

**THE EFFECTIVE USE OF INSTRUCTION TIME AT
SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY IN THE
NORTHERN FREE STATE**

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that “**The effective use of instruction time at secondary schools: A case study in the Northern Free State**” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. It is being submitted for the degree of Master in Education at the University of South Africa. It is original and has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Signature:..... on this day of :.....

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ABSTRACT

The research study has focussed on the optimal use of instruction time to arrange for improved learner performance. A qualitative investigation was conducted using individual interviewing with six school principals and focus group interviewing with fifteen Heads of Department of six selected secondary schools. The findings revealed that the establishment of a sound culture of teaching and learning in which instruction time is used optimally is the joint responsibility of the school principal and staff in collaboration with learners and parents. Instruction time is lost owing to timewasters such as teachers who are unprepared for lessons, teacher and learner absenteeism and teacher and learner tardiness. Intervention strategies to counter the negative influence of timewasters on available instruction time relate to prior planning and preparation for lessons, managing teacher and learner absenteeism and the scheduling of extra classes. The study contributes to the discourse on effective teaching and learning for acceptable learner performance.

Key terms: Daily schedule, instructional leadership, instruction time, learner performance, secondary schools, timewasters

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2	BACKGROUND TO STUDY	2
1.2.1	Instructional leadership as a theoretical framework	2
1.2.2	Different categories of instruction time.....	3
1.2.3	Factors hindering the effective use of instruction time	4
1.2.4	Aspects relevant to the time available for instruction	7
1.3	MOTIVATION FOR STUDY	8
1.4	PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	9
1.5	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY	10
1.6	RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	11
1.6.1	Research paradigm and research approach.....	11
1.6.2	Selection of sites and participants	12
1.6.3	Data collection.....	13
1.6.4	Data analysis	14
1.6.5	Trustworthiness of qualitative research.....	15
1.6.6	Ethical considerations	16
1.7	CONCEPT CLARIFICATION	17
1.7.1	Instruction time.....	17
1.7.2	Learner performance.....	17
1.7.3	Timewasters.....	18
1.7.4	A school's daily schedule.....	18
1.8	CHAPTER OUTLINE	18
1.9	CONCLUSION	19

CHAPTER TWO

A LITERATURE STUDY ON THE USE OF INSTRUCTION TIME AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS

2.1	INTRODUCTION.....	20
2.2	INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	21
2.2.1	Instructional leadership intervention.....	22
2.2.2	Teacher collaboration	25
2.2.3	Using staff as enforcers of strategies for effective teaching and learning	25
2.3	THE IMPORTANCE OF INSTRUCTION TIME	26
2.3.1	The relationship between instruction time and academic performance.....	27
2.3.2	The availability of instruction time.....	29
2.4	THE IMPORTANCE OF USING INSTRUCTION TIME OPTIMALLY	31
2.4.1	The effect of lost instruction time	31
2.4.2	The effect of additional instruction time	33
2.4.3	The optimal use of available instruction time by teachers	34
2.5	THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER ON INSTRUCTION TIME AND LEARNER PERFORMANCE	36
2.5.1	The hindering effect of administrative duties on instructional leadership	37
2.5.2	Instructional leadership responsibilities.....	38
2.5.2.1	The educational vision of the school.....	38
2.5.2.2	Creating a culture of effective teaching and learning	39
2.5.2.3	Daily schedule	40
2.5.2.4	Monitoring instruction and alerting staff to timewasters	40
2.5.2.5	Monitoring learner performance	41
2.5.2.6	Monitoring teachers' lesson preparation	42
2.5.2.7	Management of the curriculum and learning programmes	42
2.5.3	The influence of instructional leadership on academic performance.....	43

2.6	TIMEWASTERS	44
2.6.1	Teacher and learner tardiness	44
2.6.2	Teacher and learner absence	46
2.6.3	Events of a non-academic nature	47
2.6.4	Timewasters during lesson presentation	47
2.6.5	Responsibilities of teachers of a non-teaching nature	48
2.6.6	Visits during school hours	48
2.6.7	Announcements via the intercom	49
2.6.8	Lesson time lost at the start and end of the school term	49
2.6.9	Teachers not prepared for lessons.....	50
2.6.10	Sundry timewasters	51
2.7	CHANGES TO THE DAILY SCHEDULE OF A SCHOOL	52
2.7.1	Number of lessons and lesson length.....	53
2.7.2	School breaks.....	53
2.7.3	Activities of a non-lesson nature	54
2.8	STRATEGIES FOR ENSURING OPTIMAL INSTRUCTION TIME	55
2.8.1	Direct strategies	57
2.8.1.1	Administrative duties	57
2.8.1.2	Functional strategies in the classroom	57
2.8.1.3	Additional instruction after school	58
2.8.1.4	Teacher and learner absenteeism.....	59
2.8.1.5	Intercom interruptions	60
2.8.1.6	Infrastructure maintenance	60
2.8.1.7	Visitors	60
2.8.1.8	Early dismissals	61
2.8.2	Indirect strategies.....	61
2.8.2.1	Classroom observation.....	61
2.8.2.2	School breaks.....	62
2.8.2.3	Teacher alertness	62
2.8.2.4	Teacher mentoring	63
2.9	CONCLUSION	63

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	65
3.2	RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	66
3.3	RESEARCH PARADIGM AND RESEARCH APPROACH.....	66
3.3.1	Qualitative research approach	67
3.3.2	Interpretivist research paradigm.....	68
3.3.3	Phenomenological study	68
3.4	SELECTION OF SITES AND PARTICIPANTS	70
3.4.1	Site selection and sampling	70
3.4.1.1	Maximum variation sampling	70
3.4.1.2	Purposeful sampling	71
3.4.2	Sample size.....	71
3.4.3	Participant information	72
3.5	DATA COLLECTION	72
3.5.1	Individual interviews	73
3.5.2	Focus group interviews	76
3.6	DATA ANALYSIS	78
3.7	TRUSTWORTHINESS	79
3.7.1	Credibility.....	80
3.7.2	Transferability.....	80
3.7.3	Dependability	81
3.7.4	Confirmability	81
3.8	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	82
3.8.1	Anonymity.....	83
3.8.2	Confidentiality.....	83
3.8.3	Voluntary participation	83
3.8.4	Informed consent	84
3.9	CONCLUSION	84

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	86
4.2	RESEARCH METHODS	86
4.3	RESEARCH SITE AND PARTICIPANT PROFILES.....	87
4.4	RESEARCH FINDINGS	89
4.4.1	Establishing a sound culture of teaching and learning	90
4.4.1.1	Providing support to poor performing learners.....	90
4.4.1.2	Valuing top performing learners	91
4.4.1.3	Recognising academic improvement	92
4.4.1.4	The contribution of the school principal to teaching and learning	93
4.4.1.5	Learner discipline.....	95
4.4.1.6	Utilising all members of staff as instructional leaders.....	96
4.4.2	Improving the quality of teaching and learning	97
4.4.2.1	The role of the school principal	97
4.4.2.2	The role of the Head of Department.....	99
4.4.2.3	The role of the teacher	100
4.4.2.4	Extra classes	103
4.4.2.5	Planning and preparation	104
4.4.2.6	Quality control	105
4.4.3	Intervention with external factors hindering learner performance	106
4.4.4	Role players contributing to a positive culture of teaching and learning	108
4.4.4.1	Learners	108
4.4.4.2	Teachers	108
4.4.4.3	Parents	111
4.4.5	Managing timewasters	112
4.4.5.1	Administrative responsibilities	113
4.4.5.2	Identifying timewasters.....	113
4.4.5.3	Intervention strategies for timewasters.....	117
4.4.6	The daily school schedule.....	122
4.4.6.1	Increasing instruction time.....	124

4.4.6.2	Communication of changes to the daily schedule	125
4.4.6.3	Suggested changes to the daily schedule for the effective use of instruction time	125
4.5	CONCLUSION	127

**CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1	INTRODUCTION	129
5.2	SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	129
5.3	CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY	137
5.4	RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY	140
5.5	SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY	144
5.6	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	145
5.7	CONCLUDING REMARKS	146
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	147

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	157
APPENDIX B	161
APPENDIX C	162
APPENDIX D	163
APPENDIX E	167

TABLES

Table 4.1	
Background information on research sites	87
Table 4.2	
Biographical data of participants.....	88

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Academic performance is contingent on the optimal use of instruction time, which can be improved by the effective management of a school's daily schedule. This statement is confirmed by a study conducted at the California State University where it was found that an increase in the time spent on instruction has a positive influence on a school's average academic achievement (Jess and Wassmer 2013:22). It is, therefore, important for a school to focus on strategies to ensure the optimal use of instruction time continually in order to improve learner performance (Carol 2010:42). Minimising the influence of time wasting activities on school day functioning is a pro-active and practical approach towards improved academic performance.

With regard to the South African educational context, a commonly-shared perception is that the Department of Education should focus on solving problems related to poor academic performance instead of treating only the symptoms (Areff 2015(a):1). Planning endeavours need to be pro-active and focused on the preventability of problems hindering acceptable academic achievement. This planning requires micro level input which relates to instructional leadership as one of the primary responsibilities of the school principal (Areff 2015(a):1). Seeing that the core function of a school is teaching and learning, instructional leadership is crucial for the effective management of teaching and learning engendering good academic performance.

Time is experienced as a valuable commodity in all working environments. With regard to the school as a working environment, there is limited time available for teachers and learners to complete the annual subject curriculum. With reference to the South African National Curriculum Statement (NCS), the required number of hours per week for teaching and learning for Grade 10 to 12 learners are 27,5 hours (Department of Basic Education 2011:7). A total number of 40 weeks are allocated each year in order to cover the required subject content. Of this total of 40 weeks, 30 weeks are allocated for teaching and the other ten weeks for examination and any other form of assessment (Department of Basic Education 2011:9).

As good academic performance confirms effective teaching and successful learning as the primary goal of all schools, it is important that a school's instructional leaders create a culture that consistently pursues the realisation of this goal (Hallinger 2011:126). Focussing on the optimal use of available instruction time results in the gradual development of a school culture of respect for the time allocated to instruction. The concerted focus on avoiding time wasting activities and situations which could occur in normal school day functioning is an indication of the way in which instructional time is used and it depicts the prevailing culture of teaching and learning at any specific school (Haggard 2008). Avoiding time wasting situations to maximise the use of instruction time is crucial for successful teaching and learning contributing to the discourse on improved school performance.

The school principal, as the executive manager of the school, determines the culture of avoiding time wasting situations in pursuit of using instruction time optimally (Van Zyl 2013:154). Studies on strategies to counter time wasting occurrences in schools on a daily basis is important to contribute to the discourse on improved teaching and learning. This study on the effective use of instruction time provides practical guidelines and strategies for school principals to improve the academic performance of their learners by managing their schools' daily schedule in such a way that instruction time is used optimally.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO STUDY

The themes that are discussed in this section relate to the different categories of instruction time and the factors hindering the effective use of instruction time. A discussion of these two themes is preceded by a discussion of the theoretical framework underlying this study on the optimal use of instruction time.

1.2.1 Instructional leadership as a theoretical framework

The most important purpose of a school principal is to create and support conditions under which high quality teaching and learning can take place (Bush 2013:5). The instructional leaders of a school can improve the quality of teaching and learning in three different ways. Firstly, teaching and learning are influenced directly by the

personal intervention of the school principal as the instructional leader of the school (Bush 2013:8). This refers to possible changes to the school's daily schedule in order to reduce timewasters. Personal intervention by instructional leaders has an immediate and positive effect on the teaching and learning of a school. Secondly, intervention relates to reciprocity, which relies on teamwork between the school's instructional leaders and the rest of the staff (Bush 2013:8). Reciprocity holds that teachers observe the classroom environment and give constructive feedback to the relevant Heads of Department and the school principal. The feedback contributes to informed decision making by school management. Thirdly, intervention is indirect involving staff as the enforcers of planned changes (Bush 2013:8). Teachers play a crucial role in the implementation of decisions made by the instructional leaders of the school.

Indirect intervention is the most commonly used technique for improved teaching and learning. Three approaches underlie the implementation of indirect intervention (Bush, 2013:8):

- Modelling
- Monitoring
- Professional dialogue and discussion

The approaches of modelling, monitoring and professional dialogue for the effective management of teaching and learning in a normal school day to ensure the optimal use of available instruction time engendering satisfactory learner performance, is elaborated on in Chapter 2.

1.2.2 Different categories of instruction time

Instruction time is divided into different categories representing the various actions to be performed during the process of teaching and learning (Pollard 2014:198-200):

- Allocated time: This refers to the time allocated by, or expected from, the Department of Education to be spent on the instruction of different subjects

in different grades. The Department of Education, for example, prescribes that a total number of four-and-a-half hours weekly be spent on the teaching of mathematics and the home language in Grade 11 and 12 (Department of Basic Education 2011:7).

- Engaged time: The time that learners are actively paying attention represents engaged time. Strategies to avoid time wasting situations results in an increase in engaged time.
- Transition time: This is non-instructional time spent before and after an instructional activity. Determining ways to minimise timewasters during transition time and determining other time wasting situations where constructive time is lost or ineffectively used contribute to improved teaching and learning. Determining time wasting activities and implementing strategies to counter time wasting actions, contribute to the optimal use of available instruction time.

1.2.3 Factors hindering the effective use of instruction time

Factors hindering the constructive use of instruction time differ from school to school as these factors relate to the unique context of the specific school. There are, however, universal problems, which are experienced in all schools regarding the loss of instruction time. Problems that could influence the academic performance of learners negatively relate to the early close and late start of schools, a lack of general school orderliness, a lack of clear rules and routines for daily functioning, and an excessive amount of time spent on assessment (Eugene 1997:31). Experiencing these timewasters on a daily basis jeopardises the time available for instruction.

Additional instruction time is useful only when it is aligned to a constructive strategy that focuses on using available time optimally (Oxley & Baete 2012:48). Creating more instruction time by eliminating time wasting situations to arrange for improved academic performance, represents constructive strategizing endeavour. From a review of the literature on possible factors hindering the optimal use of available instruction time, six factors emerged as salient timewasters. These factors pertain to assemblies that are not constructive, teachers' lack of preparation for every lesson,

disordered class rotations accompanied by teacher and learner tardiness, teachers' overload with general administrative responsibilities, senior staff's responsibilities of a non-academic nature, and participation in the extracurricular programme. These time wasting factors are discussed next.

- **Assemblies:** Assemblies play an important role in promoting the social identity of a school and emphasising and reinforcing the academic focus of the specific school (Pollard 2014:153). The time spent on non-academic matters during assemblies should be evaluated continuously to ensure that the promoting of social identity also implies promoting the optimal use of instruction time (Van Zyl 2013:155).
- **Lack of preparation for lessons:** Purposeful classroom teaching is an important factor that contributes to successful learning and the overall effectiveness of a school (Panigrahi 2012:18). Effective instructional leadership fulfils an important role in ensuring effective teaching and learning through classroom observation, supervision and promoting the professional development of teachers. Teachers need to receive on-going supervision to ensure increased professionalism engendering enhanced lesson preparation and engaged instruction during lesson time (McDaniel, Yarbrough & Ruma 2014:37).
- **Class rotation and learner and teacher tardiness:** Class rotation causes a loss of valuable minutes owing to the continual tardiness of learners. The lost minutes add up to several school days in a school year (Fitzsimons 2011:40). Teacher tardiness to return to their classes after break exacerbates instruction time lost (Eugene 1997:31).
- **Teachers' overload with general administrative responsibilities:** Teachers spend almost the same amount of time completing general administrative responsibilities and fulfilling other supportive roles as they spend on actively teaching learners (Vannest, Soares, Harrison, Brown & Parker 2010:86). Streamlining the extra activities and responsibilities that prevent teachers from focusing primarily on their teaching responsibilities contributes to improved teaching and learning. While arranging for increased instruction time by streamlining additional responsibilities, this leads to

teacher motivation and a decrease in teacher attrition as teachers are able to meet deadlines and cover the required subject curriculum under less pressure (Vannest *et al.* 2010:90).

- **Non-academic responsibilities of senior staff:** Apart from administrative duties, there are several non-teaching activities that senior teachers fulfil on a daily basis absorbing their time for teaching (Pollard 2014:152). These activities of a non-academic nature in which many teachers, but especially senior teachers, are involved on a daily basis relate to matter such as the head of the grade following-up on disciplinary issues on an almost daily basis impacting negatively on valuable teaching time (Enomoto & Conley 2008:284; Pollard 2014:152).
- **Participation in the extracurricular programme:** Participation in the school's extracurricular programme equips learners with skill gain with prolonged effect and the ability to deal with challenges such as completing homework effectively (Scholastic News 2012:3). Participation in extra-curricular activities, therefore, influences academic performance positively. However, offering extracurricular activities has an influence on the optimal time available for instruction.

In order to use available instruction time optimally, active teaching and learning must realise in the time available for that (Jez & Wassmer 2013:23). This implies the fostering of respect for instruction time and the countering of all possible timewasters. The school principal as executive school leader demonstrates respect for instruction time by encouraging teachers to use all possible teaching and learning time meaningfully. This encouragement is achieved through the monitoring of lesson plans and teachers' progress with the facilitation of the curriculum (Botha *et al.* 2013:199). Facilitating curriculum content is dependent on the time available for the teaching of that content (Department of Basic Education 2011:9). Effective school performance is therefore contingent on arranging optimal instruction time and the active teaching and learning of essential subject content in the designated time for instruction.

1.2.4 Aspects relevant to the time available for instruction

The more extensive the number of subjects to choose from, the more complex it is to arrange for the appropriate number of hours of teaching time available for each subject (Fitzsimons 2011:41). For example, by removing only one optional course from the timetable, the amount of available lesson time spent in a New York school increased from 45 minutes to one hour in an eight-lesson day (Fitzsimons 2011:41). Keeping the menu of subject options limited is a valuable principle. In South Africa, education at secondary school level is bound to a minimum of six subjects, namely the home language, a first additional language, mathematics and three other subjects of choice (Department of Basic Education 2011:9). Owing to the compulsory number of subjects prescribed by the Department of Education, no changes are possible to the minimum number of subjects that a learner must be enrolled for.

With regard to the time available for teaching and learning, Panigrahi (2012:16) determines twelve factors that contribute to the effective use of instruction time. A first factor relates to purposeful instructional leadership by the school principal and the Heads of Department of the different subjects. The role of the subject head is a second factor to consider with regard to effective school functioning. The role of individual teachers and their contribution towards effective schooling are of the utmost importance. Working together in cohesion and ensuring structured and planned lessons are crucial for positive end-results. With structured lessons, learners are challenged intellectually with prompts that consider learners' limited ability to focus for lengthy periods of time (Panigrahi 2012:18). These prompts are enhanced by clear communication between teachers and learners. Panigrahi (2012) states that effective record keeping is an important factor contributing to the effectiveness of schooling. A valuable external factor for school effectiveness is parent involvement fostering a positive school climate to encourage constructive teaching and learning.

The principle of sufficient time to sleep and rest each day relates to effective time management, which is an essential life skill to master. Within the South African school context, the average starting time for schools varies from 7h30 to 8h00 in order to accommodate the prescribed number of school subjects sufficiently. A factor having an impact on effective time management is the fact that many South African schools

do not have the necessary basic facilities to offer an extracurricular programme after school. As arrangements include the transporting of learners to and from hired facilities, there is less time available for the practising of extracurricular activities and for additional learning support after formal school hours (Van der Merwe 2014:202). However, for the sake of a wholesome discipline of sustainability, a balance between desired academic goals and the exposure of learners to a variety of extracurricular activities contribute to developing learners holistically (Nirvi 2012:1).

In relation to the endeavours of schools to arrange for sufficient time for rest, the number of hours that learners sleep during the week is primarily the responsibility of parents and learners themselves. While schools are responsible to utilise the time available for teaching and learning as effectively as possible, learners need to be empowered to manage their personal time constructively. A sufficient period of school holidays fosters better concentration and behaviour in the classroom, which leads to improved learning (Principal 2010:8). The importance of developing learners holistically and ensuring their overall wellbeing results in a loss of possible hours for instruction time, as time needs to be provided for sufficient rest from curricular demands fostering a balanced lifestyle. The loss in instruction time owing to necessary school holidays is considered an investment in learning as a period of rest during the school holidays increases the quality of instruction time in that learners have a higher concentration span after a period of sufficient rest (Principal 2010:8).

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR STUDY

According to Van der Berg and Spaul (2011:3), the state of education and academic performance in South Africa is of serious concern. One of the reasons for concern is the poor performance of South African learners in international assessments on literacy and mathematics competency. According to the 2015 World Economic Forum (WEF) report on global competitiveness, for example, South Africa is in the 138th position out of a total of 140 countries with regard to its learners' mathematics and science competencies (Areff 2015(b):1). This WEF ranking is indicative of an education system that needs improvement on several aspects of which using available instruction time optimally is an important aspect to improve learner performance.

Acknowledging the lack of didactical resources due to financial constraint as one of the reasons for poor learner performance, the optimal use of available instruction time can effectively serve as countering strategy (Machika & Johnson 2014:1). The focus of this study is, therefore, on desired changes in a school's daily schedule to prompt improved learner performance irrespective of limited financial and didactical resources. Effective instructional leadership serves as key factor to manage available instruction time optimally (Botha *et al.* 2013:197). Constantly reflecting on the school's daily schedule in pursuit of the optimal use of available time for teaching and learning causes increased effectiveness engendering improved learner performance (Botha *et al.* 2013:145-146).

As a secondary school science and mathematics teacher, I am constantly confronted with the pressure of completing the required subject curriculum within the limited period of time available for teaching and learning. The ineffective use of available teaching time exacerbates the pressure of covering the curriculum. After several conversations with the Deputy Head Academics at my school, I realised the reality of limited instruction time encountered at secondary schools.

The academic performance of schools is the measuring instrument of their success. Schools, like business organisations, are concerned with the quality of their product. Instead of profitability, the concern of schools is education and the achievement of educational goals (Van Zyl 2013:143). The primary objective of a school is, therefore, the academic development and performance of its learners brought about by effective teaching which engenders successful learning. The motivation for this study was to identify situations and activities within the daily schedule of a school that cause a loss of instruction time and the provision of guidelines and strategies to limit these situations and activities in order to improve learner performance.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Schools are faced with the dilemma of a continuously extended curriculum which causes an increase in subject content and no increase in the time available for the teaching and learning of that content (Macfarlane 2005:1). The result is increased pressure on teachers to facilitate subject content adequately and pressure on learners

to perform satisfactorily. With the academic performance of learners being the primary goal of all schools, ways need to be found to reach the goal of achieving effective teaching and learning. Extended learning time, which is contingent on extended instruction time, is one way of improving learners' academic performance (Fitzsimons 2011:1). Schools that value instruction time refrain from entertaining activities that cause a decrease in instruction time (Jez & Wassmer 2011:24). These schools take accountability for every minute of available instruction time by utilising this time for active teaching and learning endeavour. In this regard, the school principal fulfils a major role of demonstrating that instruction time is respected as time for teaching and learning (Botha *et al.* 2013:143). The main research question flowing from this problem statement is as follows:

- How can instructional leaders manage their schools' daily schedule to ensure the optimal use of instruction time?

The research problem is solved by investigating sub-categories of the main research question. The answers to the following research sub-questions assisted in answering the main research question:

- What is the role of instructional leaders in ensuring the optimal use of instruction time?
- What are the time wasting activities that inhibit the optimal use of instruction time?
- What are the strategies that instructional leaders implement in their schools' daily schedule to ensure the optimal use of instruction time?

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The primary aim of the study was to develop management strategies that limit time wasting activities, which inhibit the optimal use of instruction time. A first focus was to identify the main factors responsible for the wasting of instruction time. Secondly, unused opportunities to increase instruction time by making practical changes to school day functioning are identified. Guidelines for the constructive management of

all possible instruction time contribute to improved planning of a school's daily schedule ensuring the optimal use of available instruction time. Apart from sensitising school management to the effective utilisation of available instruction time, these guidelines increase an awareness of the salient time wasting factors jeopardising teaching and learning.

Aligned to the postulated research questions, the research aims for this study on the optimal use of instruction time are as follows:

- To determine the role of instructional leaders in ensuring the optimal use of instruction time;
- To identify the factors and unused opportunities causing a loss in instruction time; and
- To investigate the strategies implemented with daily school functioning to gain control over available instruction time and effective teaching and learning.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To facilitate this study on the optimal use of instruction time, both a literature study and an empirical investigation were employed to find answers to the postulated research questions.

1.6.1 Research paradigm and research approach

Departing from an interpretivist research paradigm, a qualitative research approach was implemented because, in line with the explanation of McMillan and Schumacher (2010:23) on qualitative research, the researcher wanted to generate a deep understanding of the phenomenon of study, namely the optimal use of instruction time for effective teaching and learning. In order to understand the optimal use of instruction time by limiting time wasting activities, the study is regarded as a phenomenological study assisted by the use of interviews as a data collection method.

With reference to the study being phenomenological in nature, the focus was on understanding school day functioning in order to develop strategies for the optimal use of instruction time within a school's daily schedule. The phenomenological nature of the study refers to considering the views and perspectives of the participants of the study. The participants included the school principals and Heads of Department of secondary schools. The experiences and points of view of the different participants were considered to provide an understanding of the phenomenon of study (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:346), namely the optimal use of instruction time for improved learner performance. Based on the aim of a deep understanding of the studied topic, all preconceived ideas were suspended.

1.6.2 Selection of sites and participants

- Research population

The population of an empirical study comprises of a group of people or entities with similar characteristics such that these characteristics distinguish them from other groups (Hittleman & Simon 2002:91). The targeted population will also have characteristics that are of interest to the researcher and that are relevant to the research study (Gall, Gall & Borg 2010:129). The research population for this study on instruction time comprised all the public secondary schools in the Northern Free State.

- Research sample

A sample that is representative of the population is selected based on maximum variation in order to obtain a wide variety of data (Gall *et al.* 2010:300). For this study, maximum variation is understood to accommodate different school conditions. Maximum variation sampling that allows for the accommodation of different situations and different perceptions (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:326) relates in this study to the collection of data from different participants with different perceptions representing different school conditions relating to differing academic results. The research sample for this study on the optimal use of instruction time consisted of six secondary schools

selected on the basis of the academic performance of the schools, as revealed by their Grade 12 results for the period 2012 to 2016.

Academic performance is considered a valid indication of the functionality of a school's daily schedule (Blair 2002:179). For that reason, and to ensure the accommodation of differing school conditions, the research sample of six schools in the Northern Free State for the period 2012 to 2016 represented two schools from three differing scenarios. Two schools were selected with Grade 12 results in the top 20%, two schools with Grade 12 results in the bottom 20% and two schools with Grade 12 results in the average range of school performance.

From the selected six schools, the school principal and two (in some instances three) Heads of Department of each school were selected to participate in the investigation. The Heads of Department were selected based on the criteria of teaching Grades 10 to 12 and having at least three years of experience as a Head of Department.

1.6.3 Data collection

As is typical of a phenomenological study accompanied by a qualitative research approach (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:346), data were collected through semi-structured individual and focus group interviews.

- **Individual interviews**

Individual interviews were conducted with the six school principals. The semi-structured nature of the interviews related to the fact that the questions asked were specific but the interviewer did not provide possible options as answers (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:206). As the data collected with individual interviews served to explain matters from the perspective of the participants (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:355), the interviews with school principals assisted in understanding the management of a school's daily functioning and the value attached to instruction time from the point of view of the executive manager of the school (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:355). A challenge with interviewing that researchers must be aware of is the difficulty to remain objective during the interpretation of data (Bohnsack, Pfaff & Weller

2010:49). The nature of the interview might change owing to the unique paradigm of the interviewee (Hatch 2002:23). This implied that the unique approach and contribution to the interview of a specific participant changed the relative interview guide by which the participant was prompted for a sharing of information.

- **Focus group interviews**

With the focus group interviews consisting of groups of participants interviewed collectively, the researcher created an environment in which the answers and opinions of interviewees stimulated one another and increased the richness of data gathered. The researcher was aware that during a focus group interview he has to be able to manage and facilitate the interview and show that he is skilled in group dynamics and interviewing. The researcher was also aware that a typical research group that covers a complex topic, such as this topic on optimal instruction time, should compose a group of not more than eight participating interviewees (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:363).

1.6.4 Data analysis

The data collected from the individual interviews with school principals were analysed based on transcribing each interview so as to represent a narrative structure of all the aspects discussed. Data from each transcribed interview were coded in search of relationships between codes so that the relationships represented themes (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:367). The same approach was applied to the analysis of data collected from the focus group interviews with Heads of Department. The answers of participants were used to illustrate important findings derived from an analysis of the collected data.

With reference to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:369-370), data obtained were analysed by discovering and developing themes that linked data meaningfully. This was done by using inductive analysis according to the following approach:

- Gather data by means of individual and focus group interviews;
- Organise data;

- Transcribe data into segments to enable visual interpretation;
- Code the segmented data;
- Describe coded data;
- Categorize coded data; and
- Identify themes from the different categories.

The specific pieces of evidence from the data were drawn together to form a general conclusion (Hatch 2002:161) which, for this study on instruction time, served as an answer to the postulated research question. The inductive analysis was a process of looking for patterns of relationships between emerging themes and categories from the data gathered (Hatch 2002:10). The data anticipated from the questionnaires included, for example, information on the flow of lessons and aspects that might have caused a loss in instruction time. An inductive analysis of the data allowed the identification of patterns and relationships pertaining to school functioning and the use of instruction time. In line with the discussions by Conrad and Serlin (2011:149), the analysed data were meaningful in terms of revealing factors that hinder the optimal use of available instruction time with these factors related to one another in their hindering effect on optimal teaching and learning. Gathered data were analysed from a specific to an analytically deductive perspective (Hatch 2002:10).

