

The Role of the Principal in Facilitating Professional Development of Teachers and the Principal in Primary Schools in South Africa

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ABBREVIATED TITLE PRINCIPAL-TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

KEYWORDS Professional development. Primary school. Principal. Teacher. Rural area. Urban area.

ABSTRACT This study investigates principal-teacher development in four primary schools in the Limpopo Province, South Africa. Four principals were purposively selected and sampled for the purpose of the study. Interviews were conducted with the principals of the four schools and a questionnaire was completed by 89 educators in the four selected schools. At school A the principal encourages teachers to enrol with institutions of higher learning to develop them. Teachers are developed only one day by their circuit and by doing so, the circuit is trying to save money. At school B the School Management Team is still identifying areas where the educators need development. The reason why the principal and the School Management Team don't have a development plan is that they are still busy with completing a SWOT analysis. A cluster coordinator for Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is used in developing teachers. At school C the principal takes teachers through policies, and help them how to perform their duties, especially the 7 roles of a teacher. And at school D the Provincial Department of Education just call principals to give them directives in terms of the Annual National Assessment (ANA) on how to run it or they call them for results. In these

workshops there is nothing new. Principals are work-shopped and told what they already know. Principals are not motivated to attend these workshops. Some of these workshop initiatives come from private *organisations*.

INTRODUCTION

This article emanates from a study that was conducted in four primary schools in the Limpopo Province. Limpopo Province is one of the nine provinces of the Republic of South Africa. Limpopo is South Africa's northernmost province, lying within the great curve of the Limpopo River. It is a region of contrasts, from true bushveld country to majestic mountains, primeval indigenous forests, unspoilt wilderness and patchworks of farmland. The province borders the countries of Botswana to the west, Zimbabwe to the north and Mozambique to the east. In the eastern region lies the northern half of the magnificent Kruger National Park, a nature reserve teeming with African wildlife in a total area roughly the size of Israel. Limpopo is the gateway to the rest of Africa, with its shared borders making it favourably situated for economic cooperation with other parts of southern Africa.

The Maputo Development Corridor is to link the province directly with the Port of Maputo in Mozambique, creating development and trade opportunities, particularly in the southeast. Limpopo connects to the corridor via the Phalaborwa Spatial Development Initiative, a network of rail and road corridors linked to major seaports. This is complemented by airports in centres such as Phalaborwa and Musina, as well as the Gateway International Airport in Polokwane. The capital is Polokwane, located in the middle of the province. Further north is Modimolle, the hub of the local table-grape industry set near the beautiful Waterberg mountain range; Makhado at the foot of the Soutpansberg mountains; and Musina, with its thick-set baobab trees.

Other important Limpopo towns include the major mining centres of Phalaborwa and Thabazimbi, and Tzaneen, a producer of tea, forestry products and tropical fruit. Bela- Bela, with its popular mineral water baths, is near the southern border. Through the centre of the province runs the Great North Road, an important route into Africa, which crosses into Zimbabwe at the major border post of Beit Bridge. Polokwane is the capital city of the province. 52.9% of the population speaks Sepedi, 17% Xitsonga, 16.7% Tshivenda. The population was 5 404 868 in 2011. With a total area of 125 755 square kilometres, Limpopo is slightly larger than the US state of Pennsylvania. It's the fifth-largest of the country's nine provinces. (<http://www.southafrica.info/about/geography/limpopo>)

This article investigates the role of the principal in facilitating teacher development as well as principal development in schools in both rural and urban schools. In both rural and urban school settings teachers often enter the teaching profession with insufficient understanding of or experience with the diverse characteristics and needs of children in the geographic regions outside their university location (Hickey and Lanahan, 2012, p.171). Teachers cannot be trained once and for all. They need constant updating in new technology, pedagogic improvement and personal leadership development Tomlinson, 1997, p.111). Professional development in this context refers to the principal when they update individual knowledge, skills, application of new strategies and changes as well as improving their teachers' expertise. It is for individuals or groups with like needs identified by them or the school is career-orientated or personal and is longer term (Tomlinson, 1997, p. 27).

