommodate all the learners. Most learners were in full uniform, although some were without a proper uniform and shoes. However, as the researcher moved around the school, she became aware that other classrooms were in poor repair, lacked furniture and were also overcrowded<sup>22</sup>.

### **3.4 Data analysis**

The researcher transcribed the recorded data and read through participants' responses. Responses from both data sets were classified into chosen words which formed codes, and the list of codes was compared to find out whether duplicate codes existed. Subsequently the identified codes were categorised into themes. As McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 3) point out, a single category or theme can be used to give meaning to combined codes. The categorised themes were:

The understanding of the role of principal in relation to teaching and learning

The understanding of the instructional leadership in the school

Role of the principal in managing teaching and learning

The changing role of the principal

How are responsibilities shared?

What responsibilities/tasks are shared?

Decision making at school level

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<sup>22</sup> Which was also the case in school A

What are the problems encountered in sharing tasks?

### **3.5 Reliability and validity**

Validity, in qualitative research, refers to the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world

MacMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 330).

In this study, principals and teachers were considered generally reliable sources because they are professionals involved in the process of managing teaching and learning at different levels. However, use was made of triangulation to strengthen validity and reliability. As Cohen et al. (2000, p. 112) indicate, triangulation is, “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspects of human behaviour”, and that “triangulation explains more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from several standpoints and this provides validity’. Two methods were employed: firstly, methodological triangulation, in that both interviews and questionnaires were used as well as observation; secondly, spatial triangulation, in that perceptions at the various levels (principals and teachers) could be compared.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

The researcher followed all the necessary ethical procedures that are stipulated by the University. As Sieber (1993, p. 14) cited in Opie (2004, p. 25) indicates, ethics ensures application of moral principles to avoid harming or wronging others, and to ensure that researchers are respectful and fair. A letter was written to the District Education Officer Resource Centre to request permission to conduct research in the two schools. With the permission from the district officer and the school principals, the researcher was able to carry out the research. All participants were given consent forms to fill. The participants were also made aware that the research was for the researchers’ Masters Degree purposes only and they were assured that the names of their schools and their own names would remain anonymous and confidential. They were also made aware that they could withdraw from participating in the research at any time if they wanted to, because their participation was voluntary. Some were not willing to participate and were excused from the programme.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

A qualitative case study was conducted to investigate the role of principals in managing teaching and learning in two primary schools. The instruments that were used were questionnaires, follow-up interviews and observations. As the first two depend on self-reported data, the researcher used a different method (i.e. observations) to ensure validity. The researcher compared the responses from the participants to find consistency as well as her observations. Documentation, such as written school meetings' minutes were not used since the school principals were not eager to provide them.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The key purpose of this study was to examine the role of principals in leading and managing teaching and learning in two primary schools, and the extent to which the principals distributed leadership. This study was conducted in two chosen primary schools in the district of Botha-Bothe in Lesotho. School A was established in 1970 and school B in 1978. Both schools are church-owned.

School A is situated towards the edge of Botha-Bothe town, with an enrolment of 892 learners, the majority of whom come from villages around Botha-Bothe. There are 19 teachers. Of these, only five teachers, including a senior teacher and the principal participated in this study while the deputy principal was not willing to take part.

School B is situated in a semi-rural village about 10km from Botha-Bothe itself. The school draws learners from the surrounding villages and several other villages further away and has an enrolment of 682. The total number of teachers in this school is 22, out of which only five teachers, including the principal and deputy, participated in this study.

The researcher obtained permission from the principals and made arrangements for data collection a few months in advance. In school A, the researcher wanted to select participants according to their experience in teaching but the principal selected those who were in some professional development programmes because she wanted them to learn about the process while participating. The principal chose all female teachers because male teachers, who were participating in a professional development initiative, were not available during the data collection period.

In school B, the researcher also made arrangements with the principal<sup>23</sup> for the data collection. The deputy principal was very helpful by distributing questionnaires to the

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<sup>23</sup> The new principal was to start his work as soon as the school opened for 2012. He has been teaching in the same school for 7 years, and seemed to be following the footsteps of the former principal.

teachers and also by selecting teachers whom she thought would be helpful as the principal was very busy attending to meeting at the resource centre which was within walking distance and attending to some church issues that are related to the school.

**4.2 Participants’ codes**

Participants’ codes were used to ensure anonymity and to make data analysis easier to record and categorise. Capital A was used to denote participants from school A, while B was used to denote participants from school B. Table 4.1 shows the coding of participants.

**Table 4.1 Participants’ codes**

<b>School A</b>		<b>School B</b>	
<b>Participants</b>	<b>Participants codes</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Participants codes</b>
Principal	AP	Principal	BP
Teacher (senior)	AT1	Deputy Principal	BP
Teacher	AT2	Teacher	BT1
Teacher	AT3	Teacher	BT2
Teacher	AT4	Teacher	BT3

### 4.3 School A

#### 4.3.1 Participants' profile

**Table 4.2 participants' profile**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Total Teaching experience</b>	<b>Teaching experience in current school</b>	<b>No.of years in management position</b>
Principal	First Degree	Female	37	10	17
Teacher (senior)	First Degree	Female	29	26	-
Teacher	Teachers' Diploma	Female	15	15	-
Teacher	Teachers' Diploma	Female	11	11	-
Teacher	Teachers' Diploma	Female	8	8	-

Table 4.2 shows that most teachers have a Teachers' Diploma and the principal and a senior teacher have a first degree. The principal has been teaching for much longer than other teachers, and most of the teachers have more than ten years of teaching experience which indicates they could be more suitable to provide the necessary information for this research project. Only one teacher has a teaching experience of less than ten years but she has been teaching long enough to provide suitable information.

#### 4.3.2 Participants' understanding of the role of principal

Bush and Glover (2009, p. 4) describe the role of the principal as being to provide leadership and management in the school and to facilitate the creation and support of conditions under which high quality learning that promotes highest standards of learner achievement takes place. All respondents at this school agreed with this.

AP pointed out that the main role of the school principal was to:

*“Administer, supervise, monitor, guide, control, plan, implement and evaluate all that concerns teaching and learning.”*

It was clear from AP’s response that principals had several tasks to perform in order to ensure quality teaching and learning. AT2 and AT4 confirmed this. They pointed out that the principal, as a manager:

*...plans, leads, organises and controls all the activities that enhance the efficient and effective functioning of the school.*

AT3 also described the role of the principal as follows:

*“She is responsible for the running of the school. She allocates duties to teachers and ensures that teaching and learning takes place and she always delegates and supervises supervisors/senior teachers.”*

AT1 had a different perspective about the role of principal and indicated that the principal, as a leader, needed to communicate with teachers in order for them to perform their duties optimally. Studies carried out by Blasé and Blasé (1999, p. 130), in which over 800 teachers from American schools participated, revealed that one of the themes of effective management of teaching and learning is talking with teachers to promote reflection. AT1 further stated,

*“She is the one who tells teachers what to do, who counsels learners and teachers and also reminds teachers and learners about the rules and regulations to abide by.”*

AT3 pointed out that the principal had a lot to do in the school, even outside the school. She stated,

*“She is the mediator between the school and the department of education.”*

All participants, including the principal, agreed that the principal had a demanding role to play. Participants indicated that the principal could not perform the role on her own without

the help of teachers, who seemed to be eager to help her. AP was insistent that, without the help of teachers, she could not perform all the administration and academic roles. All teachers were very cooperative and helpful all the times she needed their assistance.