1.6.5 Trustworthiness of qualitative research

Researchers should always be aware of unobtrusive data, which should be gathered in an uninterrupted environment in order to create an accurate impression of the context and circumstances of the study (Hatch 2002:120). Hittleman and Simon (2002:113) state that the trustworthiness and reliability of instruments used in the gathering of data rely on the consistency of the results obtained. With regard to consistency and its relation to this study on instruction time, the same questions were asked in the different interviews. Trustworthiness in qualitative research is also arranged through appropriate research procedures in which researchers explain their procedures fully and verify their observations and interpretations (Hittleman & Simon 2002:150).

With reference to the suggestions by Hittleman and Simon (2002:150), the following reliability concepts were adhered to:

- The researcher's methods are detailed;
- The researcher's assumptions are clear;
- Data are collected from multiple sources;
- Data are saved for re-analysis; and
- Research questions are stated and answered with suggestions provided for further research.

1.6.6 Ethical considerations

High-quality research studies adhere to research ethics insofar as that research ethics are implemented in order to avoid research bias and any possible harm to research participants (Lauer 2006:92). The following aspects regarding ethical principles, as discussed by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:334), were applied during the course of this study on instruction time.

- **Informed consent**

The intended aim of the study and the uses of the data were explained to the participants prior to the conducting of interviews. Part of gaining informed consent was to assure participants of the confidentiality and anonymity of their inputs to the study.

- **Confidentiality and anonymity**

No personal information or details of participants and research sites were identifiable throughout the investigation or thereafter.

- **Voluntary participation**

Individuals decided for themselves whether they are prepared to participate in the study or not.

- **The right to withdraw**

Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study if they did not want to continue as participants.

1.7 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

The important concepts relating to this study on arranging for optimal instruction time are clarified next.

1.7.1 Instruction time

Instruction time refers to the time that teachers spend in engaging directly with learners to facilitate the teaching of curriculum content. During this allocated time direct learner–teacher interaction and supervision are maintained (Jones 2013:3). Instruction time represents the actual academic time available for instruction which learners spend in a classroom environment (Woolfolk 2010:420). Within the context of this study on instruction time utilised optimally, instruction time is regarded as the actual time spend on academic engagement excluding the impact of possible timewasters. The total number of hours in a general school day, subtracting the time lost from timewasters and other activities, such as school holidays, class rotation, and tardiness with reaching the next class, represents the time available for instruction.

1.7.2 Learner performance

Learner performance represents the extent to which learners have mastered the prescribed content of the curriculum. The performance of learners is measured through standardised testing or other forms of formal assessment. The measurement

of learner performance is an effective method of determining the academic standard of an institution (Feeney, Moravcik & Nolte 2015:55).

1.7.3 Timewasters

Any form of ineffective action in managing the school day which reduces the actual time available for instruction is seen as being a timewaster (Vannest *et al.* 2010:86). Within the context of this study on instruction time, timewasters include all actions and factors that cause available instruction time to be used ineffectively. These factors can be part of the daily schedule of the school, such as, for example, unplanned interruptions or a lack of effective time management by all parties involved.

1.7.4 A school's daily schedule

The daily schedule of a school represents a structured division of the available time allowed for maximum teaching and learning. A school's daily schedule represents the backbone of daily classroom functioning. A daily school schedule embodies the vehicle that allows effective teaching and learning to take place. An effectively planned and structured routine saves valuable teaching time and simplifies the task of teachers (Shalaway 2015).

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This study on the management of instruction time is organised according to the following outline.

Chapter 1: As the introduction to study, this overview chapter discussed the background and context of the study as well as the motivation for conducting the study. An understanding of the situation of secondary school education in South Africa and effective school functioning represented the basis for formulation of the research question and motivation for study.

Chapter 2: Apart from discussing the theoretical framework underlying the study, a literature review is conducted on the importance of using instruction time optimally.

This is followed by a focus on time management and the factors hindering the utilising of available instruction time. The important role of instructional leaders in fostering a respect for instruction time is also discussed.

Chapter 3: In this chapter the research design and research methodology for the empirical investigation is discussed. As an elaboration on paragraph 1.6, the research sample, the data collection techniques and procedures, and the process of data analysis are explained. The adherence to ethical considerations and an accounting for trustworthiness are addressed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4: The focal point of this chapter was to report on the research findings from the empirical investigation. In this regard data collected and interpreted are discussed.

Chapter 5: Based on an interpretation of the literature study findings and the findings from the empirical investigation, conclusions are drawn and recommendations made for the minimising of time wasting activities which have a negative influence on the optimal use of instruction time. The limitations of the study are also discussed.

1.9 CONCLUSION

Strategies to ensure that the time assigned for instruction is used optimally are crucial for the improvement of academic performance or the sustaining of good performance. The limited number of hours available for teaching and learning throughout the course of a school day, a school week, a school month and a school year must be used effectively. The salient factors causing a hindrance in the optimal use of instruction time need to be identified and managed in such a way as to ensure constructive engagement for good academic performance. It is the responsibility of the instructional leaders of a school to manage a school's daily schedule to ensure the optimal use of instruction time.

CHAPTER TWO

A LITERATURE STUDY ON THE USE OF INSTRUCTION TIME AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Academic performance is the measuring instrument of the success of a school. In current times there is a growing tendency to measure the academic success of a school and compare this academic achievement to those of other schools. This comparison is done through the evaluation of a school's final examination results as well as comparing these results to those of previous years and to the results of other schools (Hameiri, Nir & Inbar 2014:51). The main goal of education is, and has always been, to focus on teaching and learning, as well as finding different methods to improve the academic performance of learners. The academic performance of learners, therefore, determines the level of success or failure of a school (Balyer 2014:25).

With an increase on the emphasis of learner performance, teaching and learning as the core activity of a school has become increasingly prominent. Instructional leaders ensure that the primary focus of a school is effective teaching and learning for the sake of acceptable learner performance. All other activities that a school might offer are secondary to the academic engagement of its learners (Bush 2013:6). This also applies to education in South Africa where it is relevant that the satisfactory academic performance of learners is preceded by establishing and sustaining a sound culture of teaching and learning. A constantly renewed culture that focuses on teaching and learning is the first step to ensuring improved academic performance (Bush 2013:16).

Several variables influence the academic performance of learners. One of the key variables discussed as the focus of this study is the importance of the optimal amount of instruction time available for teaching and learning on a daily basis. Considering that learning is a natural process demanding time, the amount of available instruction time is a reliable predictor of the performance of learners, as instruction time is directly proportional to the academic performance of learners. Managing the daily schedule of

the school day as effectively as possible is a powerful tool that results in an increase in the available amount of instruction time (Abadzi 2007:17).

2.2 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Owing to the ever-changing responsibilities of a school principal as the instructional leader of a school, there are many definitions for instructional leadership. From a discussion of the responsibilities and expectations of the school principal as instructional leader a better understanding of the task description of the instructional leader is obtained (Haggard 2008:28). There are different layers of instructional leadership that do not apply only to the school principal and Heads of Department but also to teachers as the instructional managers of their own classrooms. With more role players fulfilling instructional leadership duties in different contexts, there is an increase in the collective knowledge and skills to facilitate changes in a school's system (Wasil 2016:2). With an increase in staff expertise available by including more staff members in the planning processes of the instructional programme, a school experiences positive change in the development of a culture of effective teaching and learning (Wasil 2016:2). In collaboration with the expertise of all staff members, the instructional leaders develop a culture of effective teaching and learning that ensures that the instruction that takes place in a school are of good quality (Botha 2013:195). Learner achievements are improved through the maintenance of effective organisational operations and strategies by all staff contributing to the academic success of a school (Kaster 2010:19). These organisational operations and strategies for optimising instruction time are discussed in paragraph 2.8.

One of the most important roles of a school's instructional leader is to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Bush 2013:7). Bush (2013:6) states that a school principal, as the instructional leader of a school, is responsible for managing teaching and learning effectively for this will promote the highest possible standard of learner performance. Instructional leadership is the tool that school principals use to have an indirect impact on the classroom, thus enabling school principals to affect the quality of teaching and learning (Bush 2013:6). Improving the quality of teaching and learning is a shared responsibility among the school principal, the Heads of Department and teachers. Each of these role players contributes independently and collectively to a

culture of quality teaching. Teachers manage the curriculum in the classrooms, the Heads of Department ensure teaching quality across their learning areas, and school principals fulfil a whole-school role (Bush 2013:14). The influence on the academic performance of learners is positive when instructional leaders are directly involved in the oversight and the processes of planning or participation in the instructional programme. When all role players understand their responsibilities completely, they contribute to the overall quality of teaching and learning (Bush 2013:6). The closer the instructional leaders are involved in the core business of teaching and learning, the better the quality of teaching and learning (Bush 2013:6). Effective instructional leadership results in positive changes in the instructional programme, which ultimately influences the quality of teaching and learning constructively. The effective management of the instructional programme by instructional leaders inevitably results in the optimal use of instruction time (Bush 2013:18). The instructional leadership theory by Bush (2013) further elaborates on different methods to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Three methods on how conditions for quality teaching and learning are created relate to instructional leadership intervention, teacher collaboration, and using staff as enforcers of strategies for effective teaching and learning. These three methods, as determined by Bush (2013), serve as the theoretical framework for this study and are discussed next.

2.2.1 Instructional leadership intervention

On the list of factors that influence learner achievement, only direct instruction is considered more important than instructional leadership (Bush 2013:6). The influence of the instructional leader affects the academic performance of learners positively or negatively, depending on the way in which this influence is utilised (Reagan 2015:42). A school principal who values the success of each learner's academic performance as a priority plays an active role in the instructional programme and conveys a positive influence on the academic performance of learners (Kaster 2010:19).

School principals who fulfil a positive instructional leadership role act in three ways. Firstly, they provide the necessary resources for teaching and learning (Botha 2013:195). The instructional capacity of the school provides quantitative information, which is necessary for the effective provision of the required resources (Jita & Mokhele

2008:271). The purchasing of textbooks, educational material and equipment for teaching is an important part of the financial management of a school (Botha 2013:212). Successful schools provide the required resources to satisfy the needs of the school. These schools also utilise available resources effectively (Botha 2013:216). Schools that make use of a wide variety of resources for teaching and learning are more successful in improving the quality of teaching and learning (Jita & Mokhele 2008:253). A systematic analysis and description of the school's requirements regarding resources allows for a more effective management of the provision of resources. Within the South African context, instructional leaders have opportunities to make use of a centralised provision of resources where several schools in an area order the required resources through the district's Department of Education. This strategy prevents the uneven provision of resources in a district in that an average of fifteen schools order resources simultaneously with each individual school remaining responsible to distribute the resources amongst its learners in a viable manner (Jita & Mokhele 2008:271). The interaction with content through the different resources across subject areas contributes to a more holistic collaborative teaching experience and contributes to the overall success of the teaching and learning process (Jita & Mokhele 2008:271).

Creating a positive and supportive culture of teaching and learning is the second action of school principals fulfilling a positive instructional leadership role. In this endeavour, school principals are assisted by their staff to contribute to creating a healthy and sound culture of teaching and learning (Haggard 2008:31). Zengele (2013:33) provides different strategies for the realising of this goal of collaborative achievement. When teachers discuss work-related matters with fellow teachers, it provides opportunities for advice, guidance and support amongst staff. The experience, knowledge and skills that teachers obtain from workshops are shared with fellow teachers. A further strategy for collaborative achievement relates to experienced teachers being involved in the teaching processes of fellow, less-experienced teachers to provide constructive feedback on lesson plans and lesson execution, ensuring continual professional development. One of the strategies that a school principal can follow in order to create a positive and healthy culture of teaching and learning is the demonstration of a high level of focus towards educational goals through integrity, honesty and commitment (Zengele 2013:34). School principals value the wellbeing of

staff as equally important as the realising of educational goals by practising a caring and supportive attitude towards the personal affairs of staff without making them feel uncomfortable. The availability of school principals to staff for intervention in personal and school-related matters contributes to a healthy and sound culture of teaching and learning (Van Zyl 2013:145). Staff members teaching at a school with a healthy and positive teaching and learning environment have the confidence to express their opinions and give valuable input about the management of the school. During staff meetings, the school principal acknowledges the contribution of staff with appropriate body language and being sincere and warm when responding (Van Zyl 2013:147).

A third action of positive instructional leadership includes the arranging of an increase in available instruction time and finding ways to improve the facilitation of the curriculum (Wasil 2016:2). Positive partnerships amongst teachers within the same department create a healthy and positive environment at school. These partnerships, amongst other, allow for “stand-in” arrangements amongst staff if one of the teachers is absent and the other teachers in the same department fulfil the absent teacher’s duties by continuing to teach the curriculum uninterruptedly (Zengele 2013:33).

Riddile (2012:4) explains different strategies for the classroom to maximize instruction time without making any structural changes to the school’s daily schedule. The effective start of a lesson creates an atmosphere within the classroom that is conducive to learning. Engaging learners in a lesson enhances the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Learner participation creates an effective learning environment and increases the number of learners that are engaged in a lesson, leading to increased productivity for the same amount of time. Gettinger and Seibert (2002:4) emphasise that teachers should reflect continuously on the amount of time spent constructively on teaching and learning during lessons and the amount of time wasted on trivial matters. Much time is saved when learners are aware of classroom rules and regulations because clear rules and regulations guide learners to understand how teachers manage their classrooms, causing lessons to be more effective and less instruction time prone to loss (Gettinger & Seibert 2002:9). Teachers who play a central and active role in their classes manage their classrooms effectively resulting in an improved facilitation of the curriculum and an optimal use of available instruction time (Gettinger & Seibert 2002:9). Increased instruction time is then the result of

competent staff contributing to a positive and supportive school climate in which opportunities for curriculum facilitation are enhanced (Hagel 2014:35).

2.2.2 Teacher collaboration

Teacher collaboration is improved by sustaining healthy relationships amongst teachers (Botha 2013:195). Healthy working relationships are a valuable asset that contributes to the overall work effectiveness of a school. Teaching and learning are dependent on staff efficacy and collaboration (Botha 2013:195). Healthy teacher relationships develop a sense of shared purpose amongst staff. Once staff understand that they are working together towards the common goal of effective teaching and learning, they respect one another's efforts and are more supportive for the sake of a joint benefit (Kaster 2010:21). Shared decision making amongst staff develops teacher collaboration and empowers teachers to increased efficiency (Haggard 2008:13).

The school principal and Heads of Department, as the senior instructional leaders of the school, contribute towards effective teaching and learning by engaging in teaching and learning activities and providing the necessary guidance and expertise for teachers to develop professionally (Kaster 2010:19). In this regard, school principals serve as the instructors of teachers, a responsibility which they share with Heads of Department to ensure the continued professional development of staff (Wasil 2016:1; Bush 2013:8). The school principal cannot serve as the sole instructional leader for the entire school, but relies on the assistance and participation of his or her staff (Bush 2013:7).

2.2.3 Using staff as enforcers of strategies for effective teaching and learning

The school principal influences staff to positive teaching engagement by implementing effective strategies for improved teaching and learning at ground level (Hagel 2014:37). The co-operation of staff is necessary for the successful execution of these predetermined strategies. School principals influence staff towards desired teaching and learning outcomes by guiding staff and developing their autonomy and further growth in order to become independent experts in their distinct subject fields (Hagel

2014:38). The continual development of teachers is fundamental for the long-term success of a school's performance, and school principals fulfil an important role in promoting the quest for lifelong learning (Haggard 2008:31).

With teachers as the enforcers of strategies for effective teaching and learning in the classroom, instructional leaders play an important role by supervising these processes and ensuring that the level of teaching and learning is aligned to acceptable standards. This is achieved through the supervision of lessons by either the school principal or Heads of Department, followed by frequent feedback (Botha 2013:195). Compared to the school principal, the Heads of Department as subject specialists play a more direct role during supervision and feedback. Experienced teachers often have more subject knowledge and skills than the school principal in their subject area, and they therefore serve as tools for implementing instructional interventions in the classroom (Wasil 2016:2).

The role of the school principal in overseeing effective teaching and learning is irreplaceable as this role relates to utilising staff expertise and fostering positive relationships for collaboration. Promoting continuous professional development, ensuring relevant didactic resources are available and creating and maintaining a sound culture of teaching and learning results in increased instruction time to facilitate curriculum with staff acting as enforcers of strategies. The school principal is pivotal to the guidance and motivation of staff to execute desired strategies, ensuring opportunities for optimal teaching and learning achieving the common goal of improved learner performance (Reagan 2015:36).

2.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF INSTRUCTION TIME

Robinson (2015:8) explains the importance of instruction time by referring to one of the responsibilities of the school principal as the instructional leader of a school, namely to protect available instruction time. Bush (2013:5) motivates the implementation of a School Leadership qualification mandated for all new school principals aimed at enabling school principals to manage the instruction time at their schools productively by protecting available time more effectively.

In their efforts to manage instruction time, school principals focus on ensuring that the optimal amount of instruction time is available by strategically increasing the amount of instruction time with changes to the daily school schedule and ensuring that the increased and available instruction time is used effectively (Coffman 2012:29).

2.3.1 The relationship between instruction time and academic performance

The amount of instruction time available for teachers affects the number of opportunities for learners to learn which, in turn, affects the level of academic performance of learners (Vannest *et al.* 2010:86).

An increase in instruction time contributes to the performance of learners for three reasons. Firstly, increased instruction time makes provision for increased content knowledge which is fundamental to gaining a holistic understanding of a subject. Secondly, collaborative teaching-related endeavours between teachers and learners increase instruction time and act as an effective intervention for successful learning. Learners have more opportunities through these endeavours to gain different perspectives on a topic and that assists in mastering content more comprehensively. Lastly, increased instruction time provides opportunities for a better understanding of assessments and the outcomes of assessments. This allows teachers to determine certain areas that need more attention for the sake of teaching and learning improvement. Once learners are aware of the mistakes that they have made, and there is sufficient instruction time available to fix these errors, they develop further and improve academically (Targeted News Service 2007).

Curtis (2012:1) states that to accommodate the learning needs of all learners an increase in academic exposure to content must be arranged for all learners on all levels of ability and not only for learners that are academically less able. Curtis (2012:1) argues that increased instruction time enables the establishment of an extra teaching programme where learners enjoy more contact time having more opportunities to comprehend and master subject knowledge on their different levels of ability. Arranging for these types of programmes thanks to increased instruction time ensures the accommodation of all learners on all levels of ability and with different interests.

Increased instruction time enables learners to more opportunities to learn and demonstrate their attainments within subjects and determining their natural strengths and weaknesses with subject content (Beverly 2007:1). Once learners are aware of their strengths and weaknesses in a subject, they are able to prepare more effectively for assessments. This, in turn, empowers and equips learners to perform better (Beverly 2007:1). An increase in instruction time further provides more opportunities for deep learning in the sense of increased investigations into, and class discussions regarding, subject areas that learners have not mastered. These discussions contribute to the overall understanding that learners have of the subject content and develop a more holistic view and understanding of the specific topic and subject area (Baum 2013:27).

A committed effort to increase instruction time by decreasing the potential for lost instruction time introduces a positive change in the academic performance of learners (Jez & Wassmer 2013:22). A significant improvement in the achievement of learning outcomes through increased instruction time includes increased notions to communicate high expectations for learners and to promote on-going professional development for teachers by means of a constantly thoughtful use of instruction time (Cattaneo, Oggenfuss & Wolter 2016:14; Chenoweth 2007).

Instruction time is a limited and scarce resource which, when valued and effectively used, engenders the potential for increased availability (Cattaneo *et al.* 2016:2). The amount of additional instruction time becomes irrelevant when the real time for teaching and learning is not used effectively (Joyner & Molina 2012). The primary objective therefore is to maximize available instruction time before adding additional time. In this regard, Aronson, Zimmerman and Carlos (1999:7) and Cattaneo *et al.* (2016:3) emphasise that, before a daily school schedule is altered or drastically changed, instructional leaders should ensure that the current available instruction time is used constructively. Value is added to maximized real instruction time through the continual intervention of instructional leaders in the instruction programme and the effective management of the daily school schedule with the assistance of staff (Farbham and Kaplan 2005).

In line with the fact that learners who attend school more often over an extended period of time perform better than the rest, expanded instruction further improves the academic performance of all these learners (Hoxby & Murarka 2008:56). Unscheduled school closures during the school year have a negative impact on the academic performance of learners. Five lost school days can account for up to a 3% drop in the averages of learners (Marcotte 2007). Whereas an increase for time during the formal school day causes an improvement in learner performance, there is not a significant improvement in the results of learners who are exposed to increased instruction time outside of the scheduled school hours, such as with private tutoring (Hoxby & Murarka 2008:62). Based on these facts, schools are required to strategise their daily schedules for increased instruction time (Cattaneo *et al.* 2016:14) because each and every learner benefits from increased instruction time. Teachers have the opportunity to use increased instruction time to provide extra support to poor achievers, or to arrange for enrichment for high achievers (Cattaneo *et al.* 2016:15). Whether the focus is on high, average, or low achievers, increased instruction time is an effective strategy to improve learner performance (Joyner & Molina 2012).

2.3.2 The availability of instruction time

The availability of instruction time is an international concern because of continual factors that cause a loss in instruction time on a daily school-day basis. These factors pertain to aspects such as the duties of teachers of a non-teaching nature, teacher absenteeism, disrupted school days and the carrying out of assessments (Rogers, Mirra, Seltzer & Jun 2014:1). Formative and summative assessment play an important role in the monitoring of learner progress and the improvement of teaching and learning. Feedback to learners and their parents and the further monitoring of progress follow assessments which confirms that assessments have an integral role to play in the teaching and learning process despite their influence on less instruction time available for teaching and learning (Nieman 2010:79). Other factors causing a hindrance to instruction on a daily basis include a delayed start to the school day, continual interruptions or disruptions during class time and administrative routines. A combination of all of these factors intensifies the amount of instruction time lost on a daily basis (Rogers *et al.* 2014:1).

Owing to the limited availability of instruction time in the average school day, schools worldwide use different strategies in order to assist learners in mastering the required curriculum. One of these strategies relate to afterschool teaching programmes. These programmes contribute to the academic performance of learners in general. After-school programmes provide learners who are not involved in extracurricular activities with the opportunity of spending more time on their academic work (Elmoghribi 2012:1). As all learners benefit from increased instruction time, the other side of the coin is also relevant, namely that all learners are victims of lost instruction time and are negatively affected by the factors that cause a loss in instruction time. Although the top performing learners are the least affected by lost instruction time because of their ability to undertake independent learning, these learners still experience a decrease in optimal academic performance due to a lack of enrichment opportunities when instruction time is jeopardised (Ash 2009:15).

The fact that a loss of instruction time affects the neediest learners more than the others, less instruction time has the potential of widening the performance gap between affluent and socio-economically disadvantaged learners. Apart from the ability of the more affluent learners to learn independently, advantaged learners also have resources outside of school that can assist in countering the loss in education owing to a loss in instruction time (Jez & Wassmer 2013:22). After-school teaching programmes are, therefore, a valuable tool in assisting poor achieving learners (Fryer 2014:30).

Effective schools make an effort to reduce time wasting activities. These efforts include aspects such as re-assessing the length of breaks, evaluating the necessity of assemblies and reducing meetings of a non-academic nature such as learner committee meetings or sports team meetings during school time (Fryer 2014:30). By adapting effectively to their circumstances in the school's quest for an increase in instruction time, low achievers are provided with a better opportunity to improve their academic work (Fryer 2014:30; Ntombela 2014:127).

2.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF USING INSTRUCTION TIME OPTIMALLY

As was pointed out in paragraph 2.3.1, although an increase in the amount of allotted instruction time does play an important role in the performance of learners, it has to be used effectively to ensure positive effects (Jez & Wassmer 2013:4). The implication is that learners should spend the increased instruction time actively engaged in learning. The focus on effectively engaged instruction time results in a positive snowball effect that eliminates the loss of time. The more focus a school places on instruction time, and the effective use of instruction time, the less instruction time is wasted which has a positive influence on learner performance (Seid 2010:41).

Available instruction time that is maximized and used effectively is contingent on meaningful and appropriate teaching with teachers having more opportunities to finish the required curriculum in time (Cape Argus 2010:1; Coffman 2012:29). Related to covering the curriculum in time is teachers who motivate learners to stay focused throughout the school day and achieve their academic goals with thoroughness and hard work. Committed teachers and learners who are focused on academic progress use available time effectively (Cape Argus 2010:14). Bush (2013:18) emphasises that the setting of clear expectations for learners and teachers implies the effective use of instruction time in that everyone is engaged and focussed on the task at hand. Clear expectations resembles constructive classroom management and a minimum amount of time lost (Abadzi 2007:40).

2.4.1 The effect of lost instruction time

As mentioned in paragraph 2.3.2., lost instruction time negatively influences all learners, but especially those in need of extra time and support. A loss in instruction time results in higher dropout rates for learners because learners who are in need of more academic assistance for improved performance lose this opportunity with decreased instruction time (Jez & Wassmer 2013:22). Learners who are already behind in their academic development and who are, therefore, in need of extra support, either fail their subjects or drop out of school because of jeopardised instruction time (Abadzi 2007:18).

There are many factors responsible for a loss in instruction time. The following three factors are considered to be the most common ones, namely teacher absenteeism, learner tardiness and lesson time spent on matters of a non-instructional nature. Each of these three factors is discussed next.

Teacher absenteeism affects each and every learner for the whole lesson and for every lesson that the absent teacher is scheduled to teach. In this regard a 5% increase in teacher absenteeism results in a 4% to 8% decrease in the marks of learners which demands from school principals a concerted effort to reduce teacher absenteeism and the recognition of its negative influence on learner performance (Abadzi 2007:13). The loss of instruction time because of teacher absenteeism cannot be recovered through extra classes in the afternoons, because of the different extracurricular activities of learners. Teachers compensate for lost time by working harder and faster in order to catch up with other classes that have not been affected by teacher absenteeism. Notable as these efforts are, it increases pressure on teachers and learners as instruction time is used for catching up purposes and not to cover curriculum content comprehensively (Holloway 2012:2). Continuity in teaching and learning is vital to learner success. An interruption caused by teacher absenteeism influences the next period when the teacher is present again negatively in that instruction time is then used for revising work taught when the teacher was absent instead of focussing exclusively on the new content that needs to be facilitated (Holloway 2012:1).

Learner tardiness has a negative influence on the time available for academic engagement in the class. Teachers wait for the majority of the class to be present before starting with a lesson. The need for learners to be on time for their lessons, at the start of the school day and, especially, after break, is achieved through the building of healthy attendance habits that relates to a sound culture of teaching and learning (Johnson-Gross, Lyons & Griffin 2008:42; Kosakowski 1998:113). Teachers foster healthy attendance habits through the continual application of the school's behavioural policy (Hero 2017:1-2). Zeiger (2015:1) states that because learners are more attentive in the morning than later in the day, tardiness with the first lessons of the day results in a serious loss of productive instruction time. Learner tardiness requires

teachers to restructure lessons or to re-teach missed content (Zeiger 2015:1). Both of these consequences result in a loss or ineffective use of instruction time.

In general, with regard to every lesson, there is an average of three to four minutes of time spent on non-instructional matters before learners are fully engaged in teaching and learning. The time spent on matters of a non-instructional nature relates to welcoming the learners and instructing them on what lies ahead prior to proceeding with the actual teaching and learning. These actions are important, but should not infringe on engaged instruction time. The loss of three to four minutes instruction time per lesson increases the pressure on teachers and learners to cover the required curriculum in time because the minutes lost in each lesson add up to hours and eventually to days within an academic year (Fitzsimons 2011:41; Miles & Frank 2008:33).

2.4.2 The effect of additional instruction time

There are several benefits related to increased instruction time. Better engagement due to increased instruction time allows for a broader and deeper coverage of the curriculum content (Farbham 2015:1). The mastering of extended content and essential skills is improved with increased instruction time (Oxley & Baete 2012:51). With reference to the fact that lost instruction time influences all learners negatively, especially the low-achievers, an increase in instruction time is especially ideal for low-performing schools to improve the learning performance of all their learners who need extra time for more individual support (Farbham 2015:1). In this regard, Vannest *et al.* (2010:96) confirm that a continual increase in instruction time consistently achieved influences the academic performance of learners who have learning backlogs most positively. Additional instruction time allows for more dedicated time for teacher collaboration and embedded professional development that, in turn, enables teachers to strengthen and improve their instruction ability (Farbham 2015:1).

Classroom management is a determining factor for increased instruction time influencing learners' academic performance positively (McDaniel *et al.* 2014:41). Every minute of instruction time is important because, in a twelve-year schooling period, 40 minutes of extra instruction time per day results in 300 extra school days

per twelve-year-period, which is the equivalent of one and a half years of extra education (Ornstein 1990:76).

2.4.3 The optimal use of available instruction time by teachers

The relationship between engaged instruction time and academic performance is evident (Coffman 2012:29). Arranging for increased engaged instruction time is the responsibility of teachers who rely on instructional leaders to manage school day functioning in such a way that the school day is tuned in to optimal time available for teaching and learning. The collaborative relationship between teachers and instructional leaders is vital for arranging additional instruction time (Ornstein 1990:76).