The principal has the following roles to play: in-service training of teachers in terms of new curriculum (instructional leadership) and policies, staff development (conditions of service, dispute resolution mechanisms, curriculum innovation, communication, leadership and management skills, capacity building, interpersonal skills, teaching and learning, cultural tolerance), communication (district and school, school and community). As well as developing leadership talent (accountability, relationships, trust, Ubuntu (humanness), democratic leadership styles, and constitutional values).

BACKGROUND

Most leadership preparation programs have historically focused on management skills (e.g., planning, strategic leadership, and financing; which are necessary but insufficient for meeting the adaptive challenges leaders of all kinds face in today's world. Instead, programs need a more holistic focus, one that also includes relational learning that is., a focus on building relationships), collaborative leadership, and reflective practice, and leaders must understand the nature of adult learning, the social-emotional dimension of leadership, adult development, and how to support these among adults in schools (Drago-Severson, Maslin-Ostrowski, & Hoffman, 2012, p.48). Adult developmental theories can be a powerful tool for understanding how to support leadership development and how to assist leaders with supporting adults as they develop greater internal capacities to effectively exercise good leadership in schools (Ibid, 2012, p.49). Professional development in this context refers to the principal when they update individual knowledge, skills, application of new strategies and changes as well as improving their teachers' expertise.

METHOD

Qualitative approach was used in investigating the role of the principal in the facilitation of teacher and principal development in schools. In qualitative approach the researcher relies on the views of participants; asks broad and general questions; collects data consisting largely of words or texts from participants; describes and analyses these words or themes and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner (Creswell, 2008, p.46). This approach is the most appropriate for this study because I need to describe the principals' experiences in a subjective and contextualised situation. Desk top research, observation, interviews, tape-recording and shadowing was done. Interviews were conducted with the principals of the four schools and a questionnaire completed by 89 educators in the four selected schools. In addition, the researcher completed observation forms and requested school documents from the principals. This study was conducted in four primary schools in the Limpopo Province, South Africa. Four principals were purposively selected and sampled for the purpose of the study. Interviews were conducted with the principals of the four schools and a questionnaire was completed by 89 educators in the four selected schools. 80% of the respondents were teachers at Post level 1, 16% were Heads of department (HoDs), and 5% were deputy principals. The educational level of the respondents were as follows: Matric/Grade 12+1 year were 3.4%; Matric/Grade 12+2 years were 3.4%, Matric/Grade 12+3 years were 47%, Bachelor's Degree were 15%, Honours degree or equivalent were 27.3%, Masters' Degree were 1.1%, and 3.4% had other educational levels. The respondents

THE AIM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff development must focus on job or program orientation, deficit correction, and inspiration (Bradley, Kallick, and Regan, 1991, p.25). Principals in primary schools must be aware that educators develop through different stages in their careers. Staff development is those processes that improve the job-related knowledge, skills, or attitudes of school employees. There are five models of staff development, namely: individually-guided staff development (educators learn things on their own), observation/assessment; educator involvement in development/improvement process; training; and inquiry (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989, pp.35-45)

TEACHERS' STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Self-protective stage

Teachers at this stage may use rules to their advantage. Blame is placed on other individuals or the circumstances when satisfaction is not achieved. Principals must be aware that teachers who stay at this stage maintain manipulative and exploitive interpersonal relations and tend to be opportunistic, and preoccupied with control and advantage.

Conformist stage

At this stage teachers obey rules simply because they are group-accepted rules. Teachers at this stage are preoccupied with appearance, social acceptance and reputation.

Self-aware transition

Teachers at this stage appreciate and understand that there is a multiple of possibilities, alternatives, and options in problem-solving situations. Growing self-confidence and self-evaluated standards replace group standards as guidelines for behaviour.