From the responses above, it was evident that all participants are aware of the demanding role of the principal. Huber (2004, p. 671) calls this,

“A coloured patchwork of many different aspects: some areas or role segments relate to working with and for people, others to managing resources...”

### **4.3.3 Participants’ understanding of the instructional leadership**

Marks and Printy (2003, p. 373) refer to the broad view of instructional leadership as including all the work the principal does to support student achievement as well as teachers’ teaching. AT4 agrees that instructional leadership encompasses the entire principal’s daily work, as AT4 indicated,

*“Instructional leadership refers to the effective monitoring of daily tasks/activities which enhances the quality of teaching and learning as well as utilising the relevant resources to achieve the specified goals and objectives.”*

In order to enhance teaching and learning, AP pointed out that she worked collaboratively with the supervising team (senior teachers), to ensure that planning done at the beginning of the year was implemented. AP viewed instructional leadership as,

*“Facilitating teaching and learning processes.”*

AT1 also shared the same view, that in instructional leadership the principal,

*“...is the supervisor of teaching and learning at school and facilitates both academic and non-academic staff, and takes every responsibility at school.”*

AT2 understood instructional leadership as:

*“...the leadership that provides directing and leading activities in the school”*

AT3, conversely, indicated her understanding of instructional leadership as leading through the use of instructions, (which shows misunderstanding of the term within leadership research literature), but she was able to show that the principal managed the allocated duties and gave guidance to teachers.

All participants except AT3 had a clear understanding of the meaning of instructional leadership and viewed it as management of all activities that enhance teaching and learning in the school. Taylor (2006) indicates that in managing teaching and learning one of the important roles principals must play is to direct the school to effective teaching and learning and to ensure conditions conducive for better teaching and learning.

#### **4.3.4 Role of the principal in managing teaching and learning**

AP indicated that, although administrative work took much of her time, especially during the first three months of the year, she ensured that teaching and learning took place effectively by observing other teachers teaching. Moreover, she showed that she gained more knowledge herself when observing teachers, especially from those who had attended in-service programmes, because it had been a while since she had attended any workshop that could assist her with new teaching methods or leadership skills.

She also invited teachers to observe her teaching so that they would not feel embarrassed when being observed. But AT1 remarked that observation was a daily activity: because teachers did not have a staff room, they utilised classrooms to do the whole day's work. She pointed out that when one teacher was teaching the other might be doing other tasks without disturbing the classroom activities or helping the other teacher to teach. AT4 remarked:

*“Observations also help us gain more knowledge from other teachers. Even the principal is willing to be observed and she sometimes invites teachers to observe her.”*

With this, AT4 supported the fact that the principal not only delegated duties but also demonstrated good practice to other teachers. Bush et al. (2010) show that, in playing their leadership role, principals should develop a vision for the school that places teaching and learning at the centre and that they demonstrate good practice in their teaching and leadership activities.

AP further reported that planning and assessing were part of her roles, supported by the deputy principal and senior teachers. Although supervision of teachers was done by senior teachers, her own role was to ensure that they performed their duties to the agreed standards. As AP stated,

*“There are seven senior teachers who ensure that all teachers are familiar with the content they teach.”*

AT1, who was one of the senior teachers, corroborated AP’s view in that,

*“We ‘scheme’ together with teachers in the beginning of the year in our different teaching areas. Our planning consists of mini workshops whereby teachers discuss problems they encountered in the previous year and give solutions, as well as providing different methods of teaching certain concepts.”*

AP pointed out that, in order to facilitate teaching and learning, she ensured school-based professional development which was organised by subject team leaders or senior teachers. AT3 agreed that subject team leaders were responsible for organising mini workshops and other means of staff development because government workshops were very rare, and teachers themselves were responsible for running such workshops in most cases. Murphy et al. (2009) believe that professional development is one of the elements of successful distributed leadership. In the study they carried out, it was found that professional development that is teacher-led and teacher-directed plays an important part in the success of distributed leadership.

AT1, who was one of the senior teachers, also indicated that in order to ensure that teaching and learning went well at school, they gave teachers who had attended some workshops

opportunities to share their skills to empower others. She further showed that they created an atmosphere which encouraged new teachers to share new teaching methods with old teachers.

All the participants strongly agreed that the teachers worked together and helped each other with teaching and learning at school. Four participants also added that it was through the good guidance of the principal that all duties were performed effectively in order to bring about improvement in teaching and learning.

Bush and Glover (2009) cited in Bush (2010, p. 163), (referring to the South African context), suggests that the principal should facilitate all activities that enhance quality teaching and learning such as ensuring availability of appropriate teaching and learning material for improving learners' performance and monitoring heads of department as well ensuring class visits. In school A, the principal seemed to be focusing on these activities in performing her leadership roles. All teachers also had an understanding of the principal's role.

On the question of accountability in managing teaching and learning, participants indicated that they were all accountable for quality education in the school, which was the reason they shared responsibilities. AP added that she was the one who was held accountable for the school's performance in the national examinations and consequently she ensured that all teachers were accountable in their different areas of duty. As the literature indicates, school accountability is a key responsibility of school leaders in most countries (Pont et al., 2008). The results of this study show that, in school A, the principal ensured effective teaching by supervising and observing teachers in their different classrooms.

#### **4.3.5 The changing role of the principal**

All participants showed that, since the introduction of FPE, the role of the principal in managing teaching and learning had changed drastically. New responsibilities coming with the transformation, such as dealing with a large number of learners in classrooms as well as insufficient resources to facilitate teaching and learning were major problems facing them. Huber (2004, p.671) shows that the role of principal has changed in many countries of the world, and as result principals are faced with new ranges of demands and challenges.

AP pointed out that the following factors had brought major changes in her role:

*“Increasing number of learners every year,”*

*“Lack of classrooms to allow active learning”*

*“Shortage of furniture,”*

*“Inadequate number of teachers and textbooks,”*

*“Negligence of parents regarding the needs of their children.”*

AT1 emphasised,

*“We lack infrastructure and this hinders teaching and learning”*

AT2 was of the same view that,

*“Lack of resources affects education, books come but there is always shortage because of the increasing numbers of learners every year.”*

Moloi, Morobe and Urwick (2008, p.613) indicate that large numbers of learners in classrooms and scarcities of resources in most African countries that provide FPE create a sense of insecurity among principals and teachers with regard to the maintenance of their own ‘authority.’

AT2 raised the other issue which hindered effective teaching and learning and made the principal’s work to be more difficult,

*“(the) School is operating without funds due to abolition of school fees.”*

AP indicated that most learners were HIV/AIDS orphans who were very needy and this had changed her role because she was dealing with sick and hungry learners who came to school on empty stomachs. She further explained that for most of them, the meal they received at school was the first and last meal of the day. The other four participants also agreed with AP

that most learners were orphans and that teaching them was very difficult, considering their circumstances. AP stated:

*“We act as parents, social workers and also teachers.”*

AT3 further showed that the student/teacher ratio was very high and that the government needed to act quickly to decrease the ratio because it affected the standard of education. She indicated,

*“Classes are overcrowded therefore this leads to insufficient resources.”*

AT4 stated,

*“There are no funds to give teachers when attending workshops or for principals to attend different meetings. In most cases teachers use their own money.”*

*“Lack of teachers affects the standard of education. Class six has 167 learners and only two streams.”*

Teachers seemed to be working hard to ensure quality education but they lacked suitable resources and funds to meet their goals. Otunga et al (2008, p 377) point out that principals are expected to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning at school but that the actual funds available for expenditure on education limit them in terms of the desirable infrastructure development, human resource engagement, educational material provision and development of the educational institution.