Collective efficacy is the perception that the staff as a whole can plan, organize and execute actions together and this perception results in a general positive influence on learners. Collective efficacy and the positive influence of staff endeavour are associated with improved learner performance (Angelle, Nixon, Norton & Niles 2011:5). Collective teacher efficacy manifests in teachers working collaboratively with one another in order to accomplish what they are not able to achieve on their own. The joint belief of achieving desired goals through effective teaching and learning based on shared ideas and beliefs develops over a period of time (Jahnke 2010:38; O'Hara 2011:45). Teachers' collective efficacy has a positive impact on the climate of the school. With improved collective efficacy there is an increase in job satisfaction which, in turn, causes increased commitment from teachers towards teaching, improved physical and mental health and, thus, a decrease in absenteeism, resulting in increased instruction time (Armour 2012:45). Schools where there is leadership that encourages collective efficacy experience more effective instruction practices. More effective instruction practices include an improvement in the use of available instruction time (Angelle *et al.* 2011:4). Teachers with a generally higher involvement in collective efficacy demonstrate higher levels of persistence and confidence. This results in a better use of instruction time, a strong academic focus and in quality feedback on learner progress (Eells 2011:39). Teachers having less collective efficacy are discouraged by failure owing to the belief that they are not able to accomplish the desired goals and are, thus, overwhelmed by the task at hand (Eells 2011:39).

Teachers who prosper from collective efficacy are more engaged with learners during a lesson. These teachers maximize instruction time leading to increased opportunities for improved teaching and learning (White 2009:40). Schools with high levels of collective efficacy devote sufficient time for teachers to apply ideas, knowledge and skills, which they have obtained from colleagues, in their own classrooms (Dumay, Boonen & van Damme 2013:231).

An increase in instruction time must be aligned with a strategy that sustains effective application. This implies that a school's changes to the daily schedule in order to increase instruction time and the strategies implemented to use the increased time optimally need to be sustained over an extended period of time (Siamoo 2013:38). Increased instruction time provides continual extra time similar to an optional extra teaching programme after school (Curtis 2012).

A healthy and sound culture of teaching and learning that emphasises the importance of instruction time develops over months and years and relies on healthy and interactive relationships among teachers and learners in which learners are empowered to take responsibility for their own progress (Cobb 2014:14-17). Regular meetings between teachers and learners, such as grade and school assemblies, are functional in developing positive teacher-learner relationships and are conducive to increased instruction time (Cobb 2014:18). The responsibility for increased instruction time remains, however, with the school principal as the person accountable for ensuring the development of a tailor-made strategic plan to increase the specific school's instruction time permanently. There is no set plan that works for all schools, as each school is unique (Curtis 2012).

Changes to a school's daily schedule, such as shortened breaks and longer lessons, creating an increase in instruction time is contingent on a healthy culture of teaching and learning in which instruction time is used optimally to ensure eventual improved academic results (Siamoo 2013:39).

2.5 THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER ON INSTRUCTION TIME AND LEARNER PERFORMANCE

Two salient factors influence the quality of education, namely classroom practice and school leadership (Bush 2013:6). Classroom practice relates to teaching and learning in the classroom, whereas leadership pertains to the role of the school principal as executive instructional leader of the curricular programme. As explained in paragraph 2.2, instructional leadership represents all the actions by school principals to arrange for effective teaching and learning (Ntombela 2014:77; par 2.2). The school principal as an instructional leader plays an integral, yet almost invisible, role in the school and community with regard to direct teaching and learning (Carrier 2011:6).

A school principal has a direct influence on the operation and quality of instruction provided at school. This is done through motivating teachers and learners, allocating resources such as time, and developing organisational structures to improve teaching and learning (Horng, Klasik & Loeb 2010:491). With this influence on school functioning, any changes made by the school principal to the instructional programme affect the school's academic standard and the level of academic performance of all learners (Enomoto & Conley 2008:281).

The school principal as instructional leader is the driving force behind educational reform and the initiator of any form of instructional change (Dumay *et al.* 2013:225). When making changes to the instructional programme, the school principal adheres to standards and requirements set by government to change and formulate an instructional programme that fits the culture of the specific school (Gothard 2015:35). Heads of Department also act as instructional leaders by assisting the school principal with the implementation of changes. The Heads of Department are subject specialists and are responsible for the enforcement of changes in their respective subject fields as comprehensively initiated by the school principal (Ntombela 2014:97).

Owing to an increased demand for continuously improved academic standards of schools and the related improved academic performance expected from each individual learner, instructional leaders are challenged to meet their schools' benchmarks and yearly progress. Functional changes to the instructional programme

relieve the pressure on instructional leaders, staff and learners (Enomoto & Conley 2008:282). Part of these functional changes is the effort to ensure sufficient instruction time because the lack thereof is a challenge that every teacher faces on a daily basis. Any change to the daily school schedule that results in increased instruction time relieves pressure on teachers, as teachers then have more time available to cover the curriculum thoroughly.

2.5.1 The hindering effect of administrative duties on instructional leadership

With an increase in the administrative duties of school principals, they have less time available to dedicate to instructional tasks (Knechtel 2010:100). School principals spent on average only 10% of their time on instruction-related tasks with most of their time being spent on administrative matters (Hornig *et al.* 2010:518). These administration matters include tasks and responsibilities related to planning, organising, controlling and leading the school towards effective functioning. One aspect of effective functioning is sustaining a culture of effective teaching and learning (Botha 2013:200). Other responsibilities involve communication with all parties related to the school, managing reports, processing material, administering school attendance, administering school finances, maintaining physical facilities and compiling an annual school report (Van Zyl 2013:154). As the majority of these responsibilities of school principals do not relate directly to the academic engagement of learners, the amount of time and effort spent on administrative duties needs constant delegation in order for school principals to spend more time on instructionally related matters. Monitoring school attendance, for example, is delegated to the head of a grade who provides summarised feedback to the school principal (Van Zyl 2013:152); the financial committee of the school governing body manages general financial matters (Botha 2013:215). These delegations enable school principals to allocate more time to instructionally related matters for the sake of learners' improved academic performance.

School principals act as instructional leaders of their school when they focus on increasing available instruction time (Todd 2006:53). The academic performance of learners is directly related to the instructional leader's input to the instructional programme in the sense that learners perform better when school principals spend

more time on instructional tasks than when school principals focus more on administrative duties (Horng *et al.* 2010:508).

2.5.2 Instructional leadership responsibilities

Instructional leadership, as one of several leadership roles that a school principal fulfils, demands a focus on all activities pertaining to teaching and learning and the constant improvement of the quality of that teaching and learning (Bush 2013:6; Legotlo 2014:219). The responsibility of school principals for the management of the instructional programme, regardless of the administrative duties accompanying that responsibility, demands continued focus on the academic performance of learners (Ntombela 2014:78). One important aspect of the management of the instructional programme includes setting, changing and maintaining the school's daily schedule for the sake of optimal teaching and learning (Balyer 2014:25).

School principals, as instructional leaders, lead the instructional programmes of their schools with all aspects related to the instructional programme (Dumay *et al.* 2013:28; Walker 2015:40). Aspects pertaining to leading the instructional programme include supervising teaching, monitoring instruction and assessment and providing opportunities for teachers' professional development on a constant basis (Anderson 2006:45). Instructional leadership responsibilities encapsulates defining and communicating a clear school vision, creating a culture of teaching and learning, managing the daily school schedule, and monitoring staff and learner performance. These responsibilities are discussed next.

2.5.2.1 The educational vision of the school

School principals as instructional leaders define the vision of their schools in collaboration with their schools' management teams (Dumay *et al.* 2013:227). The foundation of a school's vision is academic wellbeing and growth. This is developed through the shared ideas and beliefs of its staff (McWilliams 2007:11).

An established vision is communicated to the rest of the school and the community when it is translated into a mission statement engendering constructive aims and

related objectives for successful teaching and learning. The continual communication of the educational vision of the school allows all relevant parties to become part of the shared ideals and beliefs of the school community (Dummay *et al.* 2013:227).

All parties involved in the school, namely teachers, learners and parents, pursue the school's vision through actions directed by set aims and objectives that emerge from a clearly formulated mission statement. It is the responsibility of instructional leaders and staff to align classroom practices with the vision of the school. Improved learner achievement is obtained when a school vision, which emphasises effective teaching and learning, is realised (Balyer 2014:25). School principals continually promote their school's mission by reminding staff and learners of the vision of their school relating to academic achievement and general wellbeing (Anderson 2006:54). In this regard, an important role of school principals is to ensure that their schools are active learning and growing organisations (Balyer 2014:26). School principals who are committed to their schools' vision, and who constantly communicate high expectations for learners transpiring into satisfactory academic results, ensure successful schools characterised by active learning and growth as a default phenomenon (Anderson 2006:54).

2.5.2.2 Creating a culture of effective teaching and learning

School principals constantly look for different ways to improve teaching and learning in their schools (Robinson 2015:101). This they do by creating and sustaining a sound culture of teaching and learning related to the defined vision of their schools (Shen & Cooley 2013:92). School principals also play an important role in shaping and directing their schools' culture to respect hard work, as hard work engenders academic success and personal growth (McCoy 2011:25). School principals who value development and continual change for the sake of a sound culture of teaching and learning, influence learner achievement positively (Gothard 2015:38).

A culture of effective teaching and learning is established through a set vision that focuses on academic performance by putting a high premium on optimal instruction time for improved teaching and learning (Harding 2007:36; Walker 2015:42). The role of teachers in developing a culture of effective teaching and learning is contingent on

having a shared sense of purpose in their interactions with learners. This shared sense of purpose, relating to acting always in the best interest of the learners, demands finding ways to make learning interesting while ensuring that all possible instruction time is used optimally (Harding 2007:36). This is achieved when the school's culture, which influences the behaviour of everyone involved, namely teachers, learners and parents, is focused on learning and being productive (Harding 2007:37).

2.5.2.3 Daily schedule

Part of school principals' management of the instructional programme of their schools is the management of the daily schedule of their schools. Within each day's schedule, several minutes of instruction time can either be lost or gained (Horng *et al.* 2010:504). School principals meet teaching requirements for each subject as set by the government, through a carefully developed school timetable that serves as framework and directive for the functioning of the daily schedule.

An analysis of a school's daily schedule is important to enable the school to adapt to critical changes and to serve as a lever for important change. As the beliefs and values of a school are put into practice in its everyday activities, carrying out a school's daily schedule prompts the development, or not, of a culture of teaching and learning that is focused on the optimal use of instruction time for satisfactory learner performance (Enomoto & Conley 2008:279). In this regard, school principals play an important role by allocating resources and structuring time in such a way that instruction time is respected. School principals, as the figureheads who are accountable for ensuring sufficient time for teaching and learning, decide on changes to instructional programmes and daily schedules. These changes enable the whole school to strive for improved performance (Hallinger 2011:128).

2.5.2.4 Monitoring instruction and alerting staff to timewasters

As instructional leaders, school principals and Heads of Department monitor staff (Balyer 2014:26). The monitoring of staff includes guiding them in the effective use of instruction time, managing the curriculum and making them aware of factors that can cause a loss in instruction time (Horng *et al.* 2010:495). Staff members who are aware

of timewasters are alert to managing their instruction time effectively. One way of enabling staff to manage their teaching time optimally is to provide ample opportunities for professional development for the sake of increased subject expertise and to empower those teachers who have little classroom experience (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2012:62). Continual professional development for the sake of improved teaching, based on the optimal use of instruction time, includes a process of teacher monitoring and teacher appraisal with regard to teaching and the assessment of learning arising from teaching endeavours (Angelle 2006:320).

2.5.2.5 Monitoring learner performance

Learner performance is monitored to determine progress and to provide insight into the success of the management of instructional changes. Instructional leaders, therefore, monitor the academic wellbeing of learners across all grades and subjects in order to determine the functionality of the instructional programme and to make relevant changes to the programme for improved success with teaching and learning (Todd 2006:12). The monitoring of learner progress is, however, a time-consuming process that is countered by arranging formative and summative assessment through a structured assessment timetable ensuring the monitoring of all grades and all subjects systematically (Hopkins 2006:36).

The monitoring of learner progress through formative and summative assessment ascertains success and determines possible gaps in the performance of individual learners, specific subjects and specific grades (Dreyer 2010:17). Identifying possible gaps in learning is accompanied by the fact that instructional leaders need to plan extra support and opportunities for learners to improve their academic progress. A strategic plan to counter the poor performance of learners entails approaching parents as primary educators for assistance with their children's schoolwork. It also entails intervention strategies at school, which rely on the optimal use of all possible instruction time (Van Zyl 2013:230).

2.5.2.6 Monitoring teachers' lesson preparation

A crucial factor hindering the optimal use of instruction time is teachers who are not prepared for their lessons (Coetzee, van Niekerk & Wydeman 2008:20). Without thorough preparation, actions in the classroom are haphazardly arranged and are not directed towards desired outcomes. Thorough preparation entails a written lesson plan to accompany every single lesson of every single teacher, especially the lessons of inexperienced teachers (Coetzee *et al.* 2008:28). The Heads of Department and senior teachers – senior teachers acting as instructional leaders based on their status as subject specialists with a thorough knowledge of the curriculum content - monitor lesson plans. During the process of monitoring lesson plans, the constructive feedback by Heads of Department and senior teachers serves as ideal opportunity to staff for further professional development (Feiman-Nemser 2001:1018).

2.5.2.7 Management of the curriculum and learning programmes

The Heads of Department manage the curriculum and learning programmes of their subject areas. Managing learning programmes entails activities such as considering time frames, determining learning outcomes, ensuring structured assessments, ascertaining the facilitation of core knowledge and concepts, confirming relevant themes and the integration of themes across different subject areas (Booyse & Du Plessis 2008:64). The planning and functional management of learning programmes increase the effective use of instruction time. Part of learning programme management is the input to the meaningful functioning of the school timetable that captures all curricular and extracurricular activities. A timetable that includes all the curricular and extracurricular activities allows teachers, learners and parents to understand the concept of limited time and assists in the fostering of a culture of constructive use of available time (Booyse & Du Plessis 2008:64).

Instructional leaders ensure that relevant and adequate didactic material and resources are timeously available at the start of the school year. As effective teaching and learning depend on applicable resources, Heads of Department place orders well in advance to ensure that resources arrive on time for the new academic year (Carrier

2011:7). Managing teaching resources as an on-going process is a high priority of instructional leadership (Rogers 2009:68)

2.5.3 The influence of instructional leadership on academic performance

Instructional leadership influences learner performance by implementing effective organisational processes and by supporting teachers. The implementation of organisational processes includes all structural changes that could improve the quality of teaching and learning (Ntombela 2014:79). As the quality of teaching and learning is the main focus of instructional leadership, developing a culture that acknowledges quality teaching and learning as a priority is important (Walker 2015:30). School principals as proactive instructional leaders, influence teaching and learning positively. This requires that school principals are directly involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning by participating in curriculum planning and implementation, and by arranging for continuous opportunities for the professional development of teachers (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2012:65). This active involvement allows school principals to make relevant changes to the instructional programme for the sake of improved teaching, which influences learning and learners' academic performance positively (Bush 2013:6).

The close relationship between the time spent on managing day-to-day school functioning and improved learner performance implies that the more time spent on the instructional programme the more satisfactory the achievements of learners (Hornig *et al.* 2010:509). Hallinger (2011:127) states that a school principal directly influences the academic performance of learners through the management of school processes and procedures. In this regard, instructional leadership has a positive effect on teaching and learning and the academic performance of learners by directly ensuring that relevant opportunities exist for successful teaching and learning (Dumay *et al.* 2013:242; Anderson 2006:53). The link between effective instructional leadership and successful teaching and learning is the input and collaboration from teachers because teachers are the instruments that school principals use to influence positively what happens in the classroom (Dumay *et al.* 2013:228).

The influence of a change in instructional leadership or a change to the instructional programme is perceptible only after three years of implementation because of the time needed to adapt to changes and the time needed for learners to excel in a new instruction programme (Anderson 2006:54). The improvement of academic success serves as motivation to implement changes to the instructional programme (Balyer 2014:26) which, amongst other, includes changes that are focused on arranging for increased time spent on teaching and learning.

2.6 TIMEWASTERS

Decreasing timewasters demands a concerted awareness of possible factors that waste valuable instruction time. Instructional leaders, therefore, analyse a school's day-to-day activities and the effectiveness of the instructional programme to counter any possible reduction of instruction time (Vannest *et al.* 2010:86). Matters of a non-academic nature, such as class rotation, school breaks and different committee meetings, use a considerable amount of time, which do not directly contribute to the academic success of learners (Leonard 2009:2). Such matters can cause the loss of 60 to 90 days of school per year (Ornstein 1990:74). Timewasters that influence the real time spent on teaching and learning negatively relate to teacher and learner tardiness; teacher and learner absence; events of a non-academic nature; timewasters during lesson time; responsibilities of teachers of a non-academic nature; visits during school hours; and announcements during the school day. These timewasters are discussed next.

2.6.1 Teacher and learner tardiness

Teacher and learner tardiness is understood as the late coming of teachers and learners for lessons at the start of the school day, after break and between lessons. Time lost due to tardiness is irreplaceable (Bush 2013:5). General reasons for teachers coming to class late relate to teachers losing track of time when they become engaged in a serious conversation in the corridors or when they have to attend to administrative matters such as parental phone calls (Balsey 2012).

Teachers with low self-efficacy tend to waste time either by doing the bare minimum or by continual tardiness. They lack the necessary motivation to use available instruction time efficiently (Ford 2012:15). Several factors inside the school system, such as personal motivation, administrative support, teacher morale and teaching styles and methods, affect the self-efficacy levels of teachers (Ford 2012:15). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's personal view of his or her capabilities to perform his or her duties successfully and to persevere when confronted by adversity. Mastering tasks and achieving objectives positively influences a teacher's self-efficacy levels (Ford 2012:3). Some salient factors causing low levels of self-efficacy amongst teachers are continual problems in the educational system, frequent curriculum changes and learner discipline (Ford 2012:24-25).

Instructional leaders can improve the morale of teachers and, thus, their self-efficacy levels by providing necessary support to teachers and by valuing their contribution to the instructional programme. Instructional leaders serve as guardians of instruction time and also assist with disciplinary matters. Teachers who are provided with the necessary administrative support from instructional leaders are able to manage changes and challenges inside and outside the classroom with a high degree of self-efficacy (Ford 2012:25).

Apart from a loss of instruction time, continual teacher tardiness influences the general academic culture of a school negatively because it conveys a message of disrespect for teaching and learning. Teacher tardiness is, therefore, in direct conflict with a sound culture of teaching and learning influencing the scholastic performance of learners negatively (Pilgrim 2013). Teacher tardiness of five minutes per day adds up to a loss of five school days per year (Abadzi 2007:24). Apart from disrespect for time, teacher tardiness is an indication of a lack of self-efficacy and a lack of self-respect, which affects all aspects of school functioning, and learner progress (Owens 2014:644).

A clear and strict policy on teacher tardiness and the monitoring of teacher punctuality is the responsibility of the instructional leader (Pilgrim 2013). Constantly communicating the vision of the school and explaining the importance of respecting instruction time motivates teachers to be punctual (Dummay *et al.* 2013:227). Learner

tardiness occurs when respect for time is not fostered at home or at school, exacerbated by no repercussions for late arrival at the beginning of the school day or for lessons during the course of the school day (Daniels & Sprick 2007). Late coming for lessons is the result of a lack of supervision in the corridors during rotation, which encourages learners to socialise on their way to the next lesson without keeping time in mind (Daniels & Sprick 2007). Learners are also late for class owing to being excused late from the previous class, collecting books from lockers, and not reacting promptly to the end of break, or to rotation for the next class (Estatiev 2014). In some instances, learners are late for school due to factors over which they do not have control such as transport problems and personal challenges at home (Estatiev 2014).

Learners' late coming causes a loss in instruction time resulting in their own unsatisfactory academic performance, and they negatively influence the scholastic progress of peers (Owens 2014:644). Learners coming late cause disruptions in the classroom as they make a noise when entering and moving to their seats and they cause a teacher to repeat content that has already been covered (Snyder 2011). The disruption of the classroom influences all learners present in the classroom negatively and hinders the carrying out of the lesson plan as prepared by the teacher (Zeiger 2015:1).

The countering of learner tardiness to a point of zero tolerance contributes to a sound culture of teaching and learning (Ornstein 1990:74). The school principal, as the executive instructional leader, is responsible for initiating strategies to monitor punctuality at the start of the school day and during daily class rotations, and also to see to the punctual flow of the daily school schedule (Bush 2013:15). Pilgrim (2013) suggests the subtle motivation for lesson punctuality when teachers start lessons with short quizzes contributing to the formative assessment mark for each learner. Strict rules with adverse consequences when not abiding by these rules is an effective strategy for managing chronic learner tardiness (Snyder 2011).

2.6.2 Teacher and learner absence

Conscientious school attendance by teachers and learners is crucial and any form of absenteeism influences learner performance negatively (Edwards 2014:11; Legotlo

2014:8). A common form of teacher absence relates to teachers taking advantage of sick leave to set personal appointments during the school day which increases the loss in instruction time (Coetzer 2011:86). Careful monitoring of teacher and learner absenteeism is necessary for teaching and learning well-being (Abadzi 2007:8). School principals, therefore, need to act instantly after the first signs of frequent teacher absenteeism or learners who miss more than the average number of school days per week.

2.6.3 Events of a non-academic nature

Unplanned events of a non-academic nature are inevitable in an ever-changing school environment that is shaped by uncontrollable conditions. These types of events, which they have to manage to prevent a loss of instruction time, daily affect teachers. Instructional leaders are accountable for discerning which activities are necessary to create and sustain a sound culture of teaching and learning and which activities inhibit instruction time (Vannest *et al.* 2010:86). Events of a non-academic nature that are planned but which inhibit the available amount of instruction time include events such as teacher meetings, sport team meetings, charity collections, annual inter-school competitions such as athletics, swim galas, winter sports contests and weekly sport fixtures (Finnan 2014:27). Although these events and meetings are important to school functioning, school principals, as instructional leaders, are accountable to ensure that these events, which takes place during the normal school day, are aligned to the vision and related aims and objectives of the instructional programme. Dietzman (2015:33) suggests that all forms of extracurricular activities rather take place after the normal school day programme.

2.6.4 Timewasters during lesson presentation

A significant amount of time is lost within the lesson itself. This refers to non-instructional time where learners are not actively engaged with the lesson content (Abadzi 2007:5-13). Hammond (2016) identifies activities of a non-instructional kind taking place during lessons as relating to the record keeping of marks, the handling of attendance lists, and checking the completion of homework. Learner discipline problems and matters relating to classroom administration, such as copying

worksheets, collecting outstanding assignments and managing class resources represent important timewasters. Leonard (2009:2) emphasises that as much as 23% of the time per lesson allocated for instruction is wasted on these activities of an administrative and organisational nature which demands that teachers be prepared for every lesson in order to manage these activities as effectively as possible.

Learner discipline serves as a major timewaster as teachers have to spend valuable instruction time on disciplining learners. These disciplinary problems include aspects such as sustaining general order in the classroom by addressing learner tardiness, dealing with disruptive and disrespectful behaviour, reprimanding learners who have not submitted work according to deadline dates, and recording an offence according to the disciplinary system of the school (Vannest *et al.* 2010:86). Classroom disruptions have an influence on learners' scholastic performance in the sense of hindering the optimal realisation of educational outcomes (Bush 2013:17; Shen & Cooley 2013:92).

2.6.5 Responsibilities of teachers of a non-teaching nature

Teachers spend the same amount of time completing paperwork and doing administrative duties as they spend instructing learners (Vannest *et al.* 2010:86). Communication between teachers, teachers and instructional leaders, and teachers and the school principal can be time consuming. Thorough and continual communication between all who participate in the instructional programme is essential for effective teaching and learning. Instructional leaders, therefore, have to ensure a system for the functional facilitation of up and downward communication for improved teaching and learning without hindering the optimal use of instruction time. In this regard, Enomoto and Conley (2008:284) argue for the utilisation of e-mails to convey important and urgent messages functionally.

2.6.6 Visits during school hours

Healthy teacher-parent relationships influence learner performance positively. In order to create these healthy relationships, communication between teachers and parents takes place on a regular basis according to a scheduled and organised

arrangement to prevent a loss in instruction time (Van Zyl 2013:234). Parents and other stakeholders visiting teachers cannot be scheduled during class time, but are scheduled before or after school, during free lessons or at break. Leonard (2009:2) emphasises that unplanned visits are not important enough to affect instruction time. Effective communication with parents is realised via e-mail, phone calls, memos and general newsletters to address petty matters without formally meeting with parents during school hours and, thus, hampering the optimal use of instruction time (Graham-Clay 2005:120).

2.6.7 Announcements via the intercom

Because learners, like all humans, find it difficult to multitask without compromising their standard of work, extra strain on learners is prevented by keeping any form of disruption to a minimum (Weimer 2012). Intercom announcements feature as one of the most comprehensive forms of lesson interruption because, when announcements are made, the entire school is disrupted (Leonard 2001:7). When intercom announcements take place frequently the amount of time lost adds up to several days in an academic year (Leonard 2009:2). Preferred times for intercom announcements are at the beginning of break or at the end of the school day (Leonard 2001:14). Intercom interruptions distract learners from the lesson content to focus on the announced information. After the announcements, teachers are challenged to regain learners' focus, which collectively results in the loss of valuable time for teaching and learning throughout the school (Briggs 2014).

2.6.8 Lesson time lost at the start and end of the school term

Learners are negatively influenced by a delayed commencement of teaching and learning at the beginning of a new term or new school year (Fielding & Kwon Hoo 2004:3). Timetables and class schedules are finalised before learners return for the start of the new school year allowing teaching and learning to commence immediately. The beginning of a new term should imply that staff are properly prepared for the return of learners. Sustaining a culture of effective teaching and learning throughout the year demands an optimal use of instruction time implying teaching and learning engagement from the first to the last school day without any decrease in the intensity

and zeal with regard to teaching and learning endeavours (Mathews 2014:1; Cape Argus 2010:1). This zeal with regard to teaching and learning engagement involves thorough planning and sufficient revision as key aspects for the optimal use of instruction time until the last day of the school term or school year (Mathews 2014:1; Cape Argus 2010:1).

2.6.9 Teachers not prepared for lessons

Teachers who are well-prepared for every lesson is an indispensable factor of successful teaching and learning. Ineffective lessons owing to a lack of lesson preparation influence the meaningful use of instruction time negatively and are regarded as the most serious timewaster hindering optimal progress (Legotlo 2014:7). Lesson preparation is valuable for both the teacher and learner. When teachers are prepared for lessons they facilitate the content more productively enabling learners to have a more thorough understanding of the content and a more conceptual mastering of the relevancy of specific content within the broad subject area (Rhalmi 2010). A lesson plan serves as map or guideline throughout the teaching and learning process happening in each lesson. When teachers know what they need to teach and how they need to teach it, they are able to reach their objective with more efficiency. In doing so, teachers are using time more effectively by facilitating relevant content more thoroughly without having to continue with the same work the next day. For the sake of continuity and a constant focus on using instruction time optimally, lesson plans can serve as a guideline for the following year's planning (Coetzee *et al.* 2008:28). In essence, thorough lesson plans contribute to a culture of effective teaching and successful learning (Coetzee *et al.* 2008:44).

When teachers are prepared for their lessons, there is structure in their facilitation of lesson content resulting in order and security for learners in the lesson situation. Lessons not planned leave learners frustrated and demotivated because the lesson content is not taught to the expected standard or with the required completeness to enable learners to grasp concepts sufficiently (Rhalmi 2010). When learners do not understand the work, teachers have to repeat what has been taught with unplanned repetition representing a serious waste of valuable instruction time (Coetzee *et al.* 2008:18). Teachers who are experts in their subject fields and who are prepared for

every lesson, manage order and learner focus with ease and cover expected subject content competently (Coetzee *et al.* 2008:33).

2.6.10 Sundry timewasters

Timewasters with a subtle influence on the loss of instruction time are the use of cell phones, curriculum changes and aspects related to school infrastructure maintenance. The use of cell phones during lessons by learners and teachers is a concern. The contacting of friends and family, the use of social media, or learners playing online games on their cell phones confirms a lack of focus, which naturally influences teaching and learning negatively, and results in lost instruction time. The use of a cell phone during lesson time by a teacher is considered a misconduct, which warrants disciplinary action (Nair 2014:6). The use of cell phones and other electronic devices by learners during lesson time happens because of constant stimuli offered by mobile devices (McKenzie 2010). Teachers, therefore, are increasingly challenged to sustain learner focus during lessons. Strict policies with consequences for the use of mobile devices during lesson time ensure the constructive management of the usage of mobile devices (O'Connor 2013).

When there are changes to a curriculum, teachers are responsible for mastering the changes and adapting to changed approaches in order to maintain a high standard of teaching and learning in each lesson (Carl 2010:199). Teachers are instrumental in the effective implementation of a new curriculum because learners who are dependent on teachers readily respond to teacher approaches without being aware of the changes in a curriculum. Booyse and Du Plessis. (2008:62) emphasise that learners are not bothered by what is newly introduced into a subject programme, as long as lessons are presented in a planned and interesting way by teachers.

Outside noises owing to school maintenance is an aspect that causes disruption within the surrounding classroom environment. Outside noise, resulting from cleaning, gardening and infrastructure maintenance is regarded as a relevant timewaster. Instructional leaders are responsible for ensuring that substantial maintenance activities are carried out after school hours (Leonard 2009:1-3). These activities can normally be managed to be carried out before and after school, or during school

holidays when there is no interference with the daily functioning of the instruction programme (Leonard 2009:2).