Conscientious stage

At this stage teachers are capable of self-criticism. They are preoccupied with obligations, privileges, rights, ideals, traits, and achievement, all defined more by inner standards and less by the need for external recognition and acceptance.

Individualistic transition

Teachers at this stage tend to have more complex responses than those at earlier stages. A sense of individuality is of utmost importance, especially as it is coupled with heightened awareness of emotional dependence on others.

Autonomous stage

Teachers at this stage have the capacity to tolerate and cope with the inner conflict that arises between conflicting perceptions, needs, ideals, and duties. (Holly & Mcloughlin, 1989, p.121).

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

The principal can play a role in the in-service training of teachers in terms of new curriculum (instructional leadership), policies; staff development (conditions of service, dispute resolution mechanisms, curriculum innovation, communication, leadership and management skills, capacity building, interpersonal skills, teaching and learning, cultural tolerance), facilitating communication (district and school, school and community). Some of the roles may be the development of leadership talent in accountability, relationships, trust, ubuntu,

democratic leadership styles, and constitutional values. School leaders remain of crucial importance for continued improvement of education. Within schools that are learning organisations evolve new types of relationship between students, teachers and leaders based around a reasonably common set of characteristics that include a trusting and collaborative climate, a shared and monitored mission, taking initiatives and risks, and on-going, relevant professional development (Mulford, 2003, p.2).

In understanding the role of the principal one need to ask “What is the leadership role of the principal?” In this paper leadership is about providing direction, assuring alignment, building a commitment in educators and, facing adaptive challenges. The principal should be able to fulfil the leadership outcomes. The building of talent on the team, the increasing of individual and team energy, and the clarification of individual and team focus should be a priority. Professional teaching is undermined by alternatives that avoid preparation for teachers because the defining features of a profession are that it is knowledge-based and client oriented. The knowledge professionals need in order to make sound decisions is transmitted through professional education and by initiation through supervised practice (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1998, pp.16-17).

This article argues in favour of **applied transformational leadership**. Each of us has our own unique set of skills, abilities and potential. Peak performance comes from matching our unique capabilities with our responsibilities. Great leadership results are produced by maximizing our strengths. Overcoming competency gaps turbo-charges the use of these strengths (Hollweg, 2003, p.1-3). Applied transformational leadership encompasses the act of empowering individuals to fulfill their contractual obligations, meet the needs of the school, and go beyond the “call of duty” for the betterment of the institution (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012, p.3).

These leaders inspire, motivate, and appeal to followers through an array of skills and behaviours, which communicate their value to the institution. They serve as role models to others, modelling the characteristics, behaviours, and actions that they seek from all the members of the organisation. The benefits of this leadership style are that the leaders improve the bottom line, which occurs as employees regularly surpass expectations; morale is increased through leaders’ efforts to fully integrate followers into the core functions of the institution. Transformational leadership has a moral imperative wherein leaders aim to destroy old ways of life to make way for new ways of life, while articulating vision and values to keep empowered followers on a unified path (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012, p.3). These leaders redistribute power to their followers regardless of culture.

The school leadership should be purposive, inclusive, values driven; embrace the distinctive and inclusive context of the school; and to promote an active view of learning. It should be instructionally focused; it should be a function that is distributed throughout the school community. It needs to build capacity by developing the school as a learning community. For the leadership to be relevant it must be futures oriented and strategically driven. It must be developed through experiential and innovative methodologies. It needs to be served by a support and policy context that is coherent and implementation driven. Lastly, it should be supported by a National College that leads the discourse around leadership for learning (Crow, 2004, pp.289-299).

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

The school principal as instructional leader must first have a clear understanding of what teaching is in order to design a staff development program that will improve teaching (Bradley, Kallick, & Regan, 1991, p.142). Instructional leaders should be able to define the school's mission (framing and communicating goals); to manage the instructional program (supervising instruction, coordinating curriculum, and monitoring student progress), and to promote a positive school learning climate (protecting instructional time, professional development, a visible presence, promoting high expectations, and providing incentives for teachers and students. Principals as instructional leadership should focus on those school-level factors that will "trickle down," altering teaching and learning at the classroom level (Neumerski, 2012, p.334).