#### **4.3.6 How are responsibilities shared?**

In school A, responsibilities were shared amongst the teachers because teachers believed that leading and managing teaching and learning could not be done single-handedly by the principal. All participants strongly agreed that the principal needed to delegate. AT4 emphasised that the role of principal needed someone strong, with leadership skills. Most of the time, the principal at her school was democratic and listened to teachers' advice.

AT1 and AT2 showed that they usually assisted the principal by ensuring that they managed classes allocated to them properly. AT1 further stated,

*“Teachers are allocated different duties on the behalf of the principal through delegation.”*

AP further showed that subject leaders or senior teachers were responsible for allocating subject-related duties, while for other duties teachers were given the opportunity to choose. Most teachers indicated they were always willing to go the extra mile to make sure that the school ran properly and were very eager to see that their school improved. Murphy et al. (2009) point out that, for distributed leadership to flourish in schools, principals must create opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership and provide them the opportunity to get involved in the work of distributed leadership. This is what the principal in school A seemed to be doing.

AT2 also showed that in school A:

*“...all teachers are willing to work hand in hand for quality education. Giving teachers a chance to take part in administration’s work and allowing them to do what they do best is important because it allows teachers to perform the duties at their best.”*

In the study carried out by Louis and Marks (1996) cited in Harris (2004, p. 15) it was found that, in schools where leadership roles were shared by teachers, learners’ academic performance improved.

#### **4.3.7 What responsibilities/tasks are shared?**

AP indicated that most teachers were very dedicated to their additional tasks and performed them very well. Mascall (2008) shows that leaders who distribute leadership roles enhance the opportunity for the organisation to benefit from the capacities of its members, and increase ‘on-the-job’ leadership development experience, as well as decreasing the work load for the principals.

In school A, the principal was responsible for monitoring and supervising all activities taking place in the school. Senior teachers supervised their subject teachers, while teachers ensured

that teaching and learning took place effectively in their respective classrooms. Extra mural activities were monitored by teachers who had the passion for them, while some administrative duties were delegated by the principal to teachers with the appropriate skills.

AT1 indicated that senior teachers ensured that planning went well and that teachers were sufficiently knowledgeable in the content of their subject. When individual gaps in content were identified, the senior teachers were able to assist the teacher concerned. Groups of teachers then worked together in their different teaching areas to choose appropriate lesson content and approach.

AP supported AT1's remarks:

*"...senior teachers supervise to ensure that planning is implemented and teaching and learning goes well, and that teachers work together to ensure quality teaching and learning."*

*"Senior teachers organise workshops in order for teachers to share skills in the school."*

AT2 and AT3 pointed out the following responsibilities that were shared by different teachers:

*- Senior teachers help in disciplinary matters of pupils,*

*- Teachers help in extra mural activities and the overall school activities such as maintenance, gardening and cleaning.*

*- Some teachers lead subject teams,*

*-some teachers assist in collecting data required by the ministry of education and training.*

AT4 said that she was responsible for monitoring social studies and Sesotho and that subject team leaders held meetings once a week to report achievements or challenges. AT4 further stated:

*“I also make sure that learners in respective classes are prepared to present various activities such as reading and role play at the assembly.”*

As Muijs and Harris (2003, p.443) indicate, the literature suggests that generating teacher leadership with its combination of increased collaboration and increased responsibility benefits schools as organisations

#### **4.3.8 Decision making at school level**

The participants strongly agreed that all teachers and managers were given an opportunity to contribute towards decisions affecting teaching and learning and that there was good communication between teachers. The four teacher participants<sup>24</sup> indicated they felt empowered when they were involved in decision making relating to their work. As Davidoff and Lazarus (2002, p. 105) point out, successful implementation of any decision making depends on the extent to which teachers feel they have some sense of ownership and control. The principal is responsible for creating a positive and accepting atmosphere in the school (ibid) where teachers feel free to voice their views, as in this school: AP always included teachers in decision making and welcomed advice:

*“...Most of the decisions are made by the senior teachers and teachers...”*

AT3 also agreed that the principal involved teachers in decision making, saying

*“Teachers are free to make suggestions and are involved in decision making. Decisions are always made by teachers with the guidance of the principal, except for decisions that are made by the Resource Centre or the Ministry of Education.”*

AT4 shared the same opinion:

*“The principal is willing to listen to teachers’ decisions and works very well with teachers.”*

Knowing they were part of the plans increased teachers' buy-in and performance. It is also clear from this study that good principal-teacher relationships made it possible for teachers to make suggestions and become proactive in the decision making, leading to improvement in their school. Following Harris and Lambert (2003) we can say that the School A principal had turned his school into a professional learning community, in which teachers actively participated in decision making, had a shared sense of purpose, engaged in collaborative work and accepted joint responsibility for learners' achievement.

#### **4.3.9 What are the problems encountered in sharing tasks?**

All participants indicated that they encountered fewer problems when sharing tasks because teachers were given an opportunity to choose which tasks they would like to do. If there were circumstances in which a teacher did not want to choose, their duties were taken over by other teachers as they would not perform the task adequately well.

AT1 stated,

*“(the) Principal has less work in controlling teachers because they are all motivated and work hard. Most of her work is done by the teachers; hers is to ensure that all work is done properly”.*

AP showed that most teachers were willing to take part in all school activities. She further indicated that a few teachers who showed less interest in performing allocated duties became motivated by other teachers who performed the tasks they were allocated very well.

AT4 also indicated that there were fewer problems encountered in relation to division of tasks because teachers were proud of the school, considered one of the best in the country. AT4 and the other three teachers were wholehearted participants because the principal made them feel that their skills were very important to the school. They pointed out that the principal was about to retire but they wished she could extend her tenure because of her role-model excellence. As Murphy et al. (2009, p. 193) argues, principals use school goals to create a culture in which teachers value shared leadership. They further point out that, above all other aspects, a democratic style of leadership motivates teachers.

The above responses provide evidence that the School A principal employed an empowering leadership style that motivated teachers towards excellence and passion for their work, and that she achieved this through communication and collegiality. At this school, teachers seemed to be performing at their best even in the absence of suitable resources with which to enhance teaching and learning.

#### 4.4 School B

##### 4.4.1 Participants' profile

**Table 4.3: Participants' profile**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Total Teaching Experience</b>	<b>Teaching experience in current school</b>	<b>No. of years in management position</b>
Principal	Honours	Male	7	7	2 Months
Deputy Principal	Teachers' Diploma	Female	30	30	23
Teacher	Teachers' Diploma	Male	11	11	-
Teacher	Honours	Female	7	7	-
Teacher	Honours	Male	9	9	-

In school B, (c.f. Table 4.3), the principal as well as two teachers had an Honours degree while the other two participants held a Teachers' Diploma. The deputy principal had the highest number of years in teaching experience, but, like the rest of the staff, management experience was under ten years. All teachers, including the principal and deputy principal, took up their first posts at this school, making them completely familiar with, and part of, the teaching and learning culture of the school. The principal had just been appointed into a

leadership position<sup>25</sup>. The participants had enough experience in the school to provide useful information in the study.