2.7 CHANGES TO THE DAILY SCHEDULE OF A SCHOOL

Schools adhere to the minimum requirements set by the National Department of Education for each subject with regard to time per week spent on the specific subject. Once schools have complied with these requirements, instructional leaders plan their schools' daily schedules and make changes to the existing schedules to meet the specific needs of their schools' learners (Enomoto & Conley 2008:279). Providing routine which allows for a continual and dynamic sequence of change in a school (Enomoto & Conley 2008:281), an effective daily school routine ensures stability as a prerequisite for effective teaching and learning contributing to acceptable learner performance. The level of stability and the order of a daily school schedule to ensure the effective facilitation of the instructional programme depends on the vigour with which the daily schedule is applied by all staff (Enomoto & Conley 2008:281).

As strategic changes to a school's daily schedule increase available instruction time, instructional leaders evaluate their schools' daily schedule on a regular basis to find ways of increasing instruction time for the sake of optimal performance (Enomoto & Conley 2008:279). To ensure success with the endeavour of increasing instruction time, the input of teachers as crucial role players is important because teachers are primarily responsible for the instruction of learners and can, therefore, meaningfully contribute to arrangements for a more effective daily schedule. In this regard, Dumay *et al.* (2013:228) emphasise that the collective reflections of teachers, combined with the managing skills of the instructional leaders, provide a perfect combination for successful changes to the school's daily schedule to arrange for increased instruction time. As structural changes to a school's daily schedule for increased instruction time influence learner performance positively, school principals are constantly alert to such changes in order to improve the academic performance of learners (Vail 2012:23). Constructive changes to a school's daily schedule might increase the amount of instruction time by at least 15 minutes per day which could result in an extra seven school days per year with school years consisting of 150 days on average (Fitzsimons 2011:41).

2.7.1 Number of lessons and lesson length

With changes to the daily schedule of a school resulting in increased instruction time, this time should be used constructively. In general, increased instruction time is used for high-stake subjects such as mathematics and physical sciences with alignment to the hours required per subject as prescribed by the National Department of Education (Oxley & Bete. 2012:50).

Longer lessons ensure that teachers complete lesson plans effectively (Raines 2010:103). Scheduling seven lessons per day, instead of eight, and scheduling subjects to be offered four out of the five school days per week, results in an increase of fifteen minutes extra instruction time per subject per week. With extended lesson time, teachers cover more work per lesson, content is covered in more depth and learners have more opportunities during lesson time to practice newly-obtained knowledge and skills (Fitzsimons 2011:40). On average, four minutes of instruction time is lost between two lessons owing to class rotation. With a decrease in the number of lessons per day, less class rotation and less learner tardiness associated with class rotation results in increased time for teaching and learning (Oxley & Baete 2012:50; Vannest *et al.* 2010:96).

2.7.2 School breaks

There is a connection between physical activity and scholastic performance, which pertains to enhanced concentration and attention and improved classroom behaviour. All of these factors contribute to improved academic performance (Efrat 2016:77). Breaks during the normal school day represent planned sessions of a non-academic nature which serve to refresh learners and prepare them physically and psychologically for the lessons that follow (Evie 2015:14). One school of thought supports the idea of more frequent, but shorter, school breaks per day, whilst others are in favour of one extended school break per day (Fortenbaugh, DeGutis, Germine, Wilmer, Grosso, Russo & Esterman 2015).

With regard to the notion of frequent breaks per day, this is motivated by the fact that few learners are able to focus for extended periods of time and, therefore, need

frequent breaks (Fortenbaugh *et al.* 2015). Class rotation allows for sufficient opportunities for learners to regain focus in order to continue working at a sustained level of efficacy (Jarrett 2013:1). An increase in the number of breaks per day results in an increase in the number of times that learners are late after break, resulting in more instruction time lost (Johnson-Gross *et al.* 2008:42).

The advantages of one extended break per day include the fact that learners have more time to engage with one another during break thus strengthening friendships and social development (Hanscom 2013). A school break of more than 20 minutes per day, which allows for the refreshment of minds on a cognitive level, also provides enough time for lunch enabling learners to be properly revitalised for the lessons that follow (Jarrett 2013:3). Arranging the school's daily schedule to include one extended break per day, provides sufficient time for physical activities and social interaction and counters tardiness with the return of learners for the first lesson after break (Tuan 2014:2).

As there is an increase in the span of focus and concentration of learners as they mature, learners are able to focus for longer periods of time needing breaks less often (Fortenbaugh *et al.* 2015). The implication is that one extended break per day is sufficient for secondary school learners which, with reference to an optimal use of instruction time, counters potential tardiness with learners returning for lessons after break (Fortenbaugh *et al.* 2015).

2.7.3 Activities of a non-lesson nature

Apart from the extracurricular programme offered after school, such as sports codes, school choir, debating society and other forms of cultural activities, there are other activities scheduled within the daily school programme. These include activities such as assemblies, different kinds of workshops for learners such as first aid courses, charity events, interschool competitions, and entertainment-related initiatives all of which contribute to the holistic development of learners (Finnan 2014:27).

As opposed to lesson instruction which entails obtaining knowledge and skills related to a specific subject area, learning of a holistic kind arising from activities of a non-

lesson nature adds to fostering focus, perseverance and positive relationships amongst learners (Finnan 2014:28-31). The daily school schedule is instrumental in providing a framework for the optimal use of instruction time where activities of a non-lesson nature are limited (Shalaway 2015). Scheduled activities of a non-lesson nature contribute positively to a culture of teaching and learning because of their input to the holistic development of learners. Instructional leaders are, however, alert to the infringement on lesson time if activities of a non-lesson nature are not managed constructively (Finnan 2014:30).

2.8 STRATEGIES FOR ENSURING OPTIMAL INSTRUCTION TIME

School success is measured by the scholastic performance of its learners (Hameiri *et al.* 2014:51; par 2.1). Schools that focus on learner achievement as the measuring instrument of success, implement different strategies to improve the academic performance of its learners (Balyer 2014:24).

The improvement of learners' academic performance is directed by different principles. Four of these principles are the following (Dumay *et al.* 2013:229; McWilliams 2007:211):

- School principals value their leadership role as instructional leaders;
- Teacher collaboration in the sense of working together and sharing ideas is important;
- Collective efficiency of all stakeholders is a high priority; and
- Learner achievement is the measuring instrument for the success of a school's instructional programme.

School principals value their role as instructional leaders by being alert to the fact that their management approaches determine the teaching and learning culture prevailing at their schools, the academic performance of their learners and the academic future of their schools (Todd 2006:34). When teachers work together a sense of shared purpose towards the development of a culture of effective teaching and learning is developed. Continual collaboration promotes staff development and a strengthening

of professional relationships resulting in a teacher corps as a unit of collaborative trust, which influences learner performance positively (Botha 2013:195).

Teacher collaboration contributes to collective efficacy knowing that peer support prevails (Jahnke 2010:42). Collective efficacy enables teachers to complete tasks successfully with the help of colleagues. Support, guidance and motivation from senior teachers enable novice teachers to increase efficiency in the classroom. In this regard, collective efficacy is a vibrant tool for continued professional development (O'Hara 2011:45).

With regard to learner achievement, a focus on time, on task and on addressing learners' behavioural problems engenders opportunities for the improvement of learners' academic performance (Vannest *et al.* 2010:87). A time on task approach is the responsibility of all subject teachers requiring complete preparedness for every lesson. This implies that administrative duties are attended to prior to the start of the lesson to ensure instruction time is used optimally for real teaching (Legotlo 2014:7). Schools where instruction time is assured by an effective daily schedule (Leonard 2009:2) and where changes to the daily school schedule result in increased time for teaching and learning, experience improved learner performance which represents an effective long term strategy (Oxley & Baete 2012:48).

The effective use of instruction time influences learner discipline in that learners' behaviour is shaped by the social context to which they are exposed. As they adapt to their environment, learners behave in an orderly manner when lessons are structured to facilitate content logically and interestingly because of thorough planning (Olver, Wehley & Reschly 2011:7). As exemplary teacher behaviour influences the behaviour of learners, staff lead by example, they set high standards in and outside the classroom, and they communicate high expectations for their learners (Anderson 2006:45). A decrease in behavioural problems encourages an increase in engagement and productivity resulting in a positive spiralling effect of improved learner performance on a whole school basis (Olver *et al.* 2011:8). For this reason teachers and learners need to "buy into" education constantly and make the most of available opportunities which implies that learners add the expected value to their education and teachers set an example to learners (Makoe & Monare 2002:3).

Strategies to arrange for the optimal use of instruction time are categorised as direct and indirect strategies and are discussed next.

2.8.1 Direct strategies

Direct strategies refer to changes in the instructional programme that cause an immediate increase in instruction time. School principals who implement these strategies are motivated by the aim of protecting instruction time at all cost (Robinson 2015:8; par 2.3). One way of protecting instruction time is to respect lesson time by keeping classroom interruptions to a minimum (Ntombela 2014:108; Leonard 2009:9; par 2.3.2; par 2.4.1). Some direct strategies to arrange for optimal instruction time include matters such as administrative duties, functional arrangements within the classroom itself, after-school instruction, teacher and learner absenteeism, intercom interruptions, infrastructure maintenance, visitors and the early dismissal of learners.

2.8.1.1 Administrative duties

In order to counter the administrative duties of teachers and school principals that take up valuable instruction time, computerising duties, such as completing the daily register of learners and recording parental contact details and learners' marks, is a productive notion (Ford 2012:139). Parental contact that is filtered through the head of a grade or the school principal (Enomoto & Conley 2008:284) demands that parents be conversant with their children's school's authoritative structures and the different channels of communication for the efficient handling of different queries, complaints and requests (Van Zyl 2013:240). These arrangements enable teachers as experts of their subject areas to spend the maximum amount of time on instructing learners, facilitating relevant content competently to ensure satisfactory learning (Vannest *et al.* 2010:92).

2.8.1.2 Functional strategies in the classroom

The management of the classroom influences learner-teacher relationships negatively or positively which, in turn, hampers or contributes to improved learner performance (Coetzee *et al.* 2008:89). Successful teaching and learning is realised on account of

the teacher's subject expertise with related well preparedness for every lesson and the prevalence of constructive disciplinary conduct, with these three factors influencing one another respectively to sustain a sound culture of teaching and learning (McDaniel *et al.* 2014:37). Lesson planning, which entails organisational tasks and administrative duties, is focused on keeping learners actively engaged for the entire lesson (Ntombela 2014:108; Oxley & Baete 2012:52).

Using instruction time optimally demands that teachers manage time, the classroom environment, learner participation and classroom administration constructively in order to identify and address timewasters competently (Coetzee *et al.* 2008; McDaniel *et al.* 2014:37). Part of competent classroom management is a constructive disciplinary system to deal with classroom disruptions and other behavioural problems that cause a loss in instruction time (Ornstein 1990:74). A policy for learner conduct explaining expected learner behaviour with accompanying rules and regulations made available to all learners and parents is the backbone for effective school functioning (Coetzee *et al.* 2008:91). Classroom rules that are in agreement with the behavioural policy of the school (Coetzee *et al.* 2008:91-100) ensure an orderly environment that is less prone to timewasters and a loss of instruction time.

2.8.1.3 Additional instruction after school

Additional instruction opportunities after school are an effective intervention strategy for learners in need of extra support to master subject content. Although these opportunities are available and valuable for all learners, they benefit learners who do not participate in extracurricular activities mostly and can, therefore, not be considered as increased instruction time for all learners (Jez & Wasserman 2013:2).

As additional after school instruction programmes influence learner performance positively, these programmes are meaningful extensions to the instructional programme provided during normal school hours (Jez & Wasserman 2013:8). Regular participation in these programmes that involves engaged teaching and learning over a long period of time influences learners' academic performance positively (Jez & Wasserman 2013:8). The golden rule for successful additional instruction after school is high standards that are determined by dedicated teachers with expert knowledge of

their subjects to facilitate the subject content in a systematic way (Jez & Wasserman 2013:9). When these structured extra classes take place on a regular basis and include meaningful feedback, the academic performance of participant learners improves (Bush 2013:18).

Peer tutoring and co-operative learning opportunities enhance the after-school instructional programme when senior high-achieving learners assist with instruction because of teachers' responsibilities with the extracurricular programme (Abadzi 2007:42; Durett 2010:8). Peer tutoring is beneficial because learners relate well to other learners and it, therefore, represents a relaxed and inspirational environment for learning. Peer tutors inspire other learners by proving that subject content can be mastered without being a specialist in the subject (Gwee 2003:1). With peer tutoring, learners develop communication skills, they improve their intrapersonal skills and their ability to work as members of the team, all which contribute to a sound culture of teaching and learning (Gwee 2003:1).

2.8.1.4 Teacher and learner absenteeism

As there is a direct relation between the school attendance of teachers and learners and the achievement of teaching and learning outcomes, policies that address absenteeism provide a constructive strategy to decrease the loss in instruction time (Bush 2013:17; Ornstein 1990:74; par 2.4.1; par 2.6.1). Accountability for continual absenteeism and repercussions for these actions are included in the policy of conduct of each school with the consequences for continual absenteeism stated in the contract for teachers (Abadzi 2007:36).

Teacher absenteeism owing to ill health is functionally managed with a relief timetable by means of which learners are accommodated in the lessons of other teachers allowing for a continuation of the instructional programme regardless of teacher absence (Mamat 2009:11). With planned absence, relief teachers guide learners as they continue with work constructively, thus preventing the loss of an entire lesson (Ntombela 2014:108).

2.8.1.5 Intercom Interruptions

Announcements are of utmost importance to inform learners of possible changes to the normal daily schedule, extracurricular information and general administrative information. Learners use the time during the registration lesson at the start of the day to attend to all administrative matters before the start of formal instruction with the first lesson of the day. Informing learners of relevant administrative matters contribute to increased efficiency during the school day, which enhances a culture of teaching and learning (Miles & Frank 2008:77). The unnecessary use of the intercom system causes lesson disruptions and are, therefore, kept to a minimum and are brief and relevant to the majority of learners (Leonard 2009:9; par 2.6.7). Announcements are made during the registration lesson, before break and at the end of the school day with all other information communicated via notice boards or pre-scheduled meetings that do not interfere with the instructional programme (Miles & Frank. 2008:144). Announcements are not made during instruction time.

2.8.1.6 Infrastructure maintenance

Maintenance of a school's infrastructure enhances teaching and learning. Delayed maintenance necessitates possible reconstruction and hinders teaching and learning (Smith 2012). Owing to noise levels, the discomfort of building material on the school premises, and possible health and safety hazards, maintenance activities take place before and after school hours with major projects scheduled during school holidays (Leonard 2008:9; par 2.6.10).

2.8.1.7 Visitors

Healthy parent-teacher relationships contribute towards improved learner performance (Van Zyl 2013:230; par 2.6.6). Clear rules and regulations, which inform parents of the procedures to be followed when visiting teachers, form part of an effective school programme (Van Zyl 2013:240). Visitors meet with teachers based on formal appointments and teachers manage their appointments so as not to interfere with their teaching schedule (Leonard 2009:5). Planning ahead decreases the loss of instruction time when parent days, as structured events of school functioning, demand

from staff to accommodate parents as visitors who partake in a school tour during school hours (Leonard 2009:9).

2.8.1.8 Early dismissals

Learners who are dismissed early disrupt a lesson resulting in lost instruction time. In general, parents make prior arrangements with the head of the grade or the school principal to confirm the early departure of their child (Leonard 2009:9). Schools, however, alert parents to the negative influence that early dismissals have on content mastering by their own child and the other learners, and they communicate to parents that appointments are scheduled strictly after school hours to minimise a loss of instruction time (Coetzee *et al.* 2008:138).

2.8.2 Indirect strategies

Indirect strategies are strategies that are implemented by management in order to create an increase in available instruction time. When implemented by the parties involved they affect matters which have a direct influence on instruction time. One example of an effective indirect strategy is to arrange the daily functioning at school in such a manner that school principals have sufficient time to function as instructional leaders. A school administration manager, such as a deputy head of operations, is usually designated to assist in general administrative duties in order to enable school principals to focus more on instructional tasks and be available to learners and teachers for instructional related problems (Seid 2010:41). Indirect strategies to ensure optimal instruction time include aspects such as classroom observation, school breaks, teacher alertness, and teacher mentoring.

2.8.2.1 Classroom observation

There is a direct link between effective monitoring and quality teaching which includes the possibility of instructional leaders visiting classrooms, observing teachers and providing feedback (Bush 2013:8). School principals who visit classes frequently are able to monitor progress with the instructional programme, the effectiveness of teachers and the kind of professional development required for staff for improved

teaching and learning (Bush 2013:8; McWilliams 2007:210). School principals who are constantly visible convey a message of concern and dedication to teaching and learning which confirms the efforts being made for a sustained culture of effective teaching and learning amongst teachers and learners (Botha 2013:204).

2.8.2.2 School breaks

As learner tardiness with regard to returning to their classes after break causes a loss of instruction time, more staff on playground duty during break encourages learners to report to their classes more promptly. With this promptness representing an extra 2,5 minutes per day within an academic year of 150 school days, this results in 1,5 extra school days per year (Shah 2012:1). With staff constructively involved in break duty and a clear message of respect for teaching and learning time, a culture of dedicated teaching and learning is maintained to serve as a functional indirect strategy arranging for optimal instruction time (Harding 2007).

2.8.2.3 Teacher alertness

An irrefutable factor essential to the optimal use of instruction time is teachers who arrive for school on time and who promptly report to their classes after break (Abadzi 2007:40). A functional programme to monitor these actions of teachers include the arrangement of staff gatherings in the staff room for short, but compulsory meetings before the start of the school day. These meetings serve to determine possible teacher absentees, arrange for countering strategies to ensure learners are accommodated in other classes, and generally to tune staff in for the school day ahead (Zengele 2013:34).

For daily school functioning to progress well, teachers communicate their absence in advance to the relevant Heads of Department and the school principal, which allows the scheduling of substitution teachers to counter the loss of instruction time owing to teachers being absent. Well-developed lesson plans enable effective teaching by substitute teachers to maintain a culture of effective teaching and learning (Steyn & Van Niekerk 2012:263-265).

2.8.2.4 Teacher mentoring

In relation to the importance of being a teacher with expert subject knowledge being well-prepared for each lesson, this quality is improved by mentoring and coaching teachers on the productive use of instruction time (Abadzi 2007:40). Teachers who are able to manage available instruction time effectively provide their learners with the best opportunities for scholastic progress while simultaneously empowering learners with time management skills and respect for time (McLeod, Fisher & Hoover 2003:25).

Teacher mentoring is closely related to the functioning of a professional learning community where teachers are mentored and coached by senior teachers with the continual development of teachers resulting in an increased standard of teaching (Parady 2013:35). Heads of Department responsible for the well-functioning of their departments make use of continual teacher mentoring to ensure that subject-related matters are intact in their departments (Todd 2006:40). This is supplemented by opportunities for professional development to improve teaching and learning (Knechtel 2010:19).

2.9 CONCLUSION

The school principal as instructional leader is a critical role player in ensuring the optimal use of instruction time and the increase of instruction time through strategic interventions in order to improve learner performance. The quality of teaching and learning is improved by providing necessary resources for teachers and learners and by creating a sound culture of teaching and learning. A positive culture of teaching and learning relies on teacher collaboration to contribute to the continuous professional development of all staff in order to facilitate content expertly as a measure of using available instruction time optimally. Increased instruction time results in an increase in content-area knowledge for all learners because of more opportunities available for revision and enrichment purposes.

The school principal as executive instructional leader plays a pivotal role in ensuring the optimal use of instruction time through countering endeavours to ensure instruction time is not lost because of timewasters and through intervention strategies to ensure

that all available instruction time is spent constructively. Salient timewasters pertain especially to teacher unpreparedness for every lesson, and teacher and learner tardiness and absenteeism. Intervention strategies to arrange for the optimal use of available instruction time includes continuous encouragement to staff to be prepared for every lesson, strategic changes to the daily school schedule to counter tardiness and to utilise optimal focus, and the delegation of administrative duties to enable increased time for teaching and learning.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated in paragraph 1.4, the main research question for the study pertains to how instructional leaders manage their schools' daily schedule to ensure the optimal use of instruction time.

The three sub-research questions that were formulated in paragraph 1.4, of which the answers contributed to an answering of the main research question, are repeated again as pertaining to the following:

- What is the role of instructional leaders in ensuring the optimal use of instruction time?
- What are the time wasting activities that inhibit the optimal use of instruction time?
- What are the strategies that instructional leaders implement to ensure the optimal use of instruction time?

For an understanding of the research problem, a literature study was conducted in Chapter 2, which provided information on the loss and optimal use of instruction time in secondary schools. Instructional leadership served as the theoretical framework for the study (par 2.2). The availability and optimal use of instruction time (par 2.3 & 2.4) and the role and influence of instructional leaders on instruction time and the academic performance of learners (par 2.5) were elicited with potential timewasters (par 2.6) and strategies to counter the loss of instruction time (par 2.8).

Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology and research design for the empirical investigation. In this regard, the research aims and objectives, the research paradigm and approach, the selection of sites and participants, the collection and analysis of data, and the trustworthiness and ethical considerations with data collection and interpretation are discussed next.

3.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of the study was to develop management strategies to minimise time wasting activities and optimise the use of instruction time. In order to develop these management strategies, the researcher first had to identify the factors that are responsible for the loss of instruction time. After identifying the specific timewasters, the researcher further identified missed opportunities during the school day to increase instruction time.

In the pursuit of increasing instruction time to improve learner performance, and in accordance with the research questions, the following research aims were derived (par 1.5):

- To determine the role of instructional leaders in ensuring the optimal use of instruction time;
- To identify the factors and unused opportunities causing a loss in instruction time; and
- To investigate possible changes to the daily school schedule to gain more control over available instruction time.

The role players during the investigation were the different instructional leaders of a school. The school principal, Heads of Department and subject teachers are all regarded as instructional leaders to some degree. With this study, the school principal was considered as the primary instructional leader with the Heads of Department fulfilling the role of instructional leader on ground level and also representing the school's subject teachers.

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM AND RESEARCH APPROACH

One of the most important processes in research is the selection of an appropriate research design and then adapting it to suit the context of the study (Brooks & Normore 2015:800). The selected research design is qualitative departing from an interpretivist

research paradigm. The study is regarded as a phenomenological study (par 1.6.1) whereby individual and focus group interviews are the techniques used to collect data.

3.3.1 Qualitative research approach

Qualitative research seeks to understand a given phenomenon or research problem from the perspective of the relevant population. An understanding is obtained through the collecting of specific information about the population's values, opinions, behaviours and social contexts (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey 2005:1; Wu, Thompson, Aroian, McQuaid & Deatrck 2016:494).

Qualitative research provided the opportunity to unravel complex webs of contexts and the experiences and perspectives of participants (Brooks & Normore 2015:798; Nieuwenhuis 2000:422; Rosenthal 2016:509) in order to understand the loss of instruction time, what the different timewasters are, and how instruction time can be redeemed. Qualitative research conducted in educational leadership provided insight into school functioning as the optimal use of instruction time. This was investigated as pertaining to the inputs of instructional leadership and the collaboration of all role players, namely the school principal, Heads of Department, teachers, learners and parents.

Qualitative research in education seeks not only to answer questions such as 'does it work?', but also to find ways to understand how, why and for whom the phenomena work. These questions cannot be answered through quantitative research as there are perceptions and experiences of people involved (Tai & Ajjawi 2016:175). Qualitative research allows the researcher to record, understand and describe topics and themes (Ummel & Achille 2016:813; Wu *et al.* 2016:493), which with this study related to the instructional leadership of a school and the loss of instruction time. Qualitative research allowed for the development of intervention strategies to ensure optimal teaching and learning owing to an in-depth understanding of the themes relevant to a loss of instruction time.

Wu *et al.* (2016:494) state that qualitative research presents the views and perspectives of participants, identifies important contextual conditions, discovers new

insights in existing behaviour and acknowledges the contribution of multiple perspectives. Because of these qualities, qualitative research was selected as the research design for the empirical investigation on instruction time.

3.3.2 Interpretivist research paradigm

The interpretivist research paradigm finds its origin in sociology and relates to an understanding of a phenomenon while maintaining researcher objectivity (Humphrey 2013:7). It is increasing in popularity with studies that are small in scale, but sound in information and quality (Humphrey 2013:9). The interpretivist paradigm suited this study as a small sample of schools and sample of interviewees contributed to information-rich data.

Through an interpretivist research paradigm the researcher was able to view the research problem through the eyes of participants (school principals and Heads of Department) to interpret and construct data as research findings based on the experiences of participants (Trao & Quang 2015:24). The interpretivist research paradigm allowed the researcher to include multiple versions of the truth from the participants. Multiple versions of the truth allowed for understanding and interpretations that are more accurate (Trao & Quang. 2015:25), relating to themes underlying the loss of instruction time with normal school day functioning. Objectivity as a requirement for an interpretivistic research approach where the researcher distances his opinions from the data collected (Humphrey 2013:7), implied that the researcher maintained a high level of objectivity with his conducting of interviews and interpretation of collected data.

3.3.3 Phenomenological study

A phenomenological study focuses on explaining how individuals interpret and understand their current situations (Tai & Ajjawi 2016:177). Using phenomenology, the researcher was able to understand the daily functioning of the different schools and how the different participants, in their own way, attempted to optimise instruction time. Through phenomenology the researcher developed a real life understanding of the studied phenomenon by relying on first person accounts (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg

& McKibbin 2015:1773), as this first person accounts pertained to the challenges schools are facing regarding a loss of instruction time.

There are several different data collection methods available to ensure first person accounts, such as individual interviews, focus group interviews, surveys, and observations (Tai & Ajjawi 2016:177). Individual and focus group interviews were used to collect data for this study on instruction time. The motivation for the use of these methods is discussed in paragraph 3.5. Phenomenology, which does not require multiple interviews (Gentles *et al.* 2015:1783), was consistent with the sample size arranged for this study.

Individual interviews were ideal for collecting data on the different perspectives and experiences of the school principals. The nature of individual interviews allows sensitive topics to be investigated and discussed in-depth (Tai & Ajjawi 2016:177), which, with this study, provided for rich data and contributed to an understanding of the experiences of participants on the optimal use of instruction time. Focus group interviews are effective in generating an understanding of the phenomenon of study, which, according to Tai and Ajjawi (2016:177), provides the researcher with different topics and themes to shed light on the topic of study, which, in this case, related to instruction time losses and gains. Heads of Department were interviewed through focus group interviewing to share experiences on instruction time management based on a checks and balances approach of similar experiences. The data they provided explained a loss of instruction time with countering interventions from the perspective of a teacher and an instructional leader.

In line with Fujiura (2015:324) on a careful rendering of different perspectives, subjective experiences, rich contextual detail and personal meanings, leading to the construction of new knowledge, individual and focus group interviewing contributed to a deeper understanding of timewasters and countering strategies to ensure satisfactory learner performance.

3.4 SELECTION OF SITES AND PARTICIPANTS

As mentioned in paragraph 1.6.2, the research population consisted of all the public secondary schools in the Northern Free State. The research sites represented six schools that were selected based on their matric results for the period 2012 to 2016. Based on statistical analyses of the matric results of secondary schools in the Northern Free State for the period 2012 to 2016, two schools that performed in the top 20%, two schools that performed in the bottom 20% and two schools with an average performance history were selected as research sites. Apart from schools been selected with reference to statistical analyses, schools that were selected as research sites were conveniently accessible to the researcher with adherence to the indicators for high, average and low performing schools. School principals and Heads of Department act as primary instructional leaders at their schools. They were, therefore, considered information-rich participants.

3.4.1 Site selection and sampling

Sampling refers to the selection of individuals, units or settings to be studied (Gall *et al.* 2010:300). In the context of this study the research sites were six secondary schools in the Northern Free State selected on the basis of being high, average, and low performing schools. From these six research sites information-rich participants were selected by means of maximum variation and purposive sampling.

3.4.1.1 Maximum variation sampling

Maximum variation sampling is sampling that is based on a wide range of characteristics. During maximum variation sampling a diverse group of participants are considered. This allowed the researcher to obtain maximum differences of perceptions explaining the loss of instruction time. The purpose was to identify themes that are shared across a diverse sample whilst providing the opportunity to document these observations (Tai & Ajjawi 2016:178.). By including schools from different levels of academic performance the researcher made use of maximum variation sampling to collect data that is diverse and information-rich for a deep understanding of instruction time losses and gains.

3.4.1.2 Purposeful sampling

Based on the fact that in qualitative research sampling methods should be purposeful (Wu *et al.* 2016:498), participants for this study are the primary instructional leaders at their schools. Participants that are purposefully selected provides the researcher with a detailed as well as a holistic view on aspects of the studied phenomenon (Tai & Ajjawi 2016:177; Opong 2013:203; Polkinghorne 2005:140). School principals and Heads of Department were positioned purposefully to share their experiences regarding the loss of instruction time and measures to arrange for optimal instruction time.

The school principal and two or three Heads of Department of each selected school acted as participants for this study. Only Heads of Department teaching Grade 10 to 12 learners with at least three years of experience as Head of Department qualified as participants. As the Grade 12 results of the different schools served as criteria for school selection, only Heads of Department who teach Grade 10 to 12 qualified as participants. Grade 10 to 12 teachers are responsible for preparing learners for their final Grade 12 examination. These teachers experience the importance of an optimal use of available instruction time intensively. Heads of Department with at least three years of experience in this capacity understand their academic responsibilities and the value of instruction time.