Teacher development should focus on the following knowledge base, namely: *knowledge about learners and learning* (learners and learning; knowledge of the learner; meeting developmental needs of learners. Knowledge about curriculum and teaching (the need for a curricular vision of teaching; subject-specific pedagogy; conceptions of teaching; knowledge about reading and writing; classroom organisation and management, and effective classroom guidance); Knowledge about social foundations of education (social and political contexts, the dynamics of school district; social organisation of classes and schools; principles of sociology and anthropology, context, code, classroom and culture; professional knowledge; professional collaboration; ethical dimensions of teaching; legal rights and responsibilities); Knowledge about subject matter (subject-matter knowledge for teaching); and Knowledge about liberal arts (knowledge, representation, and quantitative thinking) (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1998; pp.36-37).

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN INFORMATIONAL AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING

Informational learning refers to increasing facts, knowledge, and skills, which are very important in our 21st-century world. However, there is another kind of learning, one that builds internal capacities. Transformational learning which is also essential. This kind of learning (i.e., growth) pertains to increases in our cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal capacities, which enables us to better manage the complexities of leadership, teaching, leading, and life. Attending to and supporting transformational learning in school leaders can help in building leaders, schools, and school systems so that they can implement leadership practices and enhance professional learning opportunities ((Drago-Severson, Maslin-Ostrowski, & Hoffman, 2012, p.50). The increasing range and complexity of leadership responsibilities in schools means that it is no longer possible for the principal to be the sole leader (Juninah Junainah Dullah, Ministry Of Education Sabariah Sharif, Universiti Malaysia Sabah Mohamad Nizam Nazarudin, Universiti Malaysia Sabah M.S. Omar-Fauzee, The development of principals differs from country to country. The examples below illustrate this point.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Qualification for school leaders in Hong Kong China

- Induction Course
- It is provided by the Education Department (ED) of Hong Kong
- It is for newly appointed school principals
- Methods: Lectures by guest speakers, discussion, and case studies.

Qualification for school leaders in South Africa

- Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE);
- It is provided by the Department of Education through the University of Pretoria;
- It is for the permanently employed practicing primary and secondary school principals;
- Methods: Lectures by lecturers, portfolios, mentoring.

Qualification for school leaders in Washington, USA

- The Danforth Educational Leadership Program of the University of Washington;

- It is provided by the College of Education of the University of Washington, Seattle;
- It is for applicants for the position of Principal in the state of Washington;
- Methods: Simulations, case studies, role-play, interactive discussion, the completion of concrete leadership tasks during work experience, personal study.

Qualification for school leaders in Singapore

- Diploma in Educational Administration;
 - It is provided by the National Institute of Education of Nanyang Technological University;
 - It target teachers before application for principalship;
- Methods used in their training are in the form of: lectures, seminars, workshops, tutorials, and mentoring.

FINDINGS

Each school's findings will be presented separately. The role of the principal in the development of educators in each school is discussed below.

School A

The principal encourages teachers to enrol with institutions of higher learning to develop them. Teachers are given university brochures and encouraged to further their studies. Teachers are developed only one day by their circuit and by doing so, the circuit is trying to save money.

School B

At school B the principal was still working on a SWOT analysis. The completion of the SWOT analysis will assist the principal in developing teachers. In every briefing, every meeting there is always an item on staff development. Educators were presented with all different types of leaves. Teachers at this school are informed about the procedure to be followed in terms of submission of forms. According to the principal at School B that capacity building was really necessary. Teachers at this school they know what is happening in the school. Curriculum management is done by the School Management Team. It was also regarded as the loophole (challenge) by the principal. The school still has a long way to go. It has until May 2015 to improve the management of the curriculum. The School Management

Team is still identifying areas where the educators need development. The reason why the principal and the School Management Team don't have a development plan is that they are still busy with completing a SWOT analysis. A cluster coordinator for Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is used in developing educators.