#### **4.4.2 Participants' understanding of the role of principal**

A case study carried out by Webb (2005, p. 86) in six schools provides evidence that the central role of primary principal is to “provide leadership that brings about continual improvement in teaching and learning.” BP pointed out that he played his role by making sure that teaching and learning took place effectively in the school.

He indicated that:

*“... (he was) responsible for the entire running and functioning of the school,”*

*“...he has to see that there is sufficient teaching and learning.”*

*“...coordinates the school and the community, as well as dealing with the discipline of teachers and learners accordingly.”*

BD described the role of principal as running the day-to-day functions of the school and helping teachers to achieve set goals. She pointed out that the role of the principal in the school was to oversee all duties related to teaching and administration.

BT1 also understood the role of principal as: to direct the school's affairs towards its mission and goals, to control and organise the matters relating to learners and teachers in the school, and to manage, evaluate and delegate the duties of the school in terms of human resources.

BT3 noted the role of the principal as:

*“...to make sure that teaching and learning is done properly.”*

*“... (be) in charge to care and monitor the use of the school properties and funds.”*

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<sup>25</sup> The principal was very young compared to most teachers (some about to retire, including the deputy). Although new in the post, he had been at the school long enough to build on the 'blocks' laid by the former principal and to add fresh ideas for the development of the school.

From participants' responses, it was clear that the principal had several roles to play in order for the school to operate effectively, including ensuring effective teaching and learning, delegating duties to members of the staff and overseeing the behaviour of teachers in interacting with learners in the classrooms. The evidence from the above responses put more emphasis on the shared leadership roles in order for schools to perform well.

#### **4.4.3 Participants' understanding of the instructional leadership**

Earley and Weindling (2004) define instructional leadership as promoting and developing schools as learning organisations in order to help bring about the schools' learning goals for their pupils. BP, BT1 and most of the other participants had no idea what the term *instructional leadership* meant. BP showed that he was familiar with other forms of leadership such as democratic leadership but not instructional leadership.

BD believed instructional leadership,

*"Is to tell your colleagues to do some work properly and obey all what they are told to do."*

BD may not have had the accepted definition of instructional leadership but, as Earley and Weindling (2004) suggest, the principal may manage teaching and learning by telling teachers what do in the school to help bring about the school's learning goals for the learners.

BT3 defined instructional leadership as:

*"...assigning other people that are found in the organisation the duties to perform..."*

BT3 also seemed to confuse instructional leadership with other types of leadership, like BT2 who confused instructional leadership with dictatorship in which the principal just dictated what should be done.

All the participants failed to define instructional leadership because they were not familiar with the term, and some would not even attempt to define it<sup>26</sup>. However the lack of theoretical

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<sup>26</sup> Reasons could be that leadership is not included in a first degree, that this particular term has been introduced fairly recently, or that their Honours specialisation was not in leadership.

knowledge did not mean they could not perform leadership roles because every teacher has a potential to become a leader. All they needed was to be given an opportunity to show their leadership skills, through the practice of distributed leadership in the school. As Hoadley et al. (2009, p. 377) argue,

*“Leadership is a property of a number of actors at the school level, and it is not invested in the principal solely.”*

#### **4.4.4 Role of the principal in managing teaching and learning**

All participants agreed that there was effective monitoring of learners’ and teachers’ work by management to guarantee effective teaching and learning. BP pointed out that he ensured that monitoring duties were shared by other members of the staff, saying:

*“Working together with the staff helps us to achieve our goals.”*

He indicated that administrative duties took a lot of his time, because his school was the church centre, and he was responsible for running all services required by the church headquarters for all teachers in the district as well as performing services required by the ministry of education. He further noted,

*“I have to attend to administrative duties and fail to pay much attention to classroom work. I teach class seven and have to come to school early in the morning to teach, as administrative duties are too much in the first three months of the school year.”*

BP’s role as principal was therefore more demanding than other principals’ roles in the district of Botha-Bothe, ensuring that the needs of the church as well as the needs of the Minister of Education were met. As Huber (1997, 1999d) cited in Huber (2004, p. 671) points out, the managing and leading tasks of the school leadership are both so complex and interrelated that there is no single clearly defined role of school leadership.

BP noted that he would like to do classroom observations to improve teaching in the school, but it was impossible due to the fact that there was a shortage of teachers as the school had 22 teacher and 22 streams. Three teachers had retired but had not yet been replaced. BP stated,

*“Observation is very difficult because teachers are always busy in their own classrooms but all teachers are free to be observed and are willing to help each other where necessary.”*

BT1 agreed that there was a shortage of teachers but that did not stop teachers from performing their duties well. He further observed:

*“The principal has a lot of work to do but he delegates and we are always willing to do what he wants us to do.”*

BP further noted that because of the shortage of teachers, he was also a classroom teacher. He pointed out that the previous principal had had no classes to teach but he chose to teach at least one class, partly because of the teacher-shortage crisis but also because he loved being in the classroom. When not performing administrative duties he would be in the classroom teaching or moving about the school to see to it that teachers and learners were in classrooms doing the work, or attending to church issues/ meetings at the resource centre. Kumende (2010, p.646) shows that many challenges like the shortage of qualified teachers and other resource constraints continue to “impinge on quality imperatives” in schools. Hallinger (2003, p.332) also argues that principals should not only manage the instructional programme but also promote a positive school learning climate. As in school A, the School B principal and the teachers seemed to be eager to guarantee effective teaching and learning although they were hindered by lack of suitable resources in the school.

In the event of the principals’ necessary absence, the Deputy ensured that the school ran properly. Management in general gave much attention to the day-to-day tasks: BT1 remarked:

*“Management ensures that lessons are planned and schemes are filled, they always ensure that teaching and learning takes place effectively. Management also encourages teachers to share their skills.”*

BP pointed out that, in managing teaching and learning, he encouraged subject panels to make sure that workshops were held at the school to help teachers gain knowledge from each other. Guskey (1986, p. 5) indicates that professional development is a central component of every proposal for improving education. He maintains that staff development brings about change in

the classroom practice of teachers, their beliefs and attitudes and change in the outcomes of learners.

In addition to this, BP further stated,

*“Most teachers go back to school to gain more skills, while others go for in-service training.”*

BT3 agreed with BP:

*“Teachers help each other to gain skills. Mini-workshops and meetings are held almost every week, whereby problems are solved together.”*

It is the principal’s responsibility to ensure that teachers improve their skills in the interest of learners’ good performance. Hargreaves (2002) argues that one of principals’ key roles is to establish their schools as professional learning communities because professional learning communities lead to sustained improvement in learners’ learning. By building professional skills, the professional learning community also brings about improvement and change in schools (ibid.).

BP indicated that he played the major role in ensuring accountability for the school’s better performance<sup>27</sup>. All participants agreed that the principal was held responsible for the school’s results in the national examinations, but the four other participants knew that they were also accountable for teaching and learning in the school. The response from the participants indicated that the principal managed teaching and learning by incorporating teachers into duties and by ensuring accountability. Lack of human resources seemed to hinder the principal in performing his role effectively. As Otunga et al. (2008, p. 378) point out, the limited resource base has a direct influence on the way principals run and organise the schools.