3.4.2 Sample size

The researcher considers the scope of the research, the nature of the research questions, the methodology, and the sufficiency in answering the research questions to decide on the size of the research sample (Tai & Ajjawi 2016:178). The size of a research sample should be big enough to develop a complete understanding of the meaning behind the experiences and behaviours of the participants (Rosenthal 2016:511). During qualitative research, small samples often generate large volumes of data from information-rich participants (Wu *et al.* 2016:499; Rosenthal 2016:511). Too few participants, however, lead to inconclusive data while too many participants result in a waste of resources one data saturation has been reached (Gentles *et al.* 2015:1783). In line with the suggestions by Pothongsunan (2010:2) and Onwuegbuzie

and Leech (2007:242), using small numbers of participants prevented the researcher from generalising, but allowed the researcher the opportunity to explore the meaning and understandings of the participants thoroughly. The sample size for this study was ideal and provided sufficient opportunity to collect information-rich data and to understand shared themes and topics. The school principals of the six different schools and two (in some instances three) Heads of Department from each school represented a total of 21 participants for this study on instruction time (par 4.3).

3.4.3 Participant information

With permission from the Department of Education of the Free State to carry out the research, and ethics clearance from the University of South Africa, all school principals from the selected research sites were contacted via telephone, e-mail or letters requesting their participation in the research study. The school principals were requested to grant Heads of Department the opportunity to participate in the focus group interviews. The school principals and Heads of Department were interviewed on their roles as instructional leaders and their awareness of the loss of instruction time as well as possible intervention strategies to prevent a loss of instruction time.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Before the empirical study was conducted, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Education at the University of South Africa (Appendix A). The researcher also contacted and received clearance from the Department of Education of the Free State (Appendix B).

The study was conducted at six schools in the Northern Free State district. These six schools were selected based on their Grade 12 results (par 3.4.2). Individual interviews were conducted with the school principals. The aim with the individual interviews was to understand how school principals manage their schools' daily schedule to maximise the availability of instruction time. Focus group interviews were conducted with two (in some instances three) Heads of Department at each selected school with Head of Department selection based on years of experience as a Head of Department for Grade 10 to 12 learners (par 3.4.2; par 4.2). Heads of Department

provided information on factors that cause a loss of instruction time and possible solutions to counter these losses. An interview guide was referred to during the conducting of the individual and focus group interviews to ensure that all the relevant aspects were addressed. The respective interview guides comprised of essential themes regarding optimal instruction time and participant input on timewasters and intervention strategies to counter instruction time loss (Appendix E). All interviews were audio-recorded for the purpose of analysing and transcribing the raw data. Note taking during the interviews was kept to a minimum to avoid distracting the interviewees (Rosenthal 2016:512).

As qualitative research approaches are pragmatically focused on collectability and sufficiency, data collection techniques must arrange for rich data to answer the research questions sufficiently (Tai & Ajjawi 2016:178). Individual and focus group interviews were used for data collection in order to find answers to the postulated research questions for this study on instruction time.

3.5.1 Individual interviews

Individual interviews were used to collect data from the six school principals. An individual interview represents a conversation with structure and purpose between a researcher and an interviewee to elicit the perspective, opinion and knowledge of the interviewee on the research topic (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:205). Key informant interviews entail the thorough questioning of a phenomenon as experienced by the interviewee (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:206). In this study, school principals acted as key informants and were questioned on their schools daily schedule with emphasis on instruction time and learner performance. Their answers allowed the researcher to understand the contextual factors that govern decision making actions relating to optimal instruction time.

The individual interview was tailored to suit the interviewee and enabled the researcher to acquire a full understanding of the school principal's experience with teaching and learning as the primary instructional leader of the school. As explained by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:2016), the semi-structured nature of the interview provided the researcher with flexibility that enabled him to manage the collecting of

data more accurately as the researcher was not bound to fixed questions and ideas. Semi-structured interviews consist of the asking of open-ended questions, which allows the interviewee to elaborate and explain his/her, point of view clearly. Open-ended questions must be clear in their intent to guide the interviewee in the desired direction, enhancing the relevance of the collected data and clarifying the research problem (Wu *et al.* 2016:495). Open-ended questions allow for follow-up probes that are designed to obtain a comprehensive understanding should the interviewee not fully understand or answer the question. Concurring with Rosenthal (2016:511), with the use of follow-up probes with this study on instruction time, the researcher had a complete understanding of the interviewee's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge. As pointed out by Brooks (2015:800), the flexibility of semi-structured interviewing allowed for a change in the sequence of questions and whether or how particular areas were probed. Using open-ended questions allowed for developing ideas throughout the interview. This, as pointed out by Pothongsunan (2010:3), kept the interview interactive and the questions relevant to the interviewee and the topic of study.

According to Rosenthal (2016:510), there are six primary types of open-ended questions, namely experience or behaviour questions, sensory questions, opinion or value questions, knowledge questions, feeling questions and background or demographic questions. Experience or behaviour questions require from interviewees to explain how they experienced the phenomena studied and how this affected their behaviour, or how they tend to react to the phenomenon. Sensory questions allow the interviewees to explain how they perceive the phenomena. Opinion or value questions are designed to elicit the interviewee's opinion or understanding of a phenomenon and provide the researcher with insight into the interviewee's goals and intentions. Knowledge questions seek to collect factual information from the interviewee. Feeling questions allow interviewees to describe their emotions regarding the research problem. Background or demographic questions assist the researcher in developing a better understanding of the context of the phenomenon (Rosenthal 2016:510). The questions asked during the interviews with school principals and Heads of Department were primarily experience or behaviour questions and knowledge questions.

The following guidelines assisted the researcher in the compilation of the semi-structured open-ended questions to ensure that data collected were accurate and relevant to the research question (Rosenthal 2016:511):

- The questions were neutral and open-ended. Neutral questions did not put any party in a negative or positive position. Open-ended questions invited the participants to share more than just one answer.
- The questions were singular and focussed on one topic at a time. Singular questions ensure that the participant answers the question satisfactorily.
- The questions were unambiguous. Participants understood all questions as they were clear and specific.
- The questions were placed in a coherent order, which allowed the interviewee to guide the researcher through the questions.

Individual interviews are easier to manage compared to focus group interviewing. The researcher was aware that individual interviewing can be time consuming, especially if the questions do not guide the participant's answers towards the research question (Tai & Ajjawi 2016:178). With the individual interviews, the school principals were motivated to keep their answers clear and specific. School principals tended to be abstract in an attempt to ensure the anonymity of their staff. Abstraction can result in misinterpretations (Brooks 2015:801). The researcher compensated for answers that were not thorough by probing participants to add more detail to answers or to clarify abstract statements. This approach increased the clarity of data collected.

In order to ensure that the interviewees were prepared for the interviews, the interview questions were sent to all participants in advance. This provided time for the interviewees to think about their answers and contributions to the study. Ethical considerations were clearly underlined in that all interviewees were informed about the purpose of the study, the expected risks of the study, the fact that participation was voluntary and how confidentiality would be protected (par 3.8.4).

3.5.2 Focus group interviews

Two, and in some instances three, Heads of Department teaching Grades 10 to 12 and having three or more years of experience as a Head of Department were selected at each school to participate in focus group interviewing.

Focus group interviews are structurally similar to individual interviews in that they consist of open-ended questions and are also designed to capture the experiences of participants. As multiple perspectives about a specific phenomenon of interest are essential in qualitative research (Wu *et al.* 2016:494), focus groups interviews provided an opportunity for the Heads of Department that are experiencing a loss in instruction time to explain their perspective on countering endeavours.

Focus group interviewing is a distinct data collection technique in the sense that the data collected relies upon the interaction between group members who are, as a unit, responsible for formulating answers to, and finding solutions for, the researcher's questions (Rosenthal 2016:510). Valuable data can be lost if members of the group choose not to share their views and opinions on a specific matter owing to the hindrances of intimidation by the interactive group situation. For this reason, the researcher ensured that all Heads of Department were willing participants knowing in advance who the other participants are.

A focus group interview represents an organised discussion between small homogenous groups of people with a maximum of six to eight interviewees (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:363). Participants discuss a topic or question in an environment where they state their opinions, even if their opinions are in conflict with the views of other interviewees. A focus group allows for a further exploration of the research problem by recording the ideas, opinions and other possible inconsistencies of the interviewees about the research problem (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:363). All teachers are affected by the loss of instruction time, which makes the Heads of Department suitable candidates for focus group interviewing. In line with Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins and Popjoy (1998:2) on focus group dynamics, the researcher facilitated the focus group interview and managed group dynamics by asking participants to respect the answers of others and to give detailed answers when

clarifying their answers. The researcher stimulated further discussions through follow-up questions and probes. The responses of participants were audio recorded and transcribed.

There are many advantages and disadvantages of focus group interviewing that the researcher must be aware of in order to make an informative decision on the use of focus group interviewing for data collection.

The advantages of focus group interviewing relate to the following (Freitas *et al.* 1998:4; Smithson 2000:103-119):

- A focus group interview is comparatively easy to conduct. Interviewees who are actively participating in the interview allow the researcher to focus on observation for additional information.
- A focus group interview provides an opportunity to collect data from a group. Groups are always more information-rich than an individual as a group has multiple ideas and opinions, probing one another for more opinions which contributes to a broader and deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon.
- A focus group interview provides substantial information in a short period. When participants are focused on the topic at hand, it provides for a sufficient amount of information in a short period of time.
- A focus group interview allows for the further exploration of a topic. With more than one interviewee, a topic is understood and interpreted from several points of view, resulting in more thorough answers and solutions to questions.

The disadvantages of a focus group interview relate to the following (Freitas *et al.* 1998:4; Smithson 2000:103-119):

- A focus group interview does not represent a natural situation in that a collection of participants gathered at the same time for discussions facilitated

by the researcher may prevent members from actively engaging in the discussions.

- A focus group interview does not allow the researcher to have complete control over data that are generated. With the objective of the focus group interview being to capture data based on the group's interaction and answers, the researcher does not have full control on information shared. Topics and questions must therefore be thoroughly prepared to guide participants towards desired outcomes.
- A focus group interview provides data that is difficult to analyse because this data represents the inputs of several interviewees with different opinions on the same topic.
- A focus group interview requires effort to assemble entailing logistical challenges. In order to have an effective focus group interview, all interviewees have to be available at the same time.

The positive characteristics of individual and focus group interviewing confirmed these data collection methods' relevancy for this study on instruction time.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

An inductive analysis was carried out with the raw data. Specific answers and comments from the interviewees were identified and categorised as different segments. These segments, in turn, enabled the researcher to identify and generate themes within the collected data (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:367). The researcher moved beyond mere describing what happened, but developed a conceptual understanding of the data collected (Tai & Ajjawi 2016:179). As explained by Rosenthal (2016:513) and Wu *et al.* (2016:500) and briefly listed in paragraph 1.6.4, the data analysis process for this study included that the researcher read and re-read the different interview transcriptions to identify recurring ideas. Recurring ideas engendered the emergence of different themes with the most relevant and accurate themes used as the starting point for an inductive analysis.

Data analysis comprised a technique of comparing and contrasting. As suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:369), by comparing and contrasting themes, the researcher gained a holistic understanding of the data, which resulted in the formulation of flexible themes to be adapted and changed as the analysis process continued, and new data were gathered. With reference to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367-380) on audio recordings as primary aid for data collection, the researcher used field notes to supplement audio recordings. The audio data were transcribed and typed for visual review. Transcribed data were coded by identifying segments of information that contained valuable ideas and information. Each segment was labelled with a unique code. By repeating the coding process with all data collected, the researcher was able to remove duplications and test the relevance of all the codes allocated. Themes were generated from coding based on the reoccurrence of segments. A relationship between the different themes was established. These relationships emerged into main themes to represent answers to the research questions. As emphasised by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367-380) the researcher continually returned to the data to validate each newly identified theme.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Different strategies to enhance the trustworthiness of the study were used in all of the stages of the research, from the preparation phase (which entailed sampling and data collection) to the organization phase (analysis and interpretation) (Wu *et al.* 2016:494). As pointed out by Shenton (2004:69), data that are trustworthy are relevant for future studies on similar topics. This implies that strategies for the effective use of instruction time and a decrease in the loss of instruction time are relevant to secondary schools that are faced with similar problems on lost instruction time.

Rigour that refers to the researcher's efforts to understand the unspoken perceptions of participants on the studied phenomena enhances the trustworthiness of findings (Wu *et al.* 2016:494). Rigour allowed the researcher to understand the factors that cause a loss in instruction time from the perspective of school principals and Heads of Department. Rigour was achieved by being purposeful in action, making sound

decisions, and being able to express the motivation for the decisions made (Wu *et al.* 2016:499).

Criteria to ensure the trustworthiness of collected data, such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, are discussed next:

3.7.1 Credibility

During the research investigation the following was applied to ensure the credibility of the study (Shenton 2004:64):

- The researcher adopted appropriate and well-recognized research methods. Making use of a qualitative investigation for this study was accurate and relevant. The findings of the study were congruent with reality.
- Triangulation strengthened the credibility of the study. The researcher made use of two different data collection techniques, namely individual and focus group interviews. Themes that were identified with individual interviewing were compared to the themes from the focus group interviews.
- Iterative questioning during interviews provided for further credibility of the data obtained. The repetition of similar questions during the individual interviews and focus group interviews allowed the researcher to investigate the same idea and concepts from the perspectives of the school principals and Heads of Department.
- Tactics to ensure the honesty of participants were enforced. Participants could refuse to answer some questions. Data collection sessions involved participants who were willing to take part in discussions and who offered their opinions freely, resulting in honest and credible data collected.

3.7.2 Transferability

During the research investigation, the following was applied to ensure the transferability of the study (Shenton 2004:69; Barnes, Conrad, Demont-Heinrich, Graziano, Kowalski, Neufeld, Zamora & Palmquist 2012:5-9):

- A sufficient number of schools and participants were included in the sample size. Interviewing six school principals and two (or three) Heads of Department per school enhanced the transferability of research findings.
- All the participants fulfilled the role of instructional leader at their schools. As instructional leaders, participants were able to contribute purposefully to instructional leadership related matters pertaining to an optimal use of instruction time for improved learner performance.
- Individual interviews with school principals lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. Focus group interviews with Heads of Department lasted between one hour and one-and-a-half hours. The duration of the interviews provided for sufficient time to collect data and allowed the researcher to develop a thorough understanding of the experiences from the perspectives of the participants.

3.7.3 Dependability

During the research investigation, the following was applied to ensure the dependability of findings (Shenton 2004:71; Gunawan 2015:10):

- A description of the study's research methodology and research design is explained in paragraph 1.6 and Chapter 3. This allows for the study to be repeated in future which enhances the dependability of findings.
- The data collection techniques used (focus and individual interviews) consisted of overlapping methods. Both techniques are regarded as interviews where the interviewees shared their understanding of the loss of instruction time. Similarities in collected data ensured that the study is dependable as there is continuity in the collected data.

3.7.4 Confirmability

During the research investigation, the following was applied to ensure the confirmability of the study (Shenton 2004:72; Morrow 2005:252):

- A detailed methodological description enables the reader to determine to what extent the collected data and conclusions emerging from the research findings are relevant.
- The researcher ensured that all personal beliefs and assumptions were admitted. With the collection and interpretation of data the researcher focussed on the information at hand and not on his personal views on the research question.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher approached the Department of Education of the Free State province, requesting permission to conduct an investigation with six schools in the Northern Free State province. The Head of the Department of Education in the Free State province granted permission provided that the researcher adhered to the following prerequisites:

- The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process;
- A bound copy of the research document, or a CD, should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 319, 3rd Floor, Old CNA Building, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein; and
- The researcher may be approached, on completion of the research study, to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.

A list of schools was sourced from the National Education Management and Information Systems section of the Northern Free State district. From this list, the sampled schools were selected. All six selected schools were contacted to explain the research intent (Appendix C). Relevant documents were sent to each selected school explaining the purpose of the study, the ethical principles to be considered, and an explanation of the data collection instruments and participant selection. Further communication entailed the questions and topics to be discussed during the interviews and school-specific logistical arrangements with the interviews. Participants received

a consent form in advance to sign and submit to the researcher before the interviews commenced (Appendix D).

Ethical principles, such as anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation and informed consent were adhered to during the course of the investigation. These principles are discussed next:

3.8.1 Anonymity

Participants were informed that their identities will not be shared in any form of dissemination of research findings. All entities involved in the investigation were categorised under fictional identities (Halai 2006:6). The six schools were referred to as School A, B, C, D, E and F and the six school principals as SP A, SP B, and so on. The Heads of Department were referred to as HoD AA, HoD AB, HoD BA and so on (par 4.3).

3.8.2 Confidentiality

In accordance with the suggestions by Ummel and Achille (2016:807), confidentiality was considered as important ethical principle in the carrying out of the research. The guarantee of privacy provided interviewees with a sense of safety and allowed them the opportunity to share innermost ideas and opinions freely. Participants were guaranteed unconditional anonymity with the dissemination of results.

3.8.3 Voluntary participation

Concurring with the opinions of Ummel & Achille (2016:808), all participants were allowed equal opportunities to participate in the investigation. Participants may withdraw at any point in time without any required explanation or justification for their decisions and actions.

3.8.4 Informed consent

Informed consent as the mechanism used to ensure that all participants understand what is expected of them and what it means to participate in a study (Mack *et al.* 2005:9), participants decided freely to participate in the study. Informed consent ensured respect for participants during the research process. Participants were informed of the following, as specified by Mack *et al.* (2005:10) and Halai (2006:5):

- The purpose of the study;
- What was expected of participants, such as the duration of the interview;
- The expected risks and benefits from the study;
- The fact that participation was voluntary and participants were allowed to withdraw with no negative repercussions; and
- The means of protecting participant confidentiality.

Tai and Ajjawi (2016:180) emphasise that ethical issues are more likely to arise in a qualitative research study because of the personal interactions between participants and researchers and potentially unexpected findings. The researcher was transparent by providing participants with relevant information on the purpose of study and the topics to be discussed during interviewing.

3.9 CONCLUSION

The aim of the empirical investigation was to collect data in order to understand the phenomenon of limited instruction time prone to timewasters and measures to counter instruction time loss for the sake of satisfactory learner performance. In order to collect data, a qualitative research design was followed based on an interpretivist research paradigm. Six secondary schools from the Northern Free State were purposefully selected based on their results in the Grade 12 final examination for the period 2012 to 2016. The six school principals from the selected schools and Heads of Department participated in individual and focus group interviews. The trustworthiness of research findings adhered to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability criteria.

Ethical principles that were considered for sound research practises, related to anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation and informed consent.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this study on instruction time was to determine the different approaches instructional leaders use to manage a school's daily schedule to ensure the optimal use of instruction time (par 1.5). The aim of the study transpired into three research objectives, namely to understand the role of a school's instructional leaders in ensuring the optimal use of instruction time, time wasting activities that inhibit the optimal use of instruction time and the management of a school's daily schedule to ensure an optimal use of instruction time. The three research sub-questions that are aligned to these three objectives led the researcher to investigate the research problem and answer the main research question pertaining to strategies and approaches by instructional leaders to ensure the optimal use of instruction time on a daily school functioning basis (par 1.4; par 3.1). Improvements in the effective use of instruction time result in an improvement in the academic performance of learners (par 2.5).

Chapter 4 reports on the data collected from the school principals and Heads of Department participants of six sampled schools. The analysis of collected data resulted in the emergence of categories to represent answers on how instruction time is used effectively to improve the academic performance of learners.

4.2 RESEARCH METHODS

Individual interviews were conducted with the school principals of six research sites. The aim with the individual interviews was to gain a better understanding of the instructional leadership role that a school principal fulfils in ensuring the optimal use of instruction time, which contributes to learners' improved academic performances. A focus group interview was conducted with two Heads of Department at School B, D and E and three Heads of Department at School A, C and F. The aim of the focus group interviews concurred with the aim of the individual interviews, but with a focus on understanding the instructional leadership role that Heads of Department fulfil in

ensuring that instruction time is used optimally. During the interviews, the researcher was able to obtain a clearer understanding of the culture of teaching and learning prevailing at the different research sites and the different operational strategies and approaches followed to manage available instruction time effectively.

4.3 RESEARCH SITES AND PARTICIPANT PROFILES

The background information on the research sites are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Background information on research sites

	Number of learners	Number of Grade 12s in 2017	Average Grade 12 pass percentage for the period 2012 - 2016	Number of teachers	Socio-economic conditions in the catchment area	Extracurricular programme
School A	405	103	99,09%	28	Rural school	Diverse
School B	766	150	98,71%	38	Rural school	Diverse
School C	988	192	81,54%	40	Township school	Restricted
School D	373	71	88,39%	15	Rural school	Diverse
School E	1338	204	83,54%	45	Township school	Restricted
School F	692	136	94,59%	46	Rural school	Diverse

It is clear from Table 4.1 that five of the six schools that participated in the study had a total of more than 400 learners of whom more than 100 were in Grade 12. The six schools had a Grade 12 pass rate average of between 80% and 100% for the period 2012 to 2016, which represented the Grade 12 pass rate for the majority of schools in the Northern Free State for that period. The socio-economic conditions in the schools' catchment areas varied between rural schools and township schools. Extracurricular programmes at the four rural schools are diverse with a wide variety of extracurricular offerings. A restricted extracurricular programme is offered at the two township schools with the focus mainly on a learner's academic studies. In addition to the background information on the different research sites, information on the participants who participated in this study on instruction time appears in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Biographical data on participants

School	Participants	Age	Gender	Years of teaching experience in post level	Tertiary Qualifications
School A	SP A	57	Female	9 years	BA Honours B.Ed; HED.
	HoD AA	63	Female	30 years	B.Ed; HED.
	HoD AB	62	Male	26 years	HED B.Com
	HoD AC	65	Male	30 years	BA; HED. Honours Afrikaans
School B	SP B	65	Female	10 years	B.Com SED
	HoD BA	34	Female	4 years	B.Ed. (FET) Natural Science
	HoD BB	56	Female	5 years	B.Ed; HED.
School C	SP C	51	Male	8 years	B.Ed. Honours
	HoD CA	30	Male	7 years	B.Ed. (FET) EMS
	HoD CB	63	Male	15 years	STD B.A.
	HoD CC	46	Female	12 years	STD ACE B.Ed. Honours in ICT
School D	SP D	49	Male	6 years	B.Com; HED B.Ed. Honours
	HoD DA	59	Female	5 years	B.Ed; HED.
	HoD DB	31	Male	4 years	B.Ed. (FET)
School E	SP E	53	Male	6 years	B.Ed. Honours STD ACE
	HoD EA	28	Female	5 years	B.Ed. Honours
	HoD EB	37	Female	2 years	B.Sc. (Computer Science) PGCE
School F	SP F	63	Female	4 years	B.Ed; HED.
	HoD FA	46	Female	23 years	B.Sc. (Ed)
	HoD FB	56	Female	2 years	B.Ed; HED.
	HoD FC	52	Male	17 years	B.Ed; HED.

Three of the school principal participants were acting principals owing to the retirement of the previous school principals and the fact that, at the time of the interviews, a new school principal had not yet been appointed. The acting school principals were regarded as legitimate participants owing to their years of management experience prior to their positions as acting school principals, which also included their

management experience as senior subject teachers. With 230 years of collective experience in school management among all participants, the data collected were valuable. Three of the focus group interviews were conducted with two Heads of Department, while the other three focus group interviews consisted of three participants. It was clear from Table 4.2 that the majority of school management participants were well qualified, having obtained a baccalaureus degree with a related professional qualification and seven participants having obtained honours degrees. Three of the school principals were female and three were male. Of all the Heads of Department interviewed, there were six male and nine female participants. A variation between male and female participants' perspectives resulted in the collection of information rich data.

4.4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The confidentiality of participant disclosures and the authenticity of interpretations entailed that the verbatim excerpts of participants substantiating findings are distinguished by means of codes. As depicted in Table 4.2, SP A, B, C, D, E and F were used to distinguish between the school principal participants and HoD AA, AB, AC, BA, BB, CA, CB, CC, DA, DB, EA, EB, FA, FB and FC to distinguish between the Heads of Department of the selected schools.

Six categories emerged from the encoded data collected through individual and focus group interviews relating to the effective use of instruction time at secondary schools to improve the academic performance of learners. These categories include: establishing a sound culture of teaching and learning; improving the quality of teaching and learning; intervention of external factors hindering learner performance; role players contributing to a sound culture of teaching and learning; managing timewasters; and changes to the daily school schedule to ensure the optimal use of available instruction time. These six categories are discussed in the following paragraphs.

4.4.1 Establishing a sound culture of teaching and learning

The school principals of all six schools stated that the primary objective of their school is teaching and learning in order to improve their learners' academic results. School principal C emphasised that *'anything and everything that we do at this school is linked with curriculum'*. According to school principal D, the primary goal of a school is *'academic performance and to get learners to qualify themselves to become valuable citizens of the country'*. A sound culture of teaching and learning implies that the moment Grade 8 pupils enter the school on their first day of attendance at a secondary school, they should understand the seriousness of teaching and learning. In this regard, HoD DB pointed out that *'a culture of teaching and learning is not established in Grade 10 or later, but as soon as the learners enter the classroom on the first day of secondary school'*. The strategies for establishing a sound culture of teaching and learning that will be discussed pertain to teachers supporting poor performing learners; valuing top performing learners; recognition of academic improvement; the role of the school principal in teaching and learning; the effect of learner discipline; and utilising all staff as instructional leaders.

4.4.1.1 Providing support to poor performing learners

Everything schools do should be in the best interest of their learners. A teacher who does not focus only on subject distinctions but who is also aware of all the learners achieving to their abilities contributes to the development of a sound culture of teaching and learning. It was evident from the interviews with participants that all six selected schools take an interest in the poorly performing learners. School principals C, D, E and F personally analyse the results of learners, especially the Grade 12s, and develop intervention strategies to assist these learners to improve their academic performance. Noting the poor performance of learners and attending to the problems that cause learners to perform poorly are important as the poor-performing learners have the tendency *'not to care about the fact that they are performing poorly'* (HoD AA).

Schools A, D and F are proactive with their intervention strategies to assist poorly performing learners. School F has a mathematics and reading laboratory with a

teacher appointed full time who assists learners who have difficulty with mathematics and reading. At school F, it is compulsory for the Grade 8s and 9s to attend weekly sessions at the mathematics and reading laboratory. School principal D explained their school's intervention strategy for poorly-performing learners as follows: *'We have an SGB post that focuses on the most basic mathematical principles only to give the poor performing learners a better opportunity to pass'*. Subject teachers are expected to provide extra assistance in their subjects in *'areas that learners tend to struggle with'* (HoD AC). In Schools B, C, E and F learners are divided into differentiated classes according to their most recent formative assessment marks. The differentiation between learners allows *'high flyers (high achievers) to get more difficult questions whilst the crawlers (poor achievers) attempt to pass'* (HoD EA). Learners are transferred between the differentiated classes based on their performance in examinations and tests with this *'differentiation in classes only academically orientated and not disciplinary'* (SP F). School principal C explained that *'by September, as a last resort, I ask teachers where learners can improve their marks in order to pass'*. School A has a teacher appointed who assists learners to apply for and obtain concessions such as extra time or a reader during examinations. School principal C mentioned that they *'look at the potential of each learner and expect him or her to perform accordingly'*. School D and E have an external company that is working in partnership with the Department of Education, which provides extra academic support. These interventions *'mainly concentrate on subjects like maths, accounting and physical sciences'* (HoD CB). School principal F stated that the school provides further support to learners who are struggling in subjects like mathematics and physical sciences by making use of external programmes and opportunities such as school visits to other schools and visits from external teachers as well as Saturday classes for increased subject exposure. These opportunities are available to learners beyond what the school has to offer as standard intervention within lesson time where teachers ensure that slow learners are also engaged with the subject content.

4.4.1.2 Valuing top performing learners

All six selected schools have top ten announcements where the top performing learners are acknowledged during a formal ceremony and rewarded with a top-ten-tour consisting of a weekend of camping and team building activities. Most of the

schools carry the expenses of the top-ten-tour as an initiative to *'reward the learners for their hard work'* (SP D). At school F, the learners are able to obtain full colours for academic achievement from Grade 8 and not only from Grade 10 as is the case with the other schools that participated in the study. A learner is also required to be in the top ten for at least two consecutive years at school F before the learner is rewarded a top-ten-badge. At school A, the top ten learners are acknowledged with a special jersey that they wear to school.

With regard to school B, *'for the stronger learners we provide extra enrichment and the learners get more level four type questions'* (HoD BB). These level four type questions challenge learners with higher order thinking and develop their abilities in solving problems that are more complex. Enrichment is more effective in differentiated classes owing to extra work being more relevant to the performing abilities of the specific learners. School D uses a mathematics laboratory as an incentive to invite learners that are performing well to exposure to programmes that are focused on *'more innovative technology'* (HoD DB). From the interviews with participants, it was clear that, at all six selected schools, the focus is on encouraging teachers to use opportunities in the classroom to motivate and complement all learners for above average performance.

4.4.1.3 Recognising academic improvement

The school principals of schools A and B admitted that the school does not give formal recognition to learners whose marks have improved during the course of the school year. *'We do not give special recognition for general academic improvement'* (SP B). Both school principals A and B explained that academic improvement is recognised on learners' school reports at the end of each term and on a continuous basis during the course of daily classroom functioning. School principal A clarified the recognition for learners with improved marks as follows: *'When we hand out reports, then the register teacher writes a comment in the report. They know the marks of the learners and the Heads of Department can also comment on improved achievement in the learner's report'* (SP A). HoD FC added that healthy internal class competition is also a motivating factor for academic improvement. Schools C, D, E and F have a more formal approach to acknowledging academic improvements, such as at school C

where they *'present certificates that state the percentage improvement'* (HoD CA). At these four schools, differentiated classes *'allows the weaker performing learner to still be number one in class'* (HoD DB). Learners from these differentiated classes who improve their marks are promoted to more challenging classes where they are exposed to more thought-provoking work. School D values the individual abilities of learners where the school principal and Heads of Department *'study learners' aptitude tests and try to improve the potential of learners'* (HoD FC) through increased sessions at the mathematics and reading laboratory.