School C

The principal takes teachers through policies, chapter J in the handbook; leave application – it keeps on changing. Chapter G, leave information; National Education Policy Act (NEPA) of 1996, how teachers should perform their duties; the 7 roles of a teacher; computer literacy the school has internet connections - teachers are able to download information; and managing the computer. Teachers know a lot of things. They are exposed to facilities.

School D

The principal is playing a leading role in the school because sometimes teachers do not come forward and say that they really need development. He picks up the areas that he feels educators need development. Like the new curriculum from the 4 – 6 grades, the principal would look at the samples of their submissions and pick up the problems, for example, if Maths is not planned in the right way then SMT put up a programme so that everyone has a common understanding. In the last two terms the school has been working in blocks and educators meet and discussed and straighten up some things. Policy interpretation can be a challenge to educators as they may interpret it in different ways. So if the principal and the teachers have the same interpretation it makes it easy. The school does team planning where two teachers sit together and plan the subject and uses the same approach and that assists a lot. That is what the school does even when they do development mentoring the principal would not leave it to the Heads of Department (HODs) because they may experience challenges.

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN THE APPRAISAL OF TEACHERS

School A

The principal visits teachers in their classes for appraisal. S/he gives recommendations to educators in those areas where they need improvement.

School B

The principal has a vision, and for him to achieve that vision, he needs other people. Advocacy is very important to the principal. Integrated Quality Management Systems

(IQMS) touches all the dimensions. The school had started with the appraisal. By the end of 2013 the school shall be having the School improvement Plan. Those reports will assist the principal and the SMT to compile the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Teachers evaluate themselves. The principal and the SMT check how teachers rate themselves. First few weeks of October they shall be dealing with the peer evaluation. Peer evaluation allows the principal and the SMT to check what are the educators' strengths and weaknesses, including the principal. The principal also needs to be appraised, for example on the 15th October 2013 the principal was scheduled to be assessed for appraisal. The principal will also be reviewed by his immediate senior.

School C

The principal train teachers and is a member of the School Development Team (SDT). Since the school had increased in learner enrolment, the principal now deal with two deputy principals and is directly involved with them. He assists the School Management Team members. He checks the files for performance 1 to 3 and also number 7 (Extra-curricular). He checks all post levels from teachers to deputy levels. The 1st four are for classroom performance, numbers 5 to 10 is for HoDs, and numbers 5 to 12 is for Deputy Principals. These are done throughout the year for cycle 1 and 2. He also sits with the DSG summatively. The PGP and SIPs of schools. The principal and the SMT do not deviate from what is prescribed in law.

School D

The school follows an Integrated Quality Management Systems approach. The principal and the SMT have a plan. They do class visits and check the educators' strengths and weaknesses and put up a plan. For example, the teachers who are not good in record keeping or those who are not good in classroom discipline, the principal and the SMT plan on how they can be helped by their peers and how management can assist them in improving. That is the approach the school uses to develop educators in different skills. Educators are firstly given the opportunity to do self-evaluation on what they do about aspects in the key areas like curriculum and co-curricular activities. The school puts up a plan to assist educators in those areas identified for development. Teachers are assisted in lesson planning, assessment and policy issues.

The principal and the SMT empower the teachers and share with them the standards they want from them. They should not just quickly mark and finish within a day, they want them

to be sensitive to the work of the learners. The school had specific standards, for example, a test must be marked in a certain way. The principal and the SMT do quality assurance on the marked scripts. In lesson planning they ask educators to bring their lesson plans and they give suggestions on how to improve them. The school relies on team work. The principal and the SMT also observe educators in their classes. Again, they check the educators' work through the books of the learners. They are able to identify the careless of those educators who do not mark the learners' books. They are also able to see coffee stains which tell them a lot about their teachers' professionalism. The principal visits educators in their classes for appraisal purposes. The principal also gives recommendations where teachers needed improvement.