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<sup>27</sup> BP here is in agreement with Pont et al. (2008, p. 51) view that, principals play the major role in integrating external and internal school accountability systems by supporting teachers in aligning instruction with agreed learning goals as well as performance standards.

#### 4.4.5 The changing role of the principal

All participants indicated that since the introduction of FPE the role of principal had become more challenging. They further pointed out that the principal's workload had increased and they believed it was important for them to help the principal manage the school. All participants showed that it had become difficult for the principal to run the school efficiently without the necessary resources such as learning materials, sufficient numbers of teachers to teach the increasing number of learners and lack of funds to run the school effectively and ensure quality teaching and learning provision. Huber (2004, p. 671) indicates that the changing structures of the school system, which affect individual schools and the role of leadership, bring about an additional load for school leaders in performing their tasks.

BP emphasised that the;

*“Supply of teaching and learning materials decreases each year.”*

Although the principal had to manage school finances to make it easy for teachers to perform their duties the finances were inadequate. BD indicated that the main problem for their running the school effectively was the lack of funds. She showed that the only source of money that was used to run the school was the Subsidy from the government at M8.00 per student in a year, fund-raising and the money collected from the women who cooked in the school. All the funds from the government were used to pay for the water supply of the school and it was not always sufficient. Teachers ended up making contributions to pay for certain improvements to be made.

She stated,

*“Teachers paid for the electricity connection in (the) principal's office so that he can use the computer that was donated to the school, to benefit the school.”*

As BD indicated, it had been difficult for the principal to do his work because:

*“Most of the learners are orphans and are very needy, which affects education. Most of them are sleepy because they are hungry. The school arranged for early lunch hour for the sake of those who come to school with empty stomachs.”*

Webb (2004, p. 89) emphasised that,

*...the changing context in which they work and the reality of the demands made by their increasingly complex and continually evolving role call for a different leadership style.*

Parents have responsibilities in helping teachers with their children’s learning, but in school B, parents seemed to be abandoning their responsibility by failing to attend parents’ meetings meant to promote their children’s educational wellbeing. In addition, BT1 and BT3 indicated that despite the overcrowding (which made their help even more necessary), they considered the government responsible for their children, failed to help them with schoolwork or to take care of their educational needs such as pencils and pens when the government-supplied pens and pencils ran out. BD added that Class 7 had 124 learners who would be sitting for the national examination at the end of the year.

BT2 also believed that the system’s academic expectations were unrealistic:

*“Learners are not allowed to repeat classes, therefore learners are made to proceed to the next class even when they are not fit to proceed, which lowers the standard of education. We have many learners with special needs but there (is) no equipment (or) materials to assist them in their learning. They are also assessed in the same way as other learners.”*

The principal was working under difficult circumstances yet he was expected to manage the school effectively and produce good results at the end of the year. The increase of the work load for the principal made his work more complex. Ridden (1992, p.68) states that the increasing complexity of principals’ roles requires skills, experience, perception and time from all staff members of the school, indicating that principals must change their leadership styles to new and advanced styles such as distributed leadership to manage their leadership roles effectively.

#### 4.4.6 How are responsibilities shared?

In relation to shared responsibilities, all the participants agreed that duties were shared in school B and teachers worked together and helped each other with teaching and learning. All teachers indicated that they helped the principal with some administration duties because the principal's duties were so onerous that he could not cope with them alone. Ongoing research conducted in 13 Chicago elementary schools shows that leadership tasks need to be distributed among several leaders (Spillane et al., 2001. P. 25).

BT2 also pointed out that teachers worked as a team to help the principal achieve his goals in relation to learners' education. BP indicated that most teachers showed their leadership skill in the areas where they were allocated duties and they were always willing to carry out delegated work.

BT3 indicated;

*"I assist the principal with his management work and accept the duties that the principal assign me to do."*

BT2 further reported,

*"The type of leadership determines the work load of principals. An autocratic leader always has a high load. Our principal is democratic therefore his work load is very low because he incorporates teachers in his work."*

*"The principal is always there to ensure that teachers carry out their delegated work properly..."*

BP showed that all subject-related duties were allocated within subject panels and other management-related duties were delegated, while in extramural activities teachers were given the opportunity to choose the activities they could perform best.

In school B, duties were allocated according to a teachers' choice and the principal also delegated some duties to make his work manageable. Teachers' responses showed that they found it important to assist the principal in managing teaching and learning by sharing his duties and the principal appreciated their expertise. Spillane (2005, p.145) points out that in leadership where duties are shared, individuals with different tools and structures work together to lead schools to greatness.

#### **4.4.7 What responsibilities/tasks are shared?**

Research evidence shows that effective leaders play an important role in distributing leadership roles and in building leadership capacity throughout schools (Harris, 2012, p. 8). BP showed that all teachers had their different tasks to perform at school level. He pointed out,

*“Teachers ensure that the whole curriculum is covered and the leaders of subject teams manage that.”*

BT3 agreed that,

*“Teachers themselves ensure that teaching and learning takes place very well in their classrooms.”*

BT1 pointed out the following tasks that teachers carry out at school:

*“To carry out delegated duties.”*

*“Teaching learners as mandated by the ministry of education.”*

*“Supporting the principal in any form that will lead to achievement of school goals”*

BP noted that school staff members had formed English, Maths and Science panels where they decided on topics to be covered per quarter, set tests and solved each other's problems together. He added that subject leaders organised workshops within the school and ensured

that subjects were taught properly, while the deputy and other teachers in the disciplinary committee dealt directly with learners' disciplinary matters.

BD indicated that teachers checked each other's plans/preparation books and schemes before the senior teachers finally checked them. Senior teachers also supervised teaching and learning and ensured there were enough resources to facilitate teaching and learning.

Evidence from school B indicated that the principal distributed leadership roles amongst the teachers to provide them with the opportunity to be part of all activities that helped the school to improve teaching and learning. A distributed perspective on leadership took into consideration the work performed by all individuals in the organisation, who contributed to leadership practice, whether or not they are organisational leaders (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 31).

#### **4.4.8 Decision making at school level**

BP showed that all teachers were involved in decision making. The other four participants including the deputy principal agreed that they were involved in decisions that were related to teaching and learning and other school issues.

BP and BT2 emphasised that most decision making in relation to the learners' education was made by teachers, and most decisions were made in the panels and communicated during the meetings. BT2 further indicated that the principal was democratic and took teachers' decisions very seriously, and added she made sure that she played her part,

*“By participating in the sharing of ideas and taking part in the decision making...”*

BT3 showed that the principal welcomed even individual teachers' advice. He stated,

*“I advise the principal with what may need to be improved....”*

Principals should ensure that structures and procedures are in place to facilitate the decision-making process where the voice of every member of the school community can be heard, as indicated by Davidoff and Lazarus (2002, p. 28). BP's view concurred with this by indicating

that teachers were given opportunities to hold meetings on their own if they wanted to make certain decisions that were directly related to the principal and deputy and to let the administration know later on.

According to BT1,

*“(the) school-selected committee, together with the principal, has the final say in most decision-makings, and management and teachers come up with some suggestions and agree together.”*

These responses indicate that school B’s decision-making was done by teachers in most cases, and that the principal guided the decision making.

Teacher decision-making has been proven to increase job satisfaction, due to the fact that teachers feel part of the organisation (Taylor & Bogotch, 1994). The School B principal seemed to be creating an environment which encouraged teachers to excel, knowing they were part of decisions and the goals to be achieved.