4.4.1.4 The contribution of the school principal to teaching and learning

Both Heads of Department from school D agreed that the sound culture of teaching and learning prevailing at their school is due to the approach of special value attached to teaching and learning by the school principal. This approach relates to a dedicated focus on consistently pursuing improved competency. School principal E understood such an approach as follows:

'Teaching is our craft, we take it seriously. We can't be doctors or singers, it is teaching. Teaching must be something that you think of everyday on how to better it. Every day I think of how to be a better instructional leader inspired by the motto 'we cannot have learners to fail'' (SP E).

Participants agreed that school principals establish a culture of teaching and learning through staff development sessions and workshops, which serve a capacitating and motivating function. A Head of Department participant explained as follows: *'We have staff development sessions that we attend. After these sessions, we are motivated because then it is easy for us to go and do what is best for the learners'* (HoD CA). School principal C mentioned that he would have been grateful for more time in order to be able to join teachers on these workshops for the sake of his own improved teaching skills. Apart from teacher development during teaching and learning related workshops, professional development requires a more holistic approach such as, for example, visiting the apartheid museum to make staff understand that they are *'mere custodians to build up and consolidate education'* (SP E). At school F, teachers are

provided with a booklet that includes all the important information regarding the administrative responsibilities of teachers and operational know-how to capacitate staff on their role in effective school functioning. School principal C emphasised the important link between staff accountability and learner performance: *'There is a definite connection between a teacher's approach and the academic performance of learners; I keep teachers accountable even until the very last day of school'* (SP C). School principal participants emphasised the importance of staff's emotional wellness to contribute to a positive educational climate because *'when teachers are happy, they make the learners happy with everyone inspired to embrace the ethos of the school'* (SP E).

When the school principal interacts with learners, it contributes to a sound culture of teaching and learning. School principal D uses assemblies to foster responsibility by informing learners about the kind of behaviour and standard of work expected from them and by encouraging learners to be proud of the ownership they take for submitted work. As part of constructive interaction, School principal F considers it the responsibility of the school principal to confront learners whose marks have decreased and to compliment learners who have improved their performances. A Head of Department at school F confirmed the involvement of the school principal in the analysis of learners' results, which *'takes a lot of his time but is very important to him'* (HoD FB). This provides all learners with a fair opportunity to receive recognition from the school principal. School principals C and E use the opportunity to visit classes and motivate learners during lessons where teachers are absent. School principal C explained that these interactions with learners prompt reflection in the sense that by discussing the minimum requirements to pass the grade with learners and determining why learners are failing, *'learners most of the time realise and state that they are actually failing themselves'* (SP C). School principal C emphasised that he consistently communicates to teachers and learners the direct correlation between the amount of focused instruction time and learner performance which influences the eventual future of the learners. All of the schools participating in the study have a staff meeting chaired by the school principal before the start of each school day. At these daily staff meetings, *'I meet with the staff to give direction and to communicate the ethos of the school'* (SP E) which contributes to teachers being prepared for the day as operational arrangements are communicated on a daily basis during these meetings.

Participants agreed that school principals contribute significantly to a sound culture of teaching and learning by the example that they set. This example relates to a dedicated presence in the sense of *'I am the first one at school in the morning and the last to leave'* (SP E). School principals A and E add value to this daily presence by being present at school events and attending all school-related functions. A sound culture of teaching and learning is also ensured when school principals demonstrate their respect for instruction time by ensuring that teaching and learning *'take place without interruptions, to give the teacher in the classroom the opportunity to teach by eliminating factors that might counter teaching'* (SP D). It was clear from the interviews with participants that school principals are accountable for the establishment of a sound culture of teaching and learning at their schools.

4.4.1.5 Learner discipline

'There is a definite relationship between academic performance and discipline' (SP D). Learner discipline determines the establishment and the sustaining of a culture of teaching and learning. School principal E explained the importance of discipline for successful teaching and learning by emphasising that *'discipline is the foundation; no discipline, no instruction, that is where everything starts'*. Teachers must understand the negative influence of a lack of discipline on effective teaching and learning. Once lessons are interrupted owing to discipline problems, teachers have difficulty in focusing on their teaching task. By constantly alerting learners to the negative effect of ill-disciplined behaviour on the classroom ambience, teaching and learning actions and eventual academic performance, a learning culture is fostered that does not tolerate a lack of discipline in the classroom. During assemblies, school principal D would ask learners whether they approved of the behaviour of a learner who disrupts a classroom. He explains to learners that their *'education is being stolen'* (SP D) by learners who are not disciplined. The result is that at school D there is a decrease in the number of learners who repeatedly fail owing to the fact that the school is *'very strict on discipline'* (SP D). A security system that includes cameras in all of the classes, and a security guard who monitors the entrance to the school and classrooms assists with the implementation of discipline and the overall safety of staff and learners. An appointed security guard who monitors the cameras informs the school principal of suspicious conduct resulting in constructive assistance with sustained

discipline. HoD BB pointed to the importance of proper behaviour to include all facets of school functioning such as *'how learners walk past my classroom, how neat learners are when arriving at my class, how focused learners are when entering my classroom'*. HoD DA mentioned that all disciplinary steps should contribute to the establishment of a sound culture of teaching and learning.

4.4.1.6 Utilising all members of staff as instructional leaders

The school principals and Heads of Department of all six schools agreed that all the teachers are instructional leaders contributing to a sound culture of teaching and learning. Summarising participants' opinions on the roles and characteristics of teachers acting as model instructional leaders, their qualities encompass having expert subject knowledge that is communicated clearly while simultaneously fostering ethical behaviour. HoD CB explained as follows:

'A teacher who is an instructional leader is a teacher who is always on the ball. It is a teacher who always addresses learners assertively, but with respect reprimanding them 'Why are you not in class?' It is a teacher who inspires and motivates a learner. It is a teacher that tells learners to pick up trash and rubbish lying around. It is a teacher that makes sure learners' books are monitored and signed. It is a teacher that reflects, reporting to the principal or Head of Department on what he or she has or has not achieved, with reasons'.

Teachers as instructional leaders take their roles and responsibilities seriously; *'they do not shy away from new ideas'* (HoD FB). They contribute to a sound culture of teaching and learning by building healthy relationships with learners outside the classroom. Dedicated teachers, acting as model instructional leaders, do not hesitate to go the extra mile for their learners and *'they teach with passion and zero tolerance for bad behaviour'* (SP B). HoD BB stated that an instructional leader is someone who goes further than his/her subject curriculum.

Part of being an instructional leader is the input of staff to the process of decision-making. School principal F emphasised the importance of staff's contributions to decision-making by pointing out that, although the management team of the school makes important decisions, *'ideas are brought to the rest of the staff to give input to problems and solutions'* (SP F). Collaboration between the management team of the school and the rest of the staff contributes meaningfully to a sound culture of teaching and learning.

4.4.2 Improving the quality of teaching and learning

An instructional leader is responsible for the quality of teaching and learning (par 2.2.1). From the interviews with participants, the different strategies of improving the quality of teaching and learning on a daily school-functioning basis became clear. These strategies emerged as pertaining to the role of the school principal, the role of the Head of Department, the role of the teacher, extra classes, planning and preparation, and quality control embedded in all actions.

4.4.2.1 The role of the school principal

The input of the school principal to ensure good quality teaching and learning consists of a directive and guiding component. In this regard, School principal E explained as follows:

'At the beginning of every term, I interview educators individually; I project learners' marks and confirm that teachers have done error analysis. Based on the error analysis teachers have certain strategies. I assist on how to 'up' certain strategies and thereafter we also set individual strategies that I monitor'.

It is clear that school principals play a supporting role with regard to the intervention strategies by teachers to ensure successful learning as the school principal and Heads of Department *'are concerned about implementation and the monitoring of that implementation'* (SP E). School principals are also accountable for the allocation of teachers to specific subjects, which directly influences the quality of teaching and

learning. School principal C stated that a school principal is *'the one at the end of everything, also teacher allocation to be accountable for school performance'*. Accountability for good quality teaching and learning implies regular class visits to provide sufficient support to staff. This support entails *'monitoring teacher performance and giving feedback'* (SP E) as the primary responsibility of a school principal. School principal C emphasised that an improvement in learner performance is possible *'through control, monitoring, support and guiding of both teachers and learners'*. This monitored control includes monitoring the performance of teachers after they have attended a subject workshop or any other professional development programme. For school principal D, the essence of a school principal's monitoring task is in strengthening the capacity of Heads of Department by *'ensuring that everything is at a high standard'* (SP D). Ensuring a high standard of work relates to random subject checks where school principal C checks the quality of work done by learners, provides constructive guidance to teachers and allows time for improvement to ensure the quality of work is acceptable.

A crucial part of good quality teaching and learning is the consistent acknowledgement of dedicated effort engendering good performance. Participant HoD CA explains the acknowledgement of teacher effort at his school and the value of this acknowledgement for continued performance:

'For people to applaud you in front of the staff, it makes you a better teacher, even if it is not something that you can hold in your hand. Last year the principal gave teachers certificates of 'appreciation' for being one of the top schools in the area.'

Acknowledging staff for their hard work creates a positive environment where the quality of teaching and learning can only improve. This acknowledgement must include each individual teacher because *'you must give credit to everyone for the part that they are playing'* (SP A). Part of school principal accountability for successful learning is the interaction with parents. HoD BA explained that her school principal conducts meetings with parents of learners who are failing. During these meetings, the learner's examination papers serve as evidence of poor performance and of indicators for additional support needed from all stakeholders including parents as the

primary educators of their child. Participants agreed that the concerned involvement of parents in the education of their children improves learners' chances of success. With regard to providing good quality teaching and learning within context, participants emphasised the importance of enriching opportunities in subjects in which learner aptitude prevails. In this regard, school principal D *'would like to spend more time finding ways for more enriching activities in technical subjects'* to offer learners with an aptitude for technically-oriented skills a more enriched curriculum enhancing the quality of their teaching and learning.

4.4.2.2 The role of the Head of Department

All the Heads of Department emphasised the importance of a consistent monitoring programme to ensure good quality teaching and learning. Owing to time constraints, the majority of Head of Department participants do not moderate lesson plans, but they monitor time and content calibrations according to a consistent work schedule. HoD BA explained this monitoring task as follows: *'We work with a work schedule to ensure all our teachers are at the same place in their work schedule and have the same assignments for their learners. We do not moderate lesson plans, but we do IQMS (Integrated Quality Management System) and class visits'*.

Participants pointed out that the moderation of lesson plans can be meaningful by assisting teachers who are having challenges to reach outcomes because their pace of work is too slow or their learners are performing poorly. Because lesson plan moderation *'is extremely time consuming'* (HoD AA), this is limited to cases of dire need. The monitoring of extra classes and teacher attendance on a daily school functioning basis is important to avoid the *'possibility that learners sit for an examination without certain topics being treated because the teacher fell behind'* (HoD CB). HoDs B, D and F emphasised the importance of a Head of Department being a mentor for novice and inexperienced teachers. Mentoring means that a teacher *'who does not understand a concept, approaches me and I show him how it works'* (HoD BA). At school F, Heads of Department may enter the class of a new teacher at any time to ascertain whether assistance is necessary and to determine what kind of support is required.

The delegation of work empowers less experienced teachers, and providing these teachers with subject guidelines, assists with effective teaching. Participants pointed out that constructive functioning based on mutual support and the sharing of subject expertise is arranged with subject teachers occupying the same locality. In this regard, participant HoD EB explained that they try to *'keep departments on the same corridor; this way you walk past someone's class and you see or hear something that might be incorrect, which you clarify afterwards'*. A crucial part of the mentoring task of a Head of Department is the emotional support to teachers in addition to subject support. Teachers must know that they can rely on the support of their Heads of Department based on a work relationship of trust and accommodation. Teachers must feel comfortable about approaching their Heads of Department with *'know-how on subject content or for assistance with the handling of a problem class'* (HoD AB). In order to provide quality emotional support *'it is important to know what is going on with teachers on a personal level'* (HoD BC). Part of mentorship is to understand teachers' emotional condition because *'if a teacher is having a difficult time at home, it affects the teacher's preparation and presentation of lessons'* (HoD BC). Mutual support manifests itself by knowing when a teacher is experiencing challenges at home, and then assisting that teacher with the setting or marking of examination papers. Providing emotional support and being aware of personal challenges implies assistance from the rest of the staff in the form of temporarily carrying out the affected teacher's tasks and functions to ensure that quality teaching and learning is maintained.

4.4.2.3 The role of the teacher

Participants pointed out that part of educative teaching is *'the focus on moral values such as honesty, respect and sound work ethics'* (SP D). Focussing on educative teaching engenders dedication and improved academic achievements, which, in turn, inspires improved teaching and learning. The teachers of School D and F inform Grade 9 learners with their parents about subject choices. The information that is conveyed by means of information evenings for learners with their parents is based on aptitude tests that are carried out prior to the information sessions. During the information evening for the Grade 9s in September of every school year, *'parents are informed about subject offerings and are issued with the results of the aptitude tests of their children'* (SP F) so that they can make informed decisions about their children's

subject choices. Participants emphasised that informed parents, thanks to the explanations by teachers on subject offerings and the results of the aptitude tests of their children, are able to make more realistic subject choices with their children. This results in fewer subject changes in further grades that can hamper the academic performance of learners.

Participants agreed on the value of teamwork based on teacher collaboration, which is engendered by formal subject meetings and informal conversations during break and between lessons. With these meetings teachers *'share content and information that they have obtained'* either at workshops, or through personal experience (SP C). Teacher collaboration manifests itself in a sharing of ideas, such as, for example, a specific way in which learners understand specific subject content better, which could relate to a specific teaching method or using specific examples that learners relate to better than others. Teacher collaboration is especially meaningful when teachers have just started working in their profession, which motivates participant HoD AB to *'share ideas and they (new teachers) are also keen to share their ideas'*. Participant HoD AA admitted that she *'learns a lot from the teachers who have just arrived from university, especially when it comes to technology.'* HoD AB emphasised that prompt discussions in the corridors between lessons about different aspects of teaching and learning, such as questions on how far teachers have proceeded with the subject curriculum, what problems they have encountered with specific subject content, or how smooth lesson presentations occurred on specific topics, improves the quality of teaching and learning. At schools B and F, senior teachers also teach Grades 8 and 9 classes to ensure that the learners are fully equipped with the background knowledge and skills on entering the higher grades to proceed effectively with relevant teaching and learning.

School principal A and the HoDs of school A motivated the importance of communicating high expectations for learners by setting goals for teachers and learners of all grades. In most schools, the setting of goals is done with the Grade 12 learners only as the monitoring of the realisation of set goals is a time-consuming process. School principal A confirmed that, based on the fact that all teachers have goals for their learners, the test results of a learner who is, for example, expected to work towards a 60% average are compared to the learner's goals and *'discussions*

conducted on ways to achieve desired goals'. Along the same lines, discussions take place to congratulate learners who have achieved set goals. The setting of goals for all learners, followed by the monitoring of marks to ascertain the extent to which goals are being realised, improves the overall quality of teaching and learning.

Participants emphasised the importance of sound assessment practices because *'teaching without assessment does not give a clear picture'* (SP E) of the extent of learning. Sound assessment, based on realistic performance indicators, contributes to sound teaching and learning and a confirmation of *'what my learners do or do not understand'* (HoD CB). Assessment serves to motivate learners because *'what makes learners to perform is the report that you give them immediately after the assessment'* (HoD CB). This report inspires learners to persevere because success breeds success or the report encourages learners to exert more effort. School principal B explained that, after formative assessment, teachers scrutinise learners' marks to identify learners who are struggling, or to determine problem areas in the content. As requested by the National Department of Education, every teacher compiles a subject improvement plan after each term, based on the results of the previous summative assessment. The subject improvement plan enables teachers to identify problem areas with the subject content and to develop intervention strategies to improve the poor performance of learners. At school D, a subject meeting is held at the end of each examination focussing on the examination paper and learner results. Minutes of these meetings serve as the basis for the compilation of subject improvement plans.

Linked to the subject improvement plan and the implementation of suggested intervention strategies for improved performance is the concerted efforts of teachers to improve their lesson presentation abilities. In this regard teachers *'share ideas that work with the rest of the staff and they listen to each other, even to those with less experience'* (HoD DB) because all teachers *'should be able to moderate each other and write a moderation report'* (HoD CA). Participants agreed that teachers who are teachers to the core contribute to the quality of teaching and learning by developing a wide variety of teaching skills. These teachers *'attend workshops and adjust to curriculum changes'* (HoD AB); they attend workshops *'to enhance their skills'* (HoD FA). Participants emphasised that teachers who are focused on increased capacity also attend cluster meetings because *'at these cluster meetings teachers are taught*

to set question papers according to Bloom's taxonomy of learning in line with the CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement) document' (HoD CA).

In addition to the facilitation of content at school F, teachers focus on teaching general subject skills that are relevant to all subjects such as *'teaching them how to answer long questions so that they can use these skills in other subjects too'* (SP F). At school C, the white board is *'more central than a textbook (because) it draws learners' attention and adds value to textbook content'* (SP C). Explanations on the white board assist in enlightening learners on challenging content so that they become convinced *'that the work is doable'* (SP C). A variety of techniques to facilitate subject content improves learner understanding, so enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. In addition to differing teaching methods, using different didactical resources and teaching aids enriches learners' learning experiences and ensures that lessons are interesting which enhances learners' excitement and influences school attendance positively. In this regard, Schools B and F focus on providing learners with opportunities to gain further subject knowledge and skills with school excursions and with exposure to events such as Techno-X, Olympiads and Bio-science.

Although improving the quality of teaching and learning is a time-consuming matter, participants determined areas and matters to improve the quality of teaching and learning, such as *'after care of test and exams (because) to move forward it is necessary to also go back again'* (SP F). School D desires to spend more time on the practical part of subjects such as mathematics, physical science and accounting as this will ensure an in-depth understanding of the theoretical content of those subjects. Participants agreed that more time to provide constructive feedback to each individual learner on achievements in tests and examination scripts would contribute to the improvement of good quality teaching and learning.

4.4.2.4 Extra classes

At all of the selected schools, extra classes are part of the curricular programme to provide teachers with the opportunity to complete their subject curriculum. These classes are offered either before or after school, in the evenings, on Saturdays or during the September school holidays for Grade 12s. The time for the offering of these

classes depends on learner availability as affected by transport possibilities, which results in classes being offered preferably *'on Saturday mornings as transport is a problem for our learners and we cannot return learners in the evenings'* (HoD DA). The focus of these extra classes is mathematics, physical science and accounting. The fact that not all learners are always available for extra classes prevents teachers from continuing fully with new content of the subject curriculum. Teachers focus only on revision and enrichment of covered content with extra classes that are not attended by all learners. In order to complete the subject curriculum, compulsory extra classes are scheduled at times that accommodate all learners. HoD FB confirmed that extra classes that are compulsory *'focus on finishing the curriculum, evening classes that are not compulsory are used for revision and enrichment'*. Participants admitted that owing to time constraints, the optional extra classes focus mainly on revision because *'we do not have time for enrichment'* (HoD FA). It was clear that time constraints disadvantage high achievers because of limited opportunities for enrichment during the extra classes as the focus is mainly on ensuring that all learners pass.

4.4.2.5 Planning and preparation

It was clear from the interviews with all participants that planning and preparation is non-negotiable for effective teaching and learning. Linked to planning is effective time management to ensure a realistic amount of time for all the different school activities. The implication is that *'everything must be planned, itemised and time allocated for all happenings'* (SP C). These 'happenings' include *'staff meetings, writing tests, meeting with parents'* (SP C), which, when planned constructively, results in making more time available. Participants concurred that there is ample time for all school functioning activities, which, however, is contingent on effective planning and effective time management. School principal A proclaimed that, if teachers *'know what to do every day and plan thoroughly according to work schedules and programmes, we do not need extra classes'*. To ensure effective time management, school principals B and F agreed that planning should be done in advance for the term ahead. Planning and thorough preparation ensures that lessons are constructive and gives teachers a better chance to complete the required subject curriculum. School principal F, who teaches a class, mentioned that she does her teaching planning for the entire year during the December holidays. She explained that learners receive a calendar on

'when what is done' alerting them to what is going on in her class throughout the year. This planning allows learners to continue with their work, *'even when I am not in class for whatever reason'* (SP F). School principal B noticed that planning is crucial because of *'a decrease in the amount of instruction time'* without a correlated decrease in the quantity of subject content.

School principal participants emphasised their role as instructional leaders to remind their staff constantly of the importance of thorough preparation for each lesson. For a teacher to arrive at class, realise that an important didactical resource is still needed and then leave the class to fetch the resource *'is a crime'* (SP E). Participants agreed that thorough planning engenders expert teaching, which, in turn, contributes to a well-functioning school and good learner performance. Thorough planning counters unprofessional conduct such as when clever learners ask questions which teachers are not able to answer owing to not being prepared for the lesson. School principal A emphasised that *'it is unfair towards the learners not to be prepared'*. This unfairness extends to the society that expects that future citizens are adequately equipped for constructive contributions to societal functioning. Thorough preparedness also implies covering the whole curriculum timely and adequately because *'when you are prepared, you will be able to cover more content per lesson'* (HoD EB). Thorough preparedness implies constructive discipline because of learner engagement contributing to successful learning. Participant HoD EA explained the influence of thorough preparation as follows: *'The more prepared you are, the better your lesson presentation is in conveying content and keeping learners focused resulting in better learning results at the end of the day'* (HoD EA). The opposite is also true, namely that ill-preparedness causes discipline problems, which inhibit proper learning.

4.4.2.6 Quality control

As demanded by the Department of Education, the Heads of Department of the selected schools conduct continual book control to ensure the quality of work facilitated by teachers and internalised by learners is up to standard. Participants confirmed that, about summative assessment, a considerable amount of time is spent on the setting, marking and moderation of examination papers. School principal F

explained the actions involved in competent examination paper setting and marking as follows:

‘Teachers are annually trained to set question papers according to the requirements of the Department. Question papers are uniform in terms of layout and font. Teachers are trained for flawless marking based on thorough memos that are discussed before marking takes place’.

Apart from a dedicated focus on setting and marking examination papers competently, moderation is important to determine aspects such as, for example, difficulty in terms of the proportion of learners who have achieved good results and discrimination value in terms of the correlation of question performance to examination paper performance. For that reason, *‘we (HoDs) moderate 10% of each class to see if the learners have made the same mistakes so that the teacher can learn and fix the mistakes’* (HoD BB).

Participants confirmed that *‘the standard of the papers is determined by the results of the learners’* (SP B). After the marking has been completed, teachers analyse results to determine which content areas need extra attention. The feedback from the Department of Education on the level of performance of the school’s Grade 12 year-end results applies to all grades in the sense of consistent control of learner performance. At school F, this consistent control includes *‘a spread sheet with the raw marks of each learner for teachers to know the exact status of each learner’s performance’* (SP F). Teachers are accountable for the performance of their learners and, in some instances, there are necessary interventions if the learners do not perform according to their ability. These interventions imply that teachers and Heads of Department *‘are confronted by the school principal if the impression is that teachers underachieve considering the potential of learners in a specific group’* (HoD FC).

4.4.3 Intervention with external factors hindering learner performance

All the selected schools have a school-based support team that provides support to learners with personal problems. Considering every school’s aim of ensuring an environment for effective teaching and learning, the approach of *‘leaving no learner*

behind' implies that when *'a learner goes off track, the teacher must intervene immediately'* (SP C). Participants emphasised their challenges with regard to the moral rehabilitation of children because of the fact that *'household problems flow over to the school'* (SP F). These family background problems influence learner performance negatively demanding crucial emotional support from teachers. In this regard, HoD CB explained that *'learners need an environment in which they experience protection from their home-related personal stuff'*. It was clear that this 'personal stuff' pertained to family disintegration leaving children vulnerably exposed. Intervention in the form of emotional support is necessary because family background problems result in learners *'not cooperating in classrooms and being negative towards lesson engagement'* (SP C). School principals C, D and F mentioned that part of family background problems is the fact that, apart from the lack of emotional support, these households also fail to provide the necessary supervision assistance to their children with their homework.

The selected schools implemented different strategies to provide emotional support to their learners. HoD DA explained that their school's intervention programme includes *'a sound school-based support team to which everything is reported'* with designated members of staff handling different types of problems, all of which are meticulously recorded. At schools E and F, staff members donate food and clothes to needy learners. This occurs by means of an adopt-a-child-programme according to which a teacher supplies a learner in need with everything needed for the year. School F has a clothing bank where learners can collect whatever school uniform-related clothing they need to be properly dressed according to the school's dress code for learners. School D and C make provision for learners to remain at school after formal school hours and do their homework with supervised assistance from teachers. In this regard, school principal C confirmed the possibility of learners doing homework *'after school hours under controlled conditions'*. At school F, a full-time life strategist provides emotional support to learners through psychological intervention focussing on motivational support to learners who could potentially fail. If motivational support seems not to be adequate, *'there is further intervention and counselling'* (SP F) available to high-risk learners. At four of the selected schools, learners with learning difficulties such as reading too slowly are supported with concession applications. Participants emphasised that these intervention strategies focused on the emotional

and psychological well-being of learners are evaluated consistently for improved effectiveness contributing to improved learning.

4.4.4 Role players contributing to a sound culture of teaching and learning

Participants agreed that effective school functioning is contingent on all stakeholders fulfilling their expected roles such as the school governing body supporting the school principal and teachers, parents supporting the school and supporting their children in all spheres of human existence, teachers teaching dedicatedly and learners taking responsibility for their own learning. When all role players act in the best interest of the school's educational programme, a sound culture of teaching and learning prevails. HoD EA summarised individual responsibility for constructive collaboration between all role players as '*working towards a common goal, taking responsibility for what is expected of you, playing your part in the bigger picture*'.

4.4.4.1 Learners

Participant HoD CB explained the responsibility of learners for their own learning as '*always being at your books, not waiting for teachers to shepherd you all the time*'. Learners who work on their own contribute to a sound culture of teaching and learning with their academic performance not being dependant on continuous teacher assistance. These learners, who are in general '*the stronger learners*', are also '*cautious to miss class*' (HoD AA). They are also hesitant to be absent from a test even when they are ill. The attitude of learners towards instruction time directly influences the culture of teaching and learning. Schools are, therefore, obliged to foster in learners the attitude of taking responsibility for their own work, which contributes not only to a sound culture of teaching and learning, but also prepares the child for eventual responsible adulthood.

4.4.4.2 Teachers

With regard to teacher responsibility, participants emphasised that teachers should at all times focus on the '*core business of their profession*' (SP C) which relates to '*teaching and educating*' (SP D) and always act '*in every child's best interest*' (SP F).

In order to carry out this calling, teachers must know, and strive towards, the vision of their school, which, according to participant SP A, should be communicated to teachers on a regular basis during formal staff meetings and in informal discussions. When teachers' inputs are considered with regard to decision-making, they readily *'buy into the academic vision of the school'* (SP C).

Teachers who value instruction time contribute to a sound culture of teaching and learning. School principal participants confirmed that they frequently alert staff to the value of using instruction time optimally and to be constantly aware of what is expected of them during the course of each school day. Using instruction time optimally entails that *'when the bell rings, promptly go to the classroom and immediately give learners work to do'* (HoD CB). For school principal F, living up to expectations entails, for example, that teachers who know that they are going to be absent for whatever reason submit work in advance to teachers who will be invigilating their classes to ensure that learners are constructively busy with relevant subject work. At five of the selected schools, a roll call is carried out at the beginning of every lesson to prevent learners from missing a class without a valid excuse contributing to improved teaching and learning and the fostering of healthy work ethics.

Participants emphasised continuity and the importance of focusing on optimal learning in all the grades because *'the standard of Grade 8 and 9 determine the calibre of Grade 10s we get'* (HoD BA). Based on a profound education provided in the junior grades of secondary school, *'the Grade 10, 11 and 12 teachers see academic engagement as utmost important and everyone tries their best so that the learners can perform according to their personal abilities'* (SP B). School principal D noted that motivation influences a learner's attitude towards a subject. In this regard, some learners are motivated by a teacher to remain focused; others are motivated by the content of the subject to remain intrigued. Participants agreed, however, that the attitudes of teachers and teachers' sustained enthusiasm with the facilitation of their subject content are crucially important in sustaining a sound culture of teaching and learning. Teachers who take complete ownership of the effective facilitation of content in an interesting way and with positive relationships with learners experience positive outcomes in an effective manner and this concurs with what participant HoD BB explained as *'one catches more flies with honey than vinegar'*. When teachers are

positive, their classes are enjoyable resulting in an enabling environment in which learners collaborate and which learners experience as being *'an environment where they want to be'* (HoD BA). Such an environment is enhanced by positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and learners that are created by the teachers' genuine interest in the well-being of their learners. Participant HoD BC explained this positive interaction as follows:

'When I see how much learners appreciate it when I watch them play rugby on Saturdays ... they see me there, and when they enter my class the following week, they are much more positive towards me and my subject because they know I am interested in them as individuals' (HoD BC).

Participants emphasised the importance of teachers being multi-skilled in the sense of being able to assist learners with content other than their specialised subject content. In this regard, school principal C emphasised the importance of a basic knowledge of mathematics expected from all his members of staff. Because mathematics is interpreted as a generic subject representing the developing of analytical skills engendering competence in all subjects, *'every teacher is expected to understand the basics of mathematics up to a certain level to be able to assist all learners with basic maths'* (SP C). This approach of encouraging teachers to be multi-skilled prompts an improved service which results in the condition of *'our learners do not have to depend on other teachers outside when they have been taught by us'* (SP C).

Teachers who participate in team teaching contribute to the development of a sound culture of teaching and learning. As explained by participants, team teaching entails that senior teachers assist in the teaching of younger grades and junior teachers, who mainly teach Grade 8 and 9, assist with the teaching of some senior grade classes. Team teaching is a strategy applied by schools C and E to ensure continuity and collaborated strength based on a continuous exchanging of expertise relating to subject content and learners' background information. Based on a team teaching approach and continuous communication between the school and parents, an

awareness of the importance of education is developed which engenders a sound culture of teaching and learning.

4.4.4.3 Parents

As the primary educators of their children, parents need to be informed about what is expected of them with regard to the schooling of their children because *'informed parents contribute to a culture of teaching and learning and the performance of their children'* (SP C). As parents have a direct influence on the academic performance of their children and the culture of teaching and learning prevailing at school, *'one can see the involvement, or lack thereof, of parents in their children's well-being'* (SP F). Parents who do not respect instruction time by removing their children from school without a legitimate reason are a problem encountered at some of the selected schools. The lack of parental involvement pertains to a culture of *'parents having the idea that all that is expected of them is to pay school fees'* (SP D). In many instances, the parents of poor performing learners are also the parents least involved in their children's education.

In order to ensure a sound culture of teaching and learning based on sound parent involvement, parents meetings are conducted where parents are informed about the different programmes that the school offers for different kinds of intervention. Parents are also informed about their children's performance and about ways to assist their children to improve their performance. These meetings help parents to develop a clear picture of school functioning and of all the efforts by management and staff to ensure that learners receive a proper education. These meetings are conducted separately for the different grades and *'for the first time in history up to 98% of our parents are attending these sessions'* (SP D). Informed parents are aware of all the efforts made by the school to intervene on behalf of their children and they are, therefore, *'more keen to buy into a programme or strategic intervention to support their child'* (HoD DA). Participants pointed out that, apart from parents' meetings, one-on-one conversations with parents are sometimes necessary to ensure parent involvement with regard to their child's behaviour or poor academic performance.

Participants emphasised that schools rely heavily on the parents' emotional and moral support to communicate the importance of education to their children. *'Whatever initiatives teachers take, parents ensure it continues'* (SP C) by providing the time, space and encouragement for their children to complete their homework. Regardless of the parents' level of education, they have knowledge, skills and wisdom to contribute to the education of their children. Part of this contribution is parents' moral support for constructive discipline. HoD EB stated that involved parents ensure that their children's homework is done and that their children's behaviour relates to proper conduct aligned to the school's code of conduct for learners. When parents are involved in such a way, teachers waste no time on checking homework or intervening with regard to incomplete homework or unacceptable behaviour. The result is learners who are content and motivated by obtained knowledge instead of being troubled and feeling incompetent for not have done their homework. One concern mentioned by participant HoD CB is the little value, which some parents attach to education. 'Parents that are educated' (HoD CB) best understand the importance of being educated and the optimal use of instruction time for teaching and learning. In many instances, it remains a challenge to convince less educated parents of the importance of education and their contribution to the progress of their children's schooling. Regardless of parents' level of education, however, they can contribute equally by their moral support for proper behaviour and ethical life skills.

4.4.5 Managing timewasters

With regard to timewasters influencing optimal time spent on teaching and learning, participants agreed with HoD AB that *'interruptions affect one's planning negatively because then you have to plan when you are going to catch up the wasted time'*. Participants shared the wish for an ideal situation where everything goes according to plan with the time reserved for what was planned being undisturbed resulting in no extra time needed for task completion. The management of optimal instruction time pertains to the identification of timewasters and the setting of intervention strategies to decrease the loss of instruction time.

4.4.5.1 Administrative responsibilities

Completing administrative tasks is an important part of any teacher's responsibilities. Although most administrative responsibilities are important, not all of them contribute directly to the academic performance of learners, but they do indirectly ensure good quality teaching and learning. In this regard, school principal B motivated the importance of administration and communication with the Department of Education such as attending meetings to obtain information on what outcomes are expected from schools. Such information is then communicated to staff through a staff meeting to ensure *'teachers know how things are supposed to be done'* (SP C). Participants agreed that most of the administrative tasks requested by the Department of Education are designed to improve the performance of learners. Participants, however, warned against the misplaced value of administrative tasks such as subject file compilation instead of ensuring good quality teaching and learning with each lesson. Participant HoD DA explained the importance of real teaching and learning versus administrative tasks: *'I would rather ensure that the learner understands the work, than to window dress my subject file; my file may not always be perfect, but my lessons are hands on'*.

All of the selected schools admitted the importance of administrative duties, but they stated that these duties absorb valuable teaching and learning time. Administrative duties were determined to be especially vast at the end of each school term, and meetings scheduled with officials from the Department of Education are always time consuming. These meetings are, however, meaningful, as explained by HoD BA: *'My meetings with the subject advisor are time consuming, but important because what she tells me is of utmost importance and the core of effective teaching for learners to master core content properly'*. Participants concurred that administrative tasks tend to have a drowning effect on optimal instruction time because these tasks hamper adequate time for finishing the subject curriculum on time.

4.4.5.2 Identifying timewasters

It was evident at all six selected schools that teachers who are not prepared for lessons are one of the biggest timewasters. School principal A pictured the negative effect of an unprepared lesson:

'You take three times longer to do the same thing. If you are not prepared, learners do not have the correct notes. You do not know what to say all the time. Learners ask questions, you do not know what to answer. You have to go and investigate and return to the same topic'.

An unprepared teacher does not use instruction time optimally resulting in a vicious circle of influencing the next lesson *'because you will have to go back and repeat the lesson'* (HoD AB) resulting in an ineffective use of instruction time.

School principal F analysed the effect of teacher tardiness on teaching and learning, which relates to unprofessional conduct that hampers the learners' right to a basic education. She explained as follows:

'It is totally unprofessional to be late for a lesson. The learners are ready but not you. I also want to know when you are going to catch up the time lost. Every lesson has its own work to do. The lesson is then rushed and not taught in the same detail as planned. At the end of the lesson, the learners do not have the opportunity to ask questions or to study the topic in more detail. Assuring the learners understand the topic in depth will not take place at the end of a lesson'.

In some instances, teachers are not at fault for arriving late for classes, such as, for example, when staff meetings before school last longer than the designated time resulting in teachers arriving late for the first class of the day. Unprofessional teacher tardiness, however, affects other classes negatively because, apart from setting a bad example by being late, learners wait *'outside my class making a noise which disrupts the other classes'* (HoD FB).

With regard to timewasters that seriously affect optimal instruction time, school principal F is of the opinion that teacher absenteeism has the greatest effect on lost instruction time. HoD EB confirmed that a teacher's absence is a serious problem especially if a substitute teacher is not allocated because instruction time is then lost.

For that reason, knowing of teacher absenteeism in advance provides opportunities for countering strategies causing less of an effect on teaching and learning.

Learners tend to linger and fail to arrive at class after break. This is a timewaster experienced at all of the selected schools, which warrants an approach of zero tolerance. HoD BA summarises the negative influence of learner tardiness on instruction time and disciplined engagement as follows: *'When learners are late for class you have to confront them to hear their reasons which interrupts your lesson; you have to re-explain the work; if it is a class with disciplinary problems it creates an opportunity for further disruptions'*. A related vice is the fact that everyone has to wait for a learner who enters the classroom late to settle down before the lesson can continue. Apart from learner tardiness with regard to arriving at lessons on time, learner absenteeism also affects academic performance negatively. The reason for this affected performance pertains to *'concepts lost because of absenteeism might be asked in a test or in an exam'* (HoD EB). Participants emphasised that learner absenteeism is a pertinent timewaster that needs effective management to counter its negative effect on school performance.

Frequent announcements interrupt teaching and learning in all the classes. Related to frequent announcements that are, in many instances, about extracurricular actions, participants from Schools A, B, D and F complained about the loss of instruction time owing to learners leaving school earlier for sport or other extracurricular obligations. Teachers attending workshops or cluster meetings scheduled by the Department of Education during school time cause a loss in instruction time. In addition to these timewasters, HoD BA mentioned incidents such as every year's *'open day, blood donations, matric farewell ticket-hand-outs, photo days, athletic events that take place over two days'*. Events such as the athletics event over two days involves a large number of learners resulting in teachers not being able to continue with new subject content. Participants admitted, however, that these time wasting events *'are part of normal school functioning'* (HoB BB) and have to be accommodated regardless of being timewasters.

A timewaster determined as seriously affecting available instruction time is the visits from the Department of Education resulting in teachers being removed from their

classes for an extended period of time without being alerted in advance. Because they are not informed in advance, these teachers do not have the opportunity to prepare extra work for learners to engage them constructively with relevant content. The result is a backlog with regard to completing the subject curriculum in time. HoD FB mentioned Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) as an extracurricular responsibility that involves a considerable amount of instruction time. School principal A added the personal appointments of learners to the list of timewasters such as doctor or dentist appointments, learners applying for driver's licences and passport application appointments. Class rotation is a time-consuming process, which, according to participants, serves as a serious timewaster if teachers are not assisting by encouraging learners to arrive promptly at the next class.

Participants emphasised that to limit the influence of timewasters on instruction time, teacher attitude plays a determinative role. Teachers with a *laissez faire* attitude towards school functioning '*results in learners being relaxed about promptness*' (HoD BB). Instead of these teachers embarking on teaching and learning, they first have to discipline learners, which results in valuable instruction time lost. Apart from a *laissez faire* approach to teaching, teachers struggling to maintain constructive discipline in their classes affect neighbouring classes. HoD FB explained as follows:

'When another teacher cannot control the learners, and allows them to walk in the corridors during lesson time and these learners make a noise outside my classroom, then I have to go and handle the situation. It also disrupts the learners in my class. The noise levels and disruptive behaviour of these learners is a concern'

Learners bunking a class and need to be found and disciplined causes a further loss in instruction time. Timewasters also apply to learners who are secretly on their cell phones, learners who seek constant attention and learners with a tendency to be disruptive whenever the chance occurs. Any form of ill-disciplined behaviour serves as a serious timewaster and '*anything that causes a teacher to leave the classroom is a big no-no*' (HoD EA) withholding learners from learning opportunities. Monitoring homework is also considered a timewaster; however, as is the case with managing proper behaviour, these are '*time consuming processes, but one cannot go without*

them' (SP F). The maintenance of the school grounds during school time with the noise levels accompanying these maintenance actions is considered a possible timewaster influencing the optimal use of available instruction time.

School principal C explained that poor performance can also be regarded as time wasting in the sense of hampering the normal tempo of instruction. Learner tempo that *'is not consistent with pace setters implies a loss of time'* (SP C). Along the same lines, *'poor performance is time lost because where learners did not perform well it (the work) has to be redone'* (SP A). The result is time lost because *'the present time implies facilitating new content'* (SP C) instead of lingering on content already facilitated. Using the time for instruction optimally on a daily school functioning basis implies that teachers should strive to continue with new work with each following lesson covering the subject curriculum systematically within the scope of a realistic period. This is possible only if the instruction time of each previous lesson has been used constructively.

4.4.5.3 Intervention strategies for timewasters

The setting of intervention strategies will vary from school to school as implemented strategies have to be relevant to the specific school. Some of the possible intervention strategies that can be implemented at schools to further develop a sound culture of teaching and learning relate to the prior planning and preparation of lessons, managing teacher absenteeism, scheduling extra classes, and monitoring class rotation. Scheduling all appointments that are not school related after school hours, using the intercom system minimally, and managing the use of cell phones by teachers and learners represent a sound culture of teaching and learning. Encouraging teachers to solve disciplinary problems themselves and not referring all disciplinary problems to senior staff, monitoring of teacher and learner absenteeism and teacher and learner punctuality are basic actions to constructive teaching and learning.

Participants agreed that *'it is the teacher's responsibility to use all available instruction time constructively'* (SP B). Teachers who are focused on their learners and the facilitation of essential subject content use instruction time constructively. HoD AB motivated that their school tries everything possible to prevent disruptions to the

academic programme and to ensure that teachers are in their classes using instruction time optimally. The most important intervention strategy to promote the effective use of available instruction time is thorough planning and preparedness for every lesson. This requires that *'you have to plan ahead, do not say you have a problem or a Departmental meeting to attend, you have to organise ahead so that the learners are divided into invigilation classes to use time constructively'* (SP A).

Planning in advance allows the management of the school to ensure that the teaching programme continues amidst the absence of teachers. HoD EB confirmed that teachers who plan in advance are prepared for each lesson, and they *'take everything they need with them to class, they do not walk up and down, there is no in and out of classes'* which influences instruction time negatively. In the event of a major loss of instruction time owing to strikes or staff development programmes, teachers plan in advance to ensure that subject content is still covered. In this regard participant HoD DA confirmed that teachers are encouraged *'to work ahead of the work schedule to prevent falling behind if there are upcoming strikes'*. The golden rule is planning *'to be proactive; if we are aware of interruptions, learners are informed and everyone works harder to get ahead of the work schedule'* (HoD DA). Participant HoD DA pointed out, however, that they are not always aware of possible interruptions, such as teacher strikes or impromptu visits by officials from the Department of Education.

At school E, extra classes are scheduled on Saturdays to catch up on work lost because of unforeseen interruptions affecting the normal school day schedule. Participants emphasised that it remains the responsibility of the subject teacher to cover the required curriculum, whether there are interruptions or not in the teaching programme. A crucial fact pointed out by participants is the difference in standard between content facilitated normally and content forced to be facilitated with extra interventions owing to interruptions. In this regard, participant HoD AA was of the opinion that *'what is unfortunate though, is that work being caught-up is not done at the same standards as the work normally taught'*. At school A, extra instruction time is arranged by using test periods for teaching and learning when learners are not scheduled for a test for the specific test period.

From the interviews with participants, it was clear that effective time management includes a five-minute break between lessons for learners to rotate and to attend to personal needs. School principal F explained as follows: *'There is time to rotate from one class to another or whatever the learner chooses to do. If the second bell rings and you are late, then you are in trouble'*. In order to protect instruction time, visitors are not allowed to interrupt the teaching programme by requesting to see a learner or teacher during the school day. Appointments with visitors occur either before school or after school. However, special arrangements are made for visitors contributing to teaching and learning by addressing certain grades or groups of learners on topical matter. These visitors *'are accommodated during life orientation lessons, assemblies or grade meetings'* (SP D).

The selected schools use an intercom system for announcements. These announcements are managed constructively ensuring that interruptions to teaching and learning are kept to a minimum. Announcements occur before break or at the end of the school day. At school F, relevant information is further communicated to learners on a daily basis by means of a mass gathering of learners in the school's courtyard. During the day, the intercom is used for specific classes only at school F to prevent the whole school being interrupted by announcements applying to only a few. Participants pointed out that the use of cell phones can either be conducive to the teaching programme or can be regarded as a timewaster, depending on the teacher's management of cell phone use by learners. At all of the selected schools, the use of cell phones during lesson time is strictly forbidden, except when used for research purposes in a specific lesson. Strict disciplinary measures communicated to learners in advance are used when cell phones interrupt instruction time, such as that *'cell phones are confiscated for a week'* (SP F). Teachers are aware that they are not allowed to use their cell phones during lessons, *'except if the cell phone call is in the interest of the school'* (HoD BA). Many of these cell phone calls accommodated during lesson time relate to the management of the extracurricular programme demanding that teachers answer phone calls during instruction time. Teachers are encouraged to make work-related cell phone calls during their free periods to ensure that instruction time is not jeopardised.

With regard to the management of discipline-related arrangements, school principal F explained the arrangement of detention that relates to learners being kept during break in the classroom of *'a teacher that has break detention as an extracurricular responsibility'*. Participants emphasised that the managing of discipline is contingent on teacher personality as some teachers ensure discipline all by themselves while others rely on the support of the school's disciplinary system to ensure order in their classrooms. In this regard, school principal A proclaimed that *'the disciplinary system is the backbone for staff that are not able to manage discipline in their classrooms'*. At school E, minor disciplinary incidents, such as not completing homework, are dealt with by means of an *'incident book'* (HoD EB) whereby three occurring incidents are referred to the senior teacher for further intervention, mostly relating to detention arrangements. Participants agreed, however, that teachers remain responsible for the management of discipline in their classrooms as the most effective way of optimal time management.

A crucial strategy to counter time wasting is meticulous punctuality exercised constantly and consistently by everyone. In order to enforce learner punctuality, teachers must set the example by being in their classrooms before learners arrive. Consistently enforcing punctuality results in *'learners knowing which teachers are strict when they are late'* (HoD BA). With regard to punctuality at the start of the school day, learners who arrive late at schools E and F have to sign in a late-arrivals-book and when learners are late owing to transport problems, the bus driver has to report to reception with an explanation. Learners attend class immediately after signing the late-arrival-book. Repeating incidents of late arrival are followed-up with an appointment with parents. At all of the selected schools, learners who are absent from school submit a letter of explanation on the day on which they return to school. When learners are absent from an examination, they also submit a letter of explanation on the first day of their return, even if this first day *'is the first day of the new term'* (SP F). Failing to provide convincing explanations results in disciplinary measures entailing periods of detention. As mentioned in paragraph 4.4.4.2, teachers carry out roll call at the beginning of each lesson to monitor learner attendance. Continual learner absence has a negative influence on the academic performance of learners and on the academic standards of the school as a whole. A possible disciplinary measure to counter continual learner absence when contacting parents about the problem, is to

encourage parents' moral support by pointing out that *'their child can be prevented from writing the examination when absent for a certain amount of days'* (SP A).

With regard to teacher punctuality, school principal E enlightens staff on time management strategies. When teacher tardiness is a recurring matter, school principals attend to these individual cases personally. In order to encourage teachers to being present daily, participant SP A demands that teachers complete leave forms when they are absent. Participant SP B confirmed that it had not yet been necessary to reprimand any teacher on personal punctuality issues, but teachers are reminded constantly of the importance of punctuality. Participants emphasised that teachers must inform the school principal when they are late for school. In this regard, some of the school principals demand a phone call explanation whilst others are comfortable with a cell phone text message. At school D, a finger print reading system monitors teachers' classroom arrival time and attendance. Records of these classroom arrivals are submitted to the school principal for scrutiny at the end of each month. School E has a time-book-system according to which teacher attendance is monitored. This time-book-system consists of two books, *'one for those that arrive on time and one for those that arrive after 7h30'* (HoD ED). School E also has a permission book that teachers sign when they have permission to leave before the end of the school day. At school F, teacher absenteeism is handled individually with a strict approach to blatant tardiness such as that *'with some teachers we request a medical certificate if they are regularly absent on a Friday'* (SP F).

It was clear from the interviews with participants that teacher absence has a severely negative influence on constructive teaching and learning. Apart from affecting their own classes' teaching and learning, absent teachers are also the cause of increased disciplinary problems *'because the learners that come from a so called free lesson because of the teacher's absence are less disciplined than learners that have been working'* (SP D). These learners arriving from a 'free lesson' *'have an attitude of unrest when entering the next lesson and then the next teacher has difficulty to get control over the class'* (SP D). School E had appointed an additional staff member who is qualified in mathematics, sciences and technical subjects (par 4.4.1.1). This staff member continues with most of the subject curriculums in the absence of a teacher as she has access to all the textbooks and essential resources of the different subjects

to present most of the lessons constructively. At the other research sites, teachers who have free periods invigilate the classes of the absent teacher. These invigilated lessons are used for formative assessment or to engage in work as prescribed by the absent teacher. At school B, a designated venue is used that is situated at a distance from the other classes to accommodate learners of classes where the teacher is absent. It was clear that at all of the selected schools, arrangements are in place to minimise the prevalence of 'free lessons' owing to teacher absenteeism.

Serious disciplinary problems or disciplinary problems of a recurring nature are referred to learners' parents to prevent further classroom interruptions and a loss of whole class and whole school instruction time. Problems of a recurring nature relate to *'regular absenteeism from lessons and tests'* (HoD AA) whereby parents are contacted with the relevant teacher following-up on improvement strategies. In this regard parents are empowered with know-how on assistance with their children's negative behaviour.

Constructive discipline relates to effective monitoring which, at school E, Heads of Department assigned to monitor different school building corridors and school building blocks, including bathrooms, ensure that order and discipline prevail. Although additional instruction time can be arranged by extending the length of the school day, logistical arrangements relating mainly to learner transport hinder such possibilities. Participants agreed that a normal school day consists of an adequate amount of time for ensuring that teaching and learning are carried out efficiently. This adequate amount of time, however, demands constructive focus to ensure that all available time is used optimally.

4.4.6 The daily school schedule

With regard to a school's daily schedule, participants emphasised that all activities contributing to the holistic development of learners are important. For that reason, *'a school should be a very flexible place; your quality of education may never stand back for any activity'* (HoD BA). Teachers must adapt to continually changing circumstances and arrange contingent plans for a sufficient amount of time spent on instruction time. Teachers are, however, faced with an imbalance between the amount

of time prescribed for completing subject curriculums and the real time available according to the school's daily schedule. In this regard, participant HoD CA explained that the scope of work to be covered in each subject does not correlate with the real school programme because some days allocated on the school programme are used for extracurricular activities, such as athletics. Furthermore, the suggested work schedule as provided by the Department of Education '*does not provide for assessments*' (HoD CA). With this difference in the work schedule of subjects and the real school programme that caters for all of the school's needs including the extracurricular programme, teachers are under constant pressure to complete the required subject curriculums on time.

Participants emphasised that some subject curriculums, such as those for mathematics, physical science and accounting, provide a challenge to complete within the allotted work schedule timeframes as prescribed by the Department of Education. The perception is that time available is decreasing or at least remaining the same while the work to be covered is consistently increasing. The result is that quality is lost owing to quantity. Participants raised their opinions on the imbalance between content facilitation and the time available for that facilitation as follows:

'The CAPS is so comprehensive that I am not able to give quality education; it is quantity only because you try just to finish every topic that there is' (HoD BC).

'Subject scopes are too big and the allocated time is not enough' (HoD CC).

'The subjects like accounting, mathematics and physical sciences struggle a lot to finish the curriculum. The teachers who convey information only and not skills also are able to finish' (HoD FC).

'Enough time to cover the curriculum is only possible when teachers sacrifice personal time to teach after school hours. According to the scope of content to cover, time during the normal school day hours is not adequate' (HoD CA).

The topics pertaining to changes in the daily school schedule that will be discussed next relate to an increase in instruction time, the communication of changes to, and the handling of, the daily school schedule.

4.4.6.1 Increasing instruction time

All the selected schools adhered to the minimum number of instructional hours per week as prescribed by the Department of Education. Participants emphasised that teaching and learning would not benefit from an extended school programme for reasons relating to the learners' span of concentration, the need for the holistic development of the child, teacher corps capacity and the nurturing of teachers' limited personal time. In this regard participants explained as follows:

'We cannot make lessons longer; learners will not be able to concentrate for that long. We cannot make the academic day longer, for it will interfere with sport and a balance is necessary' (HoD BC).

'If you want to allocate more lessons to mathematics, for example, you will have to appoint more maths teachers. There must be a balance between time available, subjects that need more instruction time and the staff available for those subjects' (SP A).

'Teachers will not be able to comply with increased instruction time because they have personal responsibilities after school hours' (HoD FB).

'The allocated instruction time must be used optimally within formal school hours. Extracurricular activities are important because they are about the holistic development of the child. You cannot only be academically orientated' (HoD DA).

It was clear that an extended daily school programme is not the answer to improved teaching and learning for valid reasons raised by the different participants. What was

emphasised as being crucially important is the concerted efforts of staff to ensure that the time allocated for instruction during the formal school hours is used optimally.

4.4.6.2 Communication of changes to the daily schedule

Schools must inform all relevant parties of changes to the daily school schedule. HoD AB explained how school A ensures that everyone is informed and aware of daily school functioning and of all possible changes to the daily school schedule: *'We distribute a newsletter with the following week's programme. Test dates are also in the newsletter two weeks in advance. This information is also on Facebook and Twitter'*. Sudden changes to the daily schedule distributed to all stakeholders are communicated the day before, or in the morning in the staffroom. Four of the selected schools use the SMS system to communicate with parents. School F communicates announcements on the school's website, which is an effective way of communication with parents who have daily access to the Internet.

At some of the selected schools, staff share information via a WhatsApp group in which all members of staff are included. In this WhatsApp group important information relating to changes to the time allocations for periods the next day, or urgent information regarding learners is shared. Teachers then individually share this information with their learners. At school A, a white board in the staffroom reveals all the activities for the following two weeks enabling teachers to plan accordingly. Adjustments to bell times are carried out at all of the selected schools when events that are arranged in addition to the normal school day schedule exceed the allocated time. At school A, the school secretary recalculates bell times equally amongst all lessons remaining for the day and communicates the new bell times in the staff's WhatsApp group for the attention of teachers.

4.4.6.3 Suggested changes to the daily schedule for the effective use of instruction time

All of the selected schools agreed that their school day starts at a proper time, namely 7h30. Before the start of the school day teachers gather in the staffroom for a brief meeting to discuss the schedule for the day (par 4.4.1.4). During this meeting, the

staff is informed of changes to the daily school schedule. Three of the selected schools stated that lessons are swapped around to ensure that learners who have to leave early because of extracurricular commitments are able to write tests that had been scheduled for the end of the school day. Swopping lessons also ensures that Grade 12 subjects such as mathematics, accounting and physical sciences that need more instruction time are presented as the first lessons of the day to prevent a possible loss of instruction time by the end of the school day.

School A was the only school with more than six lessons per day owing to a larger variety of subject offerings. School principal A motivated the value of a double period lesson for subjects such as languages and mathematics. These double period lessons are especially functional in the senior grades where learners' concentration span has developed to such an extent that they are able to remain engaged with content for an extended period of time. The length of lessons at schools with only six lessons per day is between 45 and 55 minutes. Participants pointed out that staff prefer longer lessons and fewer lessons per day in order to have more time for engagement and proper mastering of the content because, *'if you give learners a lesson today they finish the lesson on the same day; they will forget what you said yesterday and you will have to repeat yourself'* (HoD CC). HoD FC concurred that shorter lessons do not allow for the monitoring of homework and the complete covering of a new topic resulting in the need to repeat work before continuing with the topic the next period.

With regard to the functionality of the number of school breaks per day, participants stated the advantages of having only one break per day. It was pointed out that two breaks per day result in further interruption to teaching and learning actions. Classroom discipline is more challenging with two breaks because learners leave and return to classes twice during the day whereas *'with one decent break, learners have time to do what they want to do and then return to class'* (SP D). The selected schools with one break per day confirmed its sufficiency for the proper functioning of daily school activities. The schools with two breaks per day admitted that the second, shorter break was influencing the time spent on teaching and learning negatively because *'the second shorter break is insufficient; you barely have time to sit'* (HoD BB). School principal A mentioned that learners want to use the bathroom throughout

the school day, even if they have two breaks available. The five-minute rotation time between periods caters functionally for these necessary body breaks.

Prior to the start of the examinations, and when the extracurricular programme is less intensive, the scheduling of extra classes after school is meaningful to ensure the complete coverage and mastering of subject content. These extra classes are then scheduled as an extension of the school day for a limited period of time and with the assurance that all the learners are able to attend these opportunities for increased teaching and learning. Apart from extra classes, some of the selected schools provide learners with an after-school environment on the school premises that is conducive for studying and completing their homework. In this environment, teachers are available to assist with studying and with supervising learners' preparation for the examination. School principal C explained that at their school they arrange '*camps where the learners sleep at school to prepare for the examination*'.

It was clear from the interviews with participants that all the selected schools provide opportunities for learners to work after school in an environment conducive for studying. At school A, learners can book into the school's hostel where they can eat and study and learners can make appointments with their subject teachers for extra, subject-specific assistance after school. At school C, classrooms are open until the end of the afternoon's extracurricular activities providing an opportunity for learners '*to come and work until very late in the afternoons*' (HoD CB). At school D, learners are allowed to work in the library after school. It was evident that all the selected schools are focused on the optimal use of instruction time by providing an after-school environment conducive for a continuing of teaching and learning.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Answers to the question on the effective use of instruction time for improved learner performance revealed that a sound culture of teaching and learning ensures the effective use of instruction time with related potential for improved learner performance. A sound culture of teaching and learning that is already established on the first day of a Grade 8's secondary school career includes several strategies to accommodate both poor performers and high achievers. Strategies to enable slow

learners to be engaged in their schoolwork pertain to differentiated class arrangements with motivational strategies for high achievers including acknowledgement by means of tours, badges and a special dress code with applicable comments on school reports. A focused approach to the professional development of staff and communicating important information and relevant actions to staff on a daily basis contributes to a sound culture of teaching and learning consisting of pro-active arrangements to ensure smooth functioning. Teacher accountability for classroom well-being ensures constructive discipline supported by strong leadership from the school management team and constant encouragement for proper behaviour communicated during assemblies. Monitoring, followed by constructive feedback, encourages teachers and learners to be proactive about successful teaching and learning. Teamwork based on focused collaboration capacitates each member of staff to contribute to improved teaching and learning.

