

Data-informed Instructional Leadership: Improving the Instructional Program in South African Primary Schools

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ABSTRACT Managing an instructional program is recognized as constituting a major area of focus for successful school leadership. Linked to this recognition is the acknowledgement of the importance of the school principal in improving performance in this area and accounting for decisions made in the process. To improve learner performance and strengthen accountability, principals are encouraged to turn to data. This enables them to examine performance, generate informed decisions and plan for sustainable improvement. In this study, current school performance and leadership practices in South Africa are examined against a literature background. Based on a qualitative study, this paper examines specifically how principals in South African primary schools use data to manage the instructional program. The paper shows challenges which principals face in improving learner performance without the capacity for effective data use. One key finding is that school leaders lack capacity to create a culture of collaborative enquiry in schools.