#### **4.4.9 What are the problems encountered in sharing tasks?**

BP and BD agreed that, generally, School B faced no problems in relation to distributed tasks. They showed that the few teachers that did not show interest in performing certain duties became interested when they saw that other teachers were performing their tasks without being monitored by the principal or deputy. The other three participants also agreed that most teachers were willing to perform distributed tasks.

BD indicated,

*“Teachers are willing to help principal to perform his duties.”*

BT2 also noted,

*“I ...perform the allocated duties with trust.”*

BT3 added,

*“I assist the principal with his management work by accepting the duties that the principal assign me to do.”*

#### **4.5 Summary of the research findings**

In this chapter the collected data was presented, interpreted and analysed. The interpretation and analysis was focused on the role of the principal in managing teaching and learning and how the principal distributed his/her leadership roles in the school.

All participants indicated that the main role of the principal was to manage teaching and learning and that they were able to help him/her in his/her task as this was part of the way in which teaching and learning could be managed. They also revealed that, in both schools, the principals managed teaching and learning effectively. Both principals worked hand-in-hand with the senior teachers to ensure that the curriculum was covered comprehensively and also that the curriculum was implemented as agreed. In school B, the improvement of teaching and learning was hampered by a severe staff shortage<sup>28</sup>, but participants from both schools shared their skills with other teachers for the sake of the school. Mini-workshops organised by senior teachers or subject team leaders were regularly organised for the same purpose. This helped the teachers upgrade the content of lessons in the classroom, as there were few government workshops held to empower teachers. In this way, teachers had become effective leaders for the wellbeing of the school (Barth, 1990, cited in McNeil & McClanah, 2005).

Evidence from the study showed that the role of principal in Lesotho has changed exponentially since the introduction of free primary education in Lesotho. Increased scale in school and class size, the reduction of adequate resources due to the abolition of school fees, the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic (as up to half the learners are orphans) has put more pressure on principals and made it difficult for them to run the schools properly. The children are often hungry, sick and in need of emotional and physical support because they are not receiving proper care in the homes of extended family or in child-headed households.

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<sup>28</sup> As the three teachers who retired, had not yet replaced.

Although grandmothers care fairly well for them, they are often illiterate and cannot give academic support.

Most teachers were willing to share duties apart from their major role of teaching. It was shown that teachers were often given a choice of duties and tended to choose those they knew they could perform effectively, while some administrative duties were delegated to teachers in relation to their skills. Teachers also shared extramural activities and other extras.

In terms of academic responsibility, the senior teachers ensured that the plans that were related to teaching and learning were implemented, while the principals ensured that the school was functioning effectively.

In both schools, teachers' views were respected and staff were given space to play an important role in decision making as the principals had created an enabling atmosphere. As a result, the study showed that few problems were experienced in relation to the distribution of duties in both schools. The few teachers who seemed unwilling to perform certain duties became motivated when they saw other teachers performing their duties enthusiastically. All participants seemed to be motivated in their work and in helping the principals as much as possible, even when there were factors that hindered them from doing their work optimally. Participants showed that there was good communication and a high level of trust between teachers and management. This is in agreement with Copland (2003, p. 379), who draws attention to three preconditions that must exist for distributed leadership to flourish in the organisation: firstly, the development of a school culture that embodies collaboration, trust, professional learning, and reciprocal accountability; secondly, strong consensus concerning the important problems facing the school, and thirdly, a need for rich expertise in approaches to improving teaching and learning among all staff members.

However, the findings showed that school A experienced fewer problems in relation to the distribution of tasks. This could have been due to the way the principal managed the culture of the school. As Murphy et al. (2009, p. 192) indicate, school culture has a big effect on influencing teachers' willingness to perform their distributed tasks.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study has raised three issues; the first being that managing teaching and learning is a complex role which necessitates the distribution of leadership in the interests of school development; secondly, principals are responsible for the overall leading and managing of tasks performed within the school towards its success; thirdly, principals and teachers are working under very harsh and complex conditions, with the result that part of a principal's role is to create structures that will encourage and motivate teachers to take part in distributed tasks, ensure professional development in the schools in order that teachers are knowledgeable about the content, display best practice to teachers as well as instilling the elements of trust, accountability and responsibility in their pupils.

## **CHAPTER 5: GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 General conclusions**

This study aimed to investigate the extent to which principals distribute leadership while managing teaching and learning in two Lesotho schools.

#### *The role of the principal*

In relation to the study's main research question, participants understood that the core role of the principal was ensuring that optimal teaching and learning took place. This was achieved by her/his taking responsibility regarding monitoring the quality of work of senior and other teachers either directly or through the supporting organisational structures. In these schools, principals shared their managerial work with senior teachers who then ensured that teachers covered the curriculum and also had sufficient content to teach. Deputy Principals acted on behalf of the principals when the need arose, according to circumstances.

The contexts of the schools played a significant part. For example, in school A, the principal organised classroom visits for observation and encouraged teachers to observe other teachers, while in school B, stretched human resources and time constraints hindered classroom observation. Socio-political factors as well as affiliations with the Church were also factors influencing the principal's role.

The role of principal also included professional leadership, such as leading by example, mentoring and developing staff, creating a vision for school improvement and creating conditions for collective action. The study provided evidence that teachers were willing to work hand in hand in improving their skills for the better provision of education in the school and that they were encouraged by the principals to attend professional development programmes in and outside the country.

## Challenges

It was evident that the role of principals in these schools had changed and become much more complex since the introduction of Free Primary Education. In both schools, principals and teachers faced challenges in performing their roles effectively for the following reasons: firstly, the high number of learners in proportion to the inadequate numbers of teachers had led to a high student-teacher ratio which made teaching and learning very challenging; secondly, the lack of materials such as textbooks deprived teachers of resources needed to enhance teaching and learning and thirdly, the high proportion of learners affected by HIV/Aids increased the social and educational responsibilities of the school and principal. There was also the perception that parents no longer supported their children's work. Although teachers and principals were committed to better education, the lack of interest by parents was worrying and added to problems that principals were experiencing in their leadership roles. The following figure suggests the essential components of successful education:

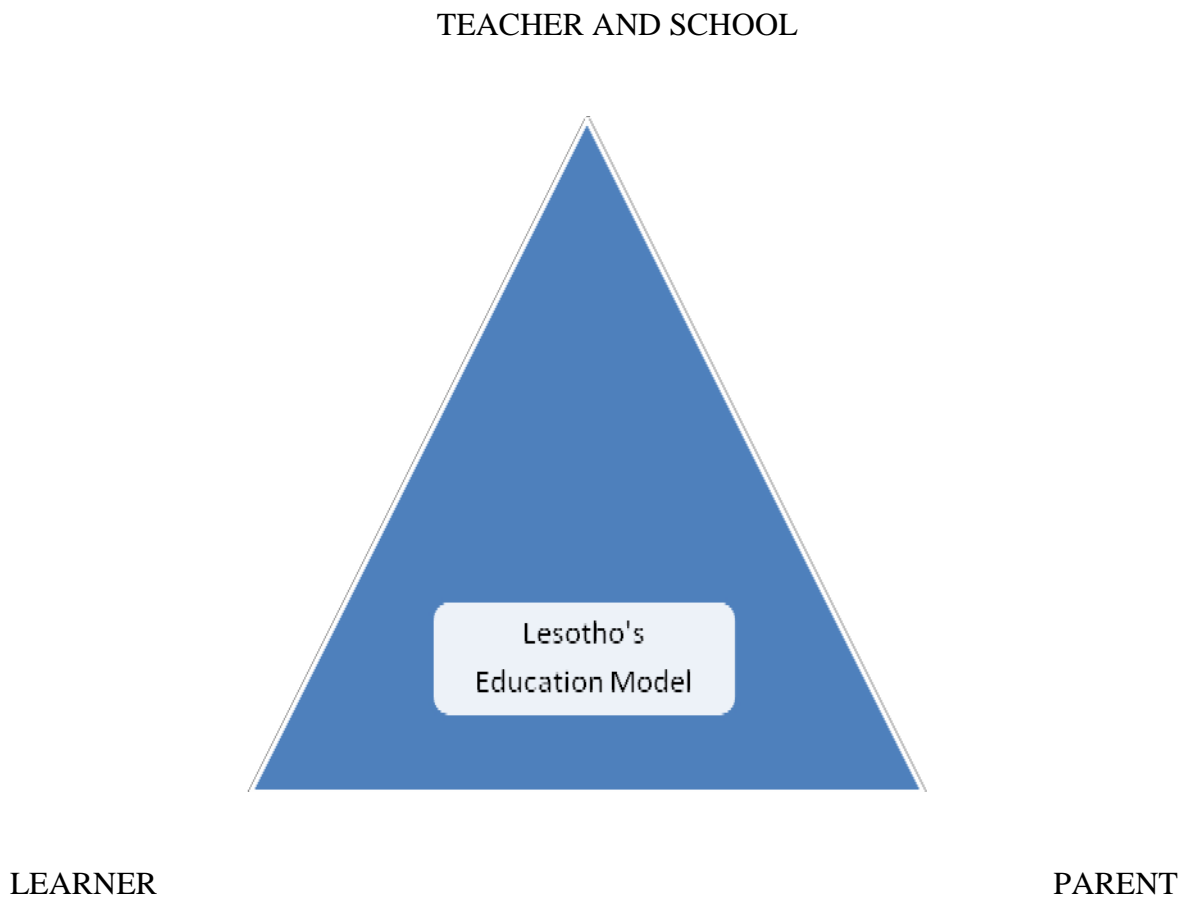


Fig 5.1

### *The extent of the distribution of leadership for the purposes of effective learning and teaching*

Findings at the two primary schools corroborated views in the Literature that principals require teachers' assistance in improving the leadership and management of education. Principals in both schools distributed their roles and teachers were willing to share administrative tasks and leadership roles because they understood that the principal had a very high work load. In addition, the principals distributed their roles through effective strategies such as by sharing certain duties with teachers who had the necessary skills for the job. (According to Copland (2003) and Grant (2006) theory/ model, distributed leadership is the redistribution of power and authority to those who hold expertise rather than giving privilege to those with formal titles). In doing so, they showed that they appreciated individual teachers for the skills they brought to the school community and the study revealed that such teachers were eager to perform the distributed tasks effectively because they felt their skills were important to the school. Participants indicated that without their leader's respectful approach to them, many teachers would not have been willing to do the distributed tasks.

It was also found that there were procedures and structures in place that put teachers in a better position to make major decisions in relation to teaching and learning. Principals in both schools accommodated teachers' decisions and welcomed advice from individual teachers, and the fact that they formed part of school decision making motivated them. Both principals communicated effectively with teachers, which made it easy for them contribute to school processes. These approaches had resulted in the achievement of effective teaching and learning through distributed leadership and the transformation of school practices. By working hand in hand with teachers, principals were able to meet school goals.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study concludes that the main research question which is concerned with the role of the principal in managing teaching and learning has been answered, in that the main role of the principal is to ensure that teaching and learning is enhanced in the school. Evidence from the two chosen schools indicate that principals can manage teaching and learning effectively through the distribution of leadership roles and also by including teachers in making decisions and overcoming problems that directly relate to teaching and learning.

The study reveals that principals who communicate effectively with their teaching staff encourage teachers to willingly carry out delegated roles. This helps to ensure that the provision of quality teaching and learning remains the priority, assists the principal in managing his/her workload and also provides for staff professional development, specifically in the area of school leadership. In general, the effectiveness of the principals' leadership role in ensuring high quality teaching and learning can only be realised through the institutional and stakeholders' support.

Since this research was conducted in only two primary schools, which constitute a small sample, its findings cannot be generalised. However, it is believed that this case study highlights problems and successful practices which may be applicable to most primary schools in Lesotho.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Leading and managing teaching and learning is becoming more complex as this study reveals, therefore to bring about improvement in education in the schools and as literature indicates, leaders need to:

- Have a shared vision in order to lead schools effectively. As indicated by Bush and Glover (2003), leadership entails inspiring and supporting followers towards the achievement a vision for the school.
- Communicate effectively with teachers to ensure that they have all the information they need for performing their duties.
- Encourage teachers to communicate effectively amongst themselves.
- Set a good example to the teachers, so that they can learn through their example.
- Create a conducive environment for optimum teaching and learning in the school.
- Motivate teachers to build their confidence in performing their duties.
- Guide teacher professionalism in order for teachers to be aware of their potential to change school culture for the benefit of learning and teaching.
- Include parents as major stakeholders in the education of their children.

The government of Lesotho, as a stakeholder, has a major role to play in ensuring that teaching and learning takes place effectively in schools:

- The government needs to realistically review its policies in respect of school fees payment and additional financial support, especially for orphans as, since the abolition of school fees, the lack of financial resources has become a constraint with regard to effective teaching and learning in the schools.
- The procurement aspect of school services, for example the delivery of books, should be decentralised in order to be more effective.
- Both principals and teachers need coherent professional development programmes installed at national level for ongoing skills development.

Given the scarcity of national research in relation to educational issues in Lesotho, the government should invest in more national research, focusing on issues such as:

- Leadership roles in managing teaching and learning in the country.
- New leadership styles and concepts, such as that of distributed leadership, which can help principals cope with pressures at work.
- The benefits of sharing duties in the school.

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## APPENDICES:

### Appendix 1

#### *Letter for Permission to Conduct Research Study in a School*

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WITSWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG  
WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

Division of Education Leadership and Policy Studies  
Wits Schools of Education  
Parktown  
July 2011

THE PRINCIPAL

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Name of School

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request for Participation in Research Study

I am Litlhaka Sefeane a full time Masters Degree student in educational leadership studies, at the Wits School of Education (University of the Witwatersrand) and I will be undertaking a research study as part of the degree requirements. My research topic is: *The role of school principal in managing and leading teaching and learning in Lesotho: A Case Study of distributed leadership in two Primary Schools in the District of Botha-Bothe.*

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

Participation in this research study is purely voluntary and you and the staff participants have the right to withdraw at any time, without prejudice. Any information that is disclosed will be treated in strictest confidence and will be used purely for research purposes. Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured through the use of fictitious names.