The provision of extra classes to complete subject curriculums and teachers who are prepared for every lesson presented during the normal school day ensure successful learning. The facilitation of curriculum content, which is accompanied by emotional support to learners, ensures a positive educational climate for learning to be realised optimally. Apart from psycho-social encouragement, emotional support to learners also includes physical support ensuring sufficient food and clothes. A focus on the holistic development of learners, reliance on parents' moral support for acting in the best interests of each learner, and the management of the daily school schedule to ensure an optimal use of instruction time result in satisfactory learner achievements.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

During this study on the effective use of instruction time it became evident that the optimal use of instruction time is a problem that most secondary schools are facing. As an educational institution, schools are expected to strive towards improving the academic performance of learners. Improved learner performance is achieved through the effective management of the daily school schedule. The role of the school principal as the executive instructional leader of the school within a context of shared instructional leadership with teachers and the school management team contributes to the effective management of instruction time as well as to the academic performance of learners. Timewasters during the school day prevent learners from enjoying the amount of instruction time they are entitled to and hampers learners' chances to perform to their full potential. In this study, constructive strategies and approaches are identified to manage available instruction time effectively for the improved academic performance of learners.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The summary of the study is guided by the research aims stated in paragraph 1.5 and repeated in paragraph 3.2 and paragraph 4.1. These aims entailed determining the role of the school principal as instructional leader in ensuring the optimal use of instruction time, identifying the main factors inhibiting instruction time and investigating possible changes to the daily school schedule to ensure instruction time is used optimally.

As explained in paragraph 1.8, the study was divided into five chapters. A summary of the first four chapters is provided in the following paragraphs.

In Chapter 1, the background to the study was set with instructional leadership as the theoretical framework of the study (par 1.2.1). Even though there are different actions to be carried out during a normal school day's functioning, instruction time remains

most important and the primary focus of the study (par 1.2). It is of national interest that there is a change in the academic performance of learners and the academic standards of education in South Africa. Instruction time is a universal resource that is available to all schools. Available instruction time, when used effectively, can improve the current state of education in the country, equipping learners with knowledge and skills to improve their academic performance (par 1.3). For this reason the study aimed to determine strategies and approaches for managing instruction time effectively.

Chapter 2 provided a literature review. In Chapter 2, the role of the school principal as an instructional leader is discussed within the context of shared instructional leadership with staff and how this shared arrangement contributes to the satisfactory performance of learners (par 2.2). Aspects, such as the role that the school principal fulfils in creating a supportive culture of teaching and learning and increasing available instruction time (par 2.2.1), motivating teacher collaboration (par 2.2.2) and using staff as enforcers of strategies and approaches for effective teaching and learning (par 2.2.3) contribute to the academic performance of learners. The amount of instruction time available affects the academic performance of learners (par 2.3.1) and should be used effectively. Owing to the limited availability of instruction time schools make a concerted effort to reduce time wasting activities (par 2.3.2). Maximizing available instruction time empowers teachers with more teaching opportunities to complete the required curriculum. A loss in instruction time affects the academic performance of all learners negatively whereas additional instruction time is to the benefit of both teacher and learner (par 2.4.1; par 2.4.2). In addition to the role of the school management team as instructional leaders in managing the school programme, teachers are responsible for the optimal use of available instruction time in the classroom (par 2.4.3).

Despite the hindering effect of administrative duties on the instructional leadership role of school principals (par 2.5.1), school principals remain primarily responsible for the quality of teaching and learning at their schools (par 2.5.2). School principals improve the quality of teaching and learning through the constant communication of the school's vision. Communicating the school's vision consistently creates a culture of sound teaching and learning and contributes to the engendering of an effective

management of the daily school schedule which includes alerting staff to timewasters, monitoring learner performance, monitoring teachers' lesson preparation, and managing curriculum facilitation and learning programmes (par 2.5.2). Instruction time is optimally used when salient timewasters are identified. Timewasters that impede the effective use of instruction time pertain to aspects such as teacher and learner tardiness with regard to arriving on time for lessons, teacher and learner absence from school, and non-academic events such as sport team meetings and annual interschool competitions taking place during the school day. Lesson disruptions caused by the non-academic responsibilities of teachers such as administrative responsibilities, visits to teachers from parents and other people during school hours and announcements via the intercom system also serve as hampering timewasters (par 2.6.5). Teachers who are not prepared for lessons, teachers using cell phones during lesson time and the noise caused by maintenance of school grounds during lessons influence the optimal use of available instruction time negatively (par 2.6.10).

Changes to the daily school schedule allow for a more effective use of instruction time. Some of these changes relate to a change in the number of lessons per day, the length of each lesson, and having only one extended break per day. These changes instantly increase the amount of instruction time available (par 2.7). The setting and implementing of strategies to counter time wasting activities are categorised as either direct or indirect strategies. Direct strategies include a decrease in the administrative responsibilities of teachers and encouraging teachers to improved classroom management skills to maintain discipline. Teachers also arrange for additional instruction time after school hours with the offering of extra classes. A decrease in teacher and learner absenteeism and teacher and learner tardiness in reaching classes on time directly influences the availability of instruction time. Direct strategies also include having fewer intercom interruptions during lesson time, scheduling the maintenance of school ground activities to take place before or after school hours and preventing visitors from interrupting lessons. A concerted effort to decrease the early dismissal of learners for all kinds of appointments made by their parents also contributes to more time available for teaching and learning. Implementing these direct strategies contributes to a more optimal use of available instruction time (par 2.8.1). Indirect strategies for the effective use of instruction time include the constant monitoring of lessons by the instructional leaders, fewer breaks per school day,

teacher preparedness for every lesson with this preparedness based on subject expertise, and teacher mentoring on a consistent basis (par 2.8).

Chapter 3 focussed on the research methodology used for the empirical investigation where data were collected in order to answer the research questions pertaining to the role of instructional leaders in the academic performance of learners, the effect of timewasters on instruction time and the changes to the daily school schedule to arrange for increased instruction time. Research sampling based on convenience and applicability was directed by the academic performance of Grade 12 learners for the period 2012 to 2016 where six schools were selected as research sites (par 3.4). In order to understand the phenomenon of using instruction time optimally, a qualitative research approach (par 3.3.1) included individual interviews (par 3.5.1) with the six school principals and focus group interviews (par 3.5.2) with the Heads of Department of the selected schools. The Head of Department participants were purposefully selected as information-rich participants based on their direct involvement in teaching and learning and in the management of the daily school schedule (par 3.4.1.2). The research design, based on a qualitative research approach incorporating interviewing with 21 participants, was sufficient in answering the research questions satisfactorily. The collected data from the interviews were analysed and interpreted using the consecutive steps of qualitative content analysis relating to reading and re-reading each transcribed interview to identify recurring ideas emerging as labelled categories and interpreted as research findings (par 3.6).

In Chapter 4, the research findings from the empirical investigation were discussed. From an analysis and interpretation of the collected data from the individual and focus group interviews, six categories were identified that contributed to clarifying the research aims. These six categories included ensuring a sound culture of teaching and learning (par 4.4.1), improving the quality of teaching and learning (par 4.4.2), and responding to external factors hindering learner performance (par 4.4.3). The remaining three categories included contributions of role players to a sound culture of teaching and learning (par 4.4.4), the management of timewasters (par 4.4.5) and the daily schedule of a school (par 4.4.6). Establishing a sound culture of teaching and learning is the primary goal of all schools to ensure instruction time is used effectively. A sound culture of teaching and learning is developed when the school provides

support to poor-performing learners through intervention strategies that provide teachers with more opportunities to teach as well as learners with a better chance to improve their performance (par 4.4.1.1). The persistent input of the top-performing learners and the academic improvement of all learners must be formally acknowledged (par 4.4.1.2; par 4.4.1.3).

The school principal contributes to the establishment of a sound culture of teaching and learning through the approaches and related strategies of showing and emphasising respect for teaching and learning; focusing on the constant professional development of staff; being directly involved in the education of the learners; and leading the staff by example (par 4.4.1.4). The discipline of learners in the classroom is an indication of the culture of teaching and learning prevailing in a school, which can be conducive to learning or can be a serious timewaster when ill-disciplined learners have to be disciplined before teaching and learning can proceed (par 4.4.1.5). Within the context of shared instructional leadership, all teachers are instructional leaders who, together with the school management team, contribute to a sound culture of teaching and learning (par 4.4.1.6). The school principal plays a central role in improving teaching and learning by collaborating with teachers in determining goals for learners and monitoring the realisation of these goals set for each learner for improved performance. Teaching and learning are also improved by allocating teachers functionally and applicably to specific grades and subjects, the monitoring of the performance of teachers and the constant giving of public praise for hard working staff (par 4.4.2.1).

Heads of Department develop a sound culture of teaching and learning through the meticulous monitoring of teacher and learner input and through providing academic and emotional support to colleagues (par 4.4.2.2). A sound culture of teaching and learning is enhanced by focussing on the holistic development of learners through continual teacher collaboration and the setting of goals for teachers and learners to ensure the realisation of the holistic development of learners. Teachers are engaged in continual assessment to determine learner progress and to provide feedback to learners followed by the setting of subject improvement plans to support learners with challenging content areas, which require more attention (par 4.4.2.3). In this regard, schools make use of scheduled extra classes to increase instruction time (par 4.4.2.4).

The planning and preparation of teachers ensure effective lessons and promote a sound culture of teaching and learning (par 4.4.2.5). Heads of Department are responsible for the moderation of examination papers and the moderation of marking to ensure that the work that is completed is of good quality (par 4.4.2.6).

The challenges and problems that learners face externally to the school environment influence their academic performance resulting in the prevalence of school-based support teams to provide support and assistance of a physical and emotional nature to learners in need. These actions of support and assistance have an indirect but positive effect on the academic performance of learners (par 4.4.3). All role players, teachers, learners and parents, contribute to a sound culture of teaching and learning. Learners who take ownership of their own progress by working independently regardless of teachers' presence promote a sound culture of teaching and learning (par 4.4.4.1). Teachers who focus on their primary responsibility of teaching and who utilise available instruction time effectively by valuing the academic performance of all learners promote a sound culture of teaching and learning. These teachers teach beyond the subject curriculum and build positive interpersonal relationships with their learners and this contributes to a healthy educational climate as an encouragement for improved learning. Team teaching, as the collaboration of subject teachers from different grades to assist each other with the facilitation of subject content in the presentation of lessons, ensures better teaching for the sake of better learning (par 4.4.4.2). A school's culture of teaching and learning is enhanced when parents are positively involved in the education of their children. Schools communicate with parents constantly and involve them in behavioural and academic related problems involving their child (par 4.4.4.3).

An important part of the effective management of a school's teaching and learning programme is the identification and management of time wasting activities that affect available instruction time. Some of the timewasters relate to the administrative responsibilities of staff that do not directly contribute to the academic performance of learners (par 4.4.5.1). Teachers who are unprepared for lessons are ineffective in the facilitation of lesson content and waste valuable instruction time. Teachers and learners who are continually late for class or frequently absent inhibit progress with the subject work schedule, wasting valuable instruction time. Intercom

announcements throughout the day disrupt all lessons even if only for a brief moment. Valuable instruction time is also lost owing to the professional development of staff during school hours and scheduled (or unscheduled) departmental visits, which require teachers to leave classes unattended resulting in teachers falling behind with their subjects' work schedules (par 4.4.5.2). Extracurricular activities, which require learners to leave school early and teachers who attend sporting meetings cause a loss in instruction time. Learners who schedule appointments, such as appointments for a driver's licence, during school hours miss newly covered subject content that has to be retaught.

Class rotation is considered a timewaster when learners linger between classes. Teachers with a *laissez faire* attitude towards teaching do not value instruction time causing a loss in instruction time (par 4.4.5.2). When discipline is not maintained in the classroom and then requires intervention, the teacher is not able to continue with a lesson as planned, resulting in a further loss of instruction time. A lack of discipline includes the use of cell phones without permission during a lesson and monitoring to determine whether homework has been completed satisfactorily. The maintenance of the school premises during school hours is a significant disruption to an environment that should be conducive to teaching and learning (par 4.4.5.2).

Once timewasters are identified, intervention strategies are set to prevent a further loss of instruction time. Intervention strategies pertain to encouraging teachers to be prepared for every lesson and to be on time for lessons. Teachers who know of their absence in advance must prepare work for learners to ensure continued progress with the subject curriculum. Time that is wasted owing to class rotation is minimised through the use of a five minute rotation bell between lessons. Visitors are allowed only before or after school hours with no disruption tolerated during lesson time. Intercom announcements are restricted to occur before break and at the end of the school day to prevent the continual disruption of classes throughout the school day. Teachers initially apply their personal classroom management skills to maintain good discipline before approaching seniors for support according to the school disciplinary system, because approaching seniors teachers for assistance implies jeopardising senior teachers' time that could have been used for teaching and learning. Requesting a letter from parents to explain the absence of their child engenders awareness for the

importance of instruction time. Informing parents of their child's behaviour and academic performance empowers parents to provide assistance with their children's progress. Heads of Department monitor corridors constantly to ensure that all learners and teachers are present and actively engaged in teaching and learning (par 4.4.5.3).

The daily schedule of a school allows for increased available instruction time when managed effectively. An increase in the amount of instruction time by extending the school day is not feasible because of logistical challenges with learner transport, teacher availability and interference with the extracurricular programme which is equally important for learners' holistic development (par 4.4.6.1). All changes that are made to the daily school schedule because of unplanned activities, such as Departmental visits or staff meetings exceeding time limits, are communicated to teachers, learners, and parents by means of communication methods including social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp (par 4.4.6.2).

Functional arrangements to the school's daily schedule to ensure that the available instruction time is used optimally pertain to a swapping of lessons. Lesson swapping should ensure that subjects with more content to be covered, such as mathematics, accounting and physical science, and lessons for Grade 12 assessment are completed at the beginning of the school day to compensate for a possible early departure of learners owing to extracurricular arrangements. Having six lessons in a school day allows for extended instruction time owing to longer lessons and less time lost with class rotations. These six lessons are split between the third and fourth lesson with a sufficient break for learners to rest and be prepared for the rest of the school day. A formal extension of the curriculum programme, with extra classes for a limited period of time after school without affecting the extracurricular programme, increases instruction time constructively. A culture of teaching and learning is enhanced by providing learners who are keen to continue with homework after school with the opportunity of completing their school work in an environment on the school premise that is conducive to learning (par 4.4.6.3).

5.3 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

With reference to the research questions stated in paragraph 1.4 and repeated in paragraph 3.1 relating to ensuring the optimal use of instruction time by identifying time wasting activities and determining strategies and approaches to counter aspects impeding the optimal use of instruction time, conclusions emanated from a summary of the literature and empirical research findings.

From the findings from the literature study and empirical investigation, it is clear that the effective use of instruction time is a challenge that schools face on a daily basis. This challenge, relating to an imbalance between the amount of time prescribed for completing subject curriculums and the real time available according to the school's daily schedule, demands concerted efforts to use instruction time optimally. Using instruction time optimally influences the academic performance of learners positively and it is, therefore, important that it be encouraged on a daily school functioning basis. The main conclusions deduced from this study on the effective management of instruction time to ensure sufficient opportunities for learners to perform optimally are discussed next.

- **The establishment of a sound culture of teaching and learning**

Instructional leaders are primarily responsible for the establishment of a sound culture of teaching and learning. Instructional leaders who work towards the establishment of a sound culture of teaching and learning directly influence the academic performance of learners positively. All role players, namely the school principal as the executive instructional leader, teachers, learners and parents, contribute to a sound culture of teaching and learning. School principals establish a sound culture of teaching and learning through a dedicated focus on consistently pursuing improved competency, keeping staff accountable for learner performance, having direct interaction with learners within the classroom and during assemblies and leading staff by the example they set. Teachers contribute to a culture of teaching and learning by embracing leadership responsibilities within their separate classrooms and by pursuing their school's academic vision and valuing instruction time optimally. Learners contribute to a culture of teaching and learning by taking full responsibility for their own work and

their own progress. Parents contribute to a culture of teaching and learning by being informed about their child's scholastic progress and moral behaviour and being supportive to the school with regard to the education of their children (par 2.5.2.1; par 2.5.2.2; par 4.4.1; par 4.4.4).

- **Improvement of the quality of teaching and learning**

By establishing a sound culture of teaching and learning, improved learning is ensured. The school principal, Heads of Department and teachers each have a specific role to fulfil in the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning. The school principal improves the quality of teaching and learning through the monitoring of the work of teachers followed by constructive feedback and acknowledging the hard work of staff. Heads of Department improve the quality of teaching and learning through a programme of consistent monitoring of work done, comparing the completed work to a subject's work schedule and the moderation of examinations and marking. By mentoring less-experienced teachers, providing emotional support and arranging assistance with tasks and responsibilities of an affected teacher, quality teaching and learning is sustained. Based on a teamwork approach of teacher collaboration to set goals for learners and themselves, teachers participate in sound assessment practices and feedback on assessment actions. Subject improvement plans involve after care of examinations and assessments actions contributing to good quality teaching and learning (par 2.2.2; par 2.5.2.5; par 2.5.2.6; par 2.5.2.7; par 4.4.2).

- **Role players understanding their responsibility with regard to using instruction time optimally**

The school principal, Heads of Department, teachers, learners and parents understand their individual responsibilities with regard to the optimal use of instruction time. The school principal is responsible for the arrangement of an increase in available instruction time and implementing strategies such as managing teacher tardiness and absenteeism to provide for the facilitation of the curriculum. Heads of Department are responsible for creating an awareness of the optimal use of instruction time through the supervision of lessons and the monitoring of the progress of facilitated

content in the work schedule. Teachers are responsible for effective classroom management ensuring optimal use of instruction time. Learners who move between classes without wasting time and completing homework daily use instruction time optimally. The parents' responsibility with regard to the optimal use of instruction time involves not collecting their children from school before the end of the school day without a legitimate reason and encouraging their children to be dedicated about school attendance (par 2.2.1; par 2.5.2.4; par 2.2.2; par 2.2.3; par 2.4.3; par 4.4.2.2).

- **Alertness to the optimal use of limited instruction time**

Instructional leaders are responsible for the creation of an awareness of the optimal use of limited instruction time, which is constantly communicated to teachers, learners and parents. There is an imbalance between the amount of time prescribed for the completion of subject curriculums and the real time available according to the school's daily programme and this emphasises the importance of increased alertness for instruction time to be used optimally. Being alert to the value of limited instruction time motivates teachers towards effective classroom management to ensure time is used constructively. Schools, which continually communicate the value of limited instruction time, create an alertness amongst learners and parents who, in turn, respect instruction time for improved learner performance (par 2.3.1; par 2.3.2; par 2.4.1; par 2.4.2; par 4.4.6).

- **The identification of timewasters with intervention strategies and approaches as countering responses**

For increased instruction time instructional leaders analyse the day-to-day school activities to determine timewasters that cause a reduction in instruction time. The three major timewasters relate to teachers who are unprepared for their lessons, who are absent from school, and who are late for their classes. Heads of Department monitor the quality of teachers' work through book control and classroom visits and through the monitoring of teaching and learning progress by comparing completed work with the work schedule. By identifying factors that are causing a loss in

instruction time and following strategies to minimise this loss, a further loss in instruction time is prevented (par 2.5.1; par 2.6; par 4.4.5).

- **Changes to the daily school schedule for an optimal use of instruction time**

Instructional leaders analyse the effectiveness of delivering the instruction programme according to the school's daily schedule to ensure that all scheduled activities contribute to a sound culture of teaching and learning. A positive arrangement includes swapping of lessons to accommodate subjects with challenging content, such as mathematics, physical sciences and accounting, to be presented earlier during the school day before lesson time is jeopardised by actions such as learners departing for extracurricular activities. By making necessary changes to the daily schedule regarding the number of lessons and breaks per day and the length of lessons and breaks, a daily schedule is set in place that values instruction time and contributes to the establishment of a constructive culture of teaching and learning (par 2.5.2.3; par 2.7; par 4.4.6.3).

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

In accordance with the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made to make schools aware of the value of instruction time and the optimal use of available instruction time for satisfactory learner performance:

RECOMMENDATION 1: Continually acknowledge learner performance in all grades and levels of engagement (par 4.4.1.1; par 4.4.1.2; par 4.4.1.3)

Recognition of learner performance in all grades and on all levels of engagement develops a sound culture of teaching and learning. This recognition is achieved through continual feedback of a constructive nature in classes and by means of written comments on tests and in school reports. Recognition to serve as encouragement for sustained performance is also arranged through top ten announcements, academic tours, upward mobility in differentiated classes and formal certificates that acknowledge academic improvement.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Teachers gain control over learner discipline (par 2.6.4; par 4.4.1.5)

Learner discipline directly affects the culture of teaching and learning prevailing at a school. Arrange for teachers to attend workshops on the management of discipline in order for teachers to be empowered to manage discipline in their classrooms constructively. These workshops must capacitate teachers with discretion skills to know when to use their own disciplinary intervention methods and when to refer disciplinary matters to the school's disciplinary system.

RECOMMENDATION 3: School principals understand their roles and responsibilities as instructional leaders in the establishment of a sound culture of teaching and learning and the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning (par 2.2.1; par 2.2.3; par 2.5.2.1; par 2.5.2.2; par 2.5.2.5; par 4.4.1.4; par 4.4.2.1)

School principals contribute to the establishment of a sound culture of teaching and learning and improving the quality of teaching and learning by constantly communicating respect for instruction time and being directly involved in the learning programme. The establishment of a sound culture of teaching and learning entails communicating the school's vision to staff, learners and parents on a constant basis and ensuring that necessary resources for teaching and learning are timeously available. As staff assist in countering factors that inhibit instruction time, school principals invest in the professional development of staff by valuing staff's wellbeing and acknowledging their contribution to creating a sound culture of teaching and learning.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Heads of Department mentor teachers and do continual quality control (par 4.4.2.2; par 4.4.2.6).

Heads of Department provide academic and emotional support to the teachers in their Department. They ensure accurate teaching of subject content through the monitoring of learners' books. To support colleagues in times of emotional distress, Heads of Department arrange for the sharing of the workload amongst teachers in the same

department. Heads of Department moderate the setting and marking of examination papers to ensure a fair and relevant assessment of learner outcomes. Mark analyses and the setting of subject improvement plans follow the moderation of the outcomes of learner assessment.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Empower teachers to manage instruction time optimally and to improve their quality of teaching for improved learning (par 2.2.2; par 2.5.2.5; par 2.6.1; par 2.6.2; par 2.6.4; par 4.4.2.3; par 4.4.2.4; par 4.4.2.5; par 4.4.5.2; par 4.4.5.3).

Teachers use instruction time optimally by being on time for all lessons and being prepared to teach subject content effectively. This avoids time wasting relating to the repeating of lessons owing to the learners' lack of mastering the content of the lesson. School management monitors teacher absence to prevent an unnecessary hampering of teaching and learning. Teachers develop teaching skills through sharing subject expertise on content facilitation and methods of presentation. Teachers monitor learner performance by setting goals for each individual learner and monitoring the realising of these goals. Teachers engage in thorough planning and lesson preparation and in continual assessment, followed by constructive feedback to learners and their parents. Teachers attend cluster meetings and conduct extra classes for a limited period of time after school when the extracurricular programme has ended to complete subject curriculums and to enrich subject content for improved learning.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Educate learners on the optimal use of instruction time and how to contribute to a sound culture of teaching and learning (par 2.3.1; par 2.4.1; par 2.4.2; par 4.4.4.1).

Educate learners as a group during assemblies on the value of instruction time and the direct effect it has on their academic performance and future. Mentor learners to take responsibility for their own work and not be dependent on other learners or teachers. Address learner tardiness and learner absence from school strictly. Ensure that class rotations are quick and efficient with disciplinary interventions for tardy learners.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Educate parents on the optimal use of instruction time and on how to contribute to a sound culture of teaching and learning (par 4.4.4.3; par 4.4.5.2)

Parents who are informed about the value of instruction time and how instruction time affects learner performance buy into a sound culture of teaching and learning. Educate parents not to collect their children early from school or visit their children or their children's teachers during school hours. Educate parents on their responsibility to provide supervision with the completion of their children's homework and on ensuring that their children complete their school work-related responsibilities after school.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Be alert to external factors hindering learner performance and intervene when required (par 4.4.3).

Having a formal school-based support team that provides necessary emotional and physical support to learners in need. Keep all incidents documented and intervene where necessary with the available resources. Know when to refer problems for professional help or appoint a professional counsellor.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Identify timewasters (par 2.6; par 4.4.5.2).

Rely on staff to assist in the identification of timewasters that are impeding available instruction time. Teachers' alertness to timewasters involves being strict on punctuality for lessons. Follow up on continual learner absences with appointments with parents to alert parents to their responsibility as primary educators of their children. Teachers encourage learners constantly to arrive promptly for their next lesson. Teachers ensure that they are prepared for each lesson; they are always punctual and they adhere to dedicated school attendance.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Develop intervention strategies and approaches to counter timewasters to ensure the optimal use of available instruction time (par 2.8; par 4.4.5.3).

Within a context of shared instructional leadership, consider the opinion of staff with regard to strategies and approaches to counter identified timewasters. Encourage the planning and preparation of lessons in advance to have work available in the absence of a teacher. Encourage learners to rotate classes promptly within the five-minute rotation bell times. Schedule personal appointments with teachers to take place only after school hours.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Make changes to the daily school schedule for the optimal use of available instruction time (par 2.7; par 4.4.6.3).

Instructional leaders analyse the effectiveness of their schools' daily schedules to make adjustments to provide more instruction time. This is achieved through changing the number of lessons per day to no more than six lessons to ensure a reasonable lesson length of between 45 and 50 minutes for optimal engagement in mastering demarcated content in the same lesson. Schedule one extended break in the middle of the school day instead of two breaks to counter attention and time loss with learners returning to class after break. Formally schedule an extra-class-programme for a limited period of time during the school year after school when the extracurricular programme has come to an end to increase instruction time to cover and reinforce curriculum content.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Data for this study, which focussed on the effective use of instruction time in secondary schools, were collected from secondary schools in the Northern Free State based on the schools' Grade 12 marks from 2012 to 2016.

The study was focused on secondary schools within a rural environment. Suggestions for further study entail a focus on timewasters and the optimal use of instruction time as applicable to schools in urban environments to determine similarities and

differences for a comprehensive understanding of the optimal use of instruction time within a secondary school context.

There are no private secondary schools in the Northern Free State area that qualified as a research site for this study. A further suggestion for continued research is a comparison of the optimal use of instruction time between private and public schools in order to determine similarities and differences with regard to the use of instruction time and the academic achievements of learners.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study on the optimal use of instruction time in secondary schools in the Northern Free State was conducted as a qualitative investigation using individual and focus group interviews to collect data. The aim of the study was not to generalise findings and, therefore, the research sample was limited to six schools and 21 participants. Apart from limitations with the research sample size, the following is regarded as limitations of the study:

- **The availability of participants.** At some of the selected schools, only two Heads of Department were available for a focus group interview. This possibly could have resulted in not collecting information-rich data optimally. With the interviews conducted, however, the researcher experienced saturation of information shared later in the data collecting process, which confirmed that the data that were collected were completely adequate to answer the research question satisfactorily.
- **Misunderstanding due to translations.** Four of the six selected schools were primarily Afrikaans schools. All of the interview questions and probes were prepared in English, resulting in the translation of questions to allow participants to communicate in their mother tongue and translating responses into English again. Data could possibly have been collected and reported on more clearly had all participants and the researcher shared the same mother tongue.

- **Contradicted responses from some participants.** The explanations and answers of some of the Heads of Department contradicted what the school principal of that school said. The researcher interpreted these contradictions as attempts to provide information that describes ideal scenarios at the school and not the real, current state of matters at the school. The researcher was not able to use contradictory data, which resulted in a waste of valuable time with the collecting of that data.
- **A limited research population.** The research population of this research study was public secondary schools in the Northern Free State. By having arranged for a bigger research population with extended criteria, the researcher would have had a larger number of schools to choose from for a more comprehensive understanding of the optimal use of instruction time at secondary schools in South Africa.

5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

A lack of sufficient instruction time is a challenge that all secondary schools face. The amount of focused instruction time spend on teaching and learning determines the academic performance of learners. It is in the interest of all secondary schools in South Africa to manage available instruction time optimally for improved academic performance.

The school principal as the executive instructional leader of the school plays a pivotal role in establishing a sound culture of teaching and learning that values instruction time. At a school with a sound culture of teaching and learning, role players contribute to the continuous improvement of the quality of teaching and learning. The optimal use of instruction time and the increasing of time available for teaching and learning requires an approach of constantly determining and eliminating unnecessary timewasters and applying constructive strategies to change the daily school schedule for optimal purposefulness contributing to improved learner performance.

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APPENDIX A



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

2017/05/17

Dear Mr van der Merwe,

REC Ref#: 2017/05/17/47016167/19/MC
Name: Mr MH van der Merwe
Student#: 47016167

**Decision: Ethics Approval from
2017/05/17 to 2020/05/17**

Researcher: Name: Mr MH van der Merwe
Telephone#: 0761058530
E-mail address: mhvandermerwe17@gmail.com

Supervisor: Name: Prof HM van der Merwe
Telephone#: 0834421503
E-mail address: vdmerhm@unisa.ac.za

Working title of research:

The effective use of instruction time at secondary schools: A case study in the Northern Free State

Qualification: M Ed in Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for 3 years.

The low risk application was reviewed by the College of Education Ethics Review Committee on 2017/05/17 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was approved on 2017/05/17.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is



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relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date 2020/05/17. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number 2017/05/17/47016167/19/MC should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

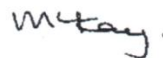


Signature

Chair of CEDU ERC: Dr M Claassens

E-mail: mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Tel: (012) 429 8750



Signature

Executive Dean: Prof VI McKay

E-mail: mckayvi@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-4979



URERC 25.04.17 - Decision template (V2) - Approve

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APPENDIX B

Enquiries: KK Motshumi
Ref: Research Permission: MH van der Merwe
Tel. 051 404 9283 / 9221 / 079 503 4943
Email: K.Motshumi@fseducation.gov.za



education
Department of
Education
FREE STATE PROVINCE

Mr MH van der Merwe
34 Ludik Street
Jordania
Bethlehem, 9701

076 105 8530

Dear