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPALS IN THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT

School A

The principal at school A did not participate in any workshops, courses or programmes before he became a principal. There was no support provided. The principal had to find his own way of getting information pertaining to principalship. He only attended meetings on how to fill surveys. No Leadership workshops were attended and the principal read on his own some of the Departmental of Education policies.

School B

At school B the principal participated in a number of workshops before he became a principal. All along he was working as a teacher who was in possession of a diploma. S/he obtained a certificate as a qualified assessor. He also obtained a certificate in computers. He has a number of Information Technology Certificates that S/he had obtained. One of them is about a Spread sheet. The principal is a qualified website designer. He has an Advanced Certificate in Education, Leadership and Management. He attended a number of workshops such as the SASUMS. The purpose of SASUMS is to minimize the paperwork. The challenge here was that the school got a problem of pleading with people for compliance. All school are expected to use the SASUMS and they are complying. The circuit manager has emphasized that submission to the circuit must be done electronically.

School C

At this school the principal attended programmes which were not management programmes per se. They were general educational programmes in nature. For example, curriculum courses, Revised National Curriculum Statement, introduction of new subjects and all new

policies and resolutions. The principal remembers one of the workshops organised by the district, in 1996, in Settlers High by the former Circuit Manager of Modimolle. The other workshops were on Management and Governance. The management workshops were organised by principals and the Governance Workshops were organised by the District officials, on admissions, handling of finances, the same workshops every year. These workshops were also for School Governing Bodies (SGBs). These workshops are used as telling-workshops as to how to handle finances. It is like parrot talk. To this principal these workshops become so obvious because he knows how to deal with the “to do list” (Researcher’s comment). The principal also attended courses on new policies, for example, about the Norms and Standards, the South African Schools Act, No.84 of 1996, Section 28b which grants permission to pay School Governing Bodies’ (SGBs) appointees.

School D

Before becoming a principal, this principal attended quite a number of workshops, courses or programmes. From now and then he would be called for meetings and conferences now and then. He benefited from these workshops even though he was not directly involved. There is not such of training apart from information from the universities for his personal growth which they drop in the mail. There were some programmes like a year’s programmes which would assist in curriculum issues but it’s very scarce. There are some conferences and symposiums but they are very rare. While being a principal, he attended few workshops. The Provincial Department of Education just call principals to give them directives in terms of the Annual National Assessment (ANA) on how to run it or they call them for results. In these workshops there is nothing new. They are used as accountability sessions. Principals are work shopped and told what they already knew. Principals are not motivated to attend these workshops. Some of these workshop initiatives come from private organisations. There was one teacher conference organised by the Department of Education a while ago.

The challenge facing primary schools is the people on the senior posts. Some of them are there not because they qualify to be there but for political reasons. The principal is of the view that people in management positions should be academics and visionary. But it does not happen that way in terms of senior management up there. In schools they are selected but above that it is more of politics. It does not go with suitability and delivery. It is about who is doing what and who can be given the post. The principal would not say with certainty that this is across the board but it is a tendency of appointing political figures. For example, a district where this school is situated is very diverse and if the senior management does not

even have a Degree in Management; it will be very difficult to manage it. The person would issue sanctions and avoid academic podiums where people question things. If the leadership or management role above the school level would be filled in a way that is really relevant to the post and what needs to be done it would make a difference in our education.

CONCLUSION

Teachers are developed only one day by their circuit and by so doing, the circuit is trying to save money. Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is used in developing teachers in some primary schools in the Limpopo Province of South Africa.. They are exposed to facilities. Team planning where two teachers sit together and plan can assist in teacher development in primary schools. Pertaining to principal development, in the researched schools one principal had to find his own way of getting information pertaining to principalship. Principals are work shopped and told what they already knew.

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