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

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

Yours faithfully,

Lithaka Sefeane

## Appendix 2

*Letter to the ministry of education and training for permission to conduct a research*

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WITSWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG  
WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

Division of Education Leadership and Policy Studies

Wits Schools of Education

Parktown

July 2011

The Ministry of Education and Training Lesotho

Senior Education Officer

P.O. Box 230

Botha-Bothe 400

Lesotho

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Request to conduct a research study in two primary schools

I am Litlhaka Sefeane a full time Masters Degree student in educational leadership studies, at the Wits School of Education (University of the Witwatersrand) and I will be undertaking a research study as part of the degree requirements. My research topic is: *The role of school principal in leading and managing teaching and learning in Lesotho; A case study distributed leadership in two primary schools in the district of Botha-Bothe.*

I wish to request your permission to collect data from two primary schools on my proposed research. Questionnaires and follow-up interviews will be used as instruments to collect the information from the teachers and principals in two schools. The key criterion for selection of the participants is because they are knowledgeable in issues concerning teaching and learning and their contribution will be very important to my study. Each of the follow-up interviews will take approximately 40-60 minutes. Data collected from the respondents will be treated

confidentially and anonymously; no names will be mentioned in the research findings. All data will be stored in a safe place and will be destroyed between 3 and 5 years after the research has been completed, in accordance with the requirements of the University of the Witwatersrand.

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

Yours faithfully

Lithaka Sefeane

## Appendix 3

### *Information Letter to participants*

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WITSWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG  
WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

Division of Education Leadership and Policy Studies

Wits Schools of Education

Parktown

July 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request for Participation in Research Study

I am Litlhaka Sefeane a full time Masters Degree student in educational leadership studies, at the Wits School of Education (University of the Witwatersrand) and I will be undertaking a research study as part of the degree requirements. My research topic is: *The role of principal in leading and managing teaching and learning in Lesotho; A case study of distributed leadership in two primary schools in the district of Botha-Bothe.*

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

Participation in this research study is purely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time, without prejudice. Any information that is disclosed will be treated in strictest confidence and will be used purely for research purposes. Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured through the use of fictitious names. All raw data obtained for the purposes of the

research will be destroyed within five years in accordance with the requirements of the University of the Witwatersrand.

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

Yours faithfully,

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Name Litlhaka Sefeane

Contact details 0788803790

## Appendix 4

### *Consent Form*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the research study conducted by the researcher, Litlhaka A.Sefeane a full time student at the Wits School of Education (University of the Witwatersrand). I have read the information letter and understand its contents. I am aware that the interviews will be audio recorded for later transcription for use in research analysis.

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

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

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 5

### Provisional Questionnaire for the Principal and Deputy Principal

**Instruction: Please tick as appropriate**

#### School Information

District \_\_\_\_\_

Type of school: mixed girls only boys only

Total numbers of learners: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of teachers: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Biographic information

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A. Gender: Male Female

B. Level of Qualifications:

Masters

Honours

First Degree

Teacher Diploma

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

C. Total numbers spent as a teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

D. Total number of years spent as a teacher in this school: \_\_\_\_\_

E. Total number of years in a leadership position: \_\_\_\_\_

F. What is your position at the school:

Principal

**Deputy Principal**

**Leadership Experience**

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

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**H. Are you familiar with the term instructional leadership?**

Yes     No

**I. If Yes, what do you understand by instructional leadership?**

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**J. Do you play a role in ensuring that teaching and learning takes place at your school?**

Yes     No

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

**a. Discipline of learners**                     

**b. Dealing with parents**                     

**c. School finances**

- d. Teaching
- e. Supervising educators
- f. Overseeing teaching and learning
- g. Liaising with district officials
- h. Administration
- i. Other. Specify \_\_\_\_\_

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

- a. Discipline of learners
- b. Dealing with parents
- c. School finances
- d. Teaching
- e. Supervising educators
- f. Overseeing teaching and learning
- g. Liaising with district officials
- h. Administration
- i. Other. Specify \_\_\_\_\_

**M. Do you do lesson observation of your educators?**

Yes       No

**N. Who is the main person responsible for academic issues in the school?**

**The principal**   
**One of the deputy principals**   
**One of the subject heads**   
**Individual teachers**

**O. Who is most responsible for overseeing the teachers cover the whole curriculum**

**The Principal**   
**The Deputy Principal**   
**The HoD**   
**Grade heads**   
**Subject heads**   
**The teachers themselves**

**P. Who is involved in the decision making processes at school**

**The Principal**   
**The Deputy Principal**   
**Grade heads**   
**Subject heads**   
**The teachers**

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

**The Principal**

**The Deputy Principal**

**Grade heads**

**Subject heads**

**The teachers**

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

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**S. With the introduction of free primary education, what additional problems if any have you experienced in leading and managing teaching and learning?**

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## Appendix 6

### Provisional Questionnaire for Teachers

**Instruction: Please tick as appropriate**

#### School Information

District \_\_\_\_\_

Type of school: mixed girls only boys only

Total numbers of learners: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of teachers: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Biographic information

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A. Gender: Male Female

B. Level of Qualifications:

Masters

Honours First

Degree Teacher

Diploma

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

C. Total numbers spent as a teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

D. Total number of years spent as a teacher in this school: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

	Strongly Agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
a. There is good communication between teachers and managers at the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Teachers and managers are given opportunity to contribute towards decisions about teaching and learning in the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. There are adequate resources to support Teaching and learning in the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**d. There is generally sufficient professional support through staff development in the school.**                       

**e. Teachers work together and help each other with teaching and learning in the school**                       

**f. There is effective monitoring of learner and educators work by the school managing team in the school.**                       

**g. How do you assist the principal with his/her management work?**

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## Appendix 7

### PROVISIONAL FOLLOW UP PROBING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PRINCIPALS AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

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1. Do you ensure that teaching and learning is effective in the school?
2. If yes, how?
3. Who helps?
4. How do you develop teachers' skills to ensure that teaching and learning is effective?
5. Are there programs designed for staff development in your school?
6. How do you ensure that there are enough resources to enhance teaching and learning in your school?
7. What committees are there in the school that are related to teaching and learning? Who heads these committees?
8. Do you have a system of monitoring teachers and learners? Who does the monitoring?
9. How do you involve teachers in leadership tasks?
10. What are some of the challenges that you face with regard to the management of teaching and learning in the school? How have you dealt with these issues?

## Appendix 8

### PROVISIONAL FOLLOW UP PROBING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE TEACHERS

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1. Does the principal ensures that teaching and learning is effective in the school?
2. If yes, how?
3. Who helps?
4. How are teachers' skills developed?
5. Who is responsible for ensuring that teachers' skills are developed? Are there programs designed for developing teachers' skilled?
6. How do you use school's available resources to benefit students?
7. What committees are there in the school that are related to teaching and learning? Who heads these committees?
8. Do you have a system of monitoring teachers and learners in the school? Who does the monitoring?
9. How do you help the principal with management of teaching and learning?
10. What are some of the challenges that you face with regard to the processes of teaching and learning in the school? How have you dealt with these issues?

## Appendix9

Letter of permission from education office to schools for conducting a research

### MEMO

TO PRINCIPAL  
FROM SENIOR EDUCATION OFFICER  
NAME M.AROLE I.A.(MR.)  
SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE 19/07/2011



REF: QJF-STTO CONDUCT RESEARCH

The office kindly requests you to allow Ms Lidhaka Sefeano to conduct research on **The role of the principal in managing teaching and learning** in Lesotho: A case study of 100 primary schools in the district of Botha-Bothe' at your school.

Ms Sefeano is pursuing her M Ed with the University of Witwatersrand School of Education. She hopes to conduct her study from July to August 2011.

Please cooperate with her. Attached is a copy of her application to my office.

Thank you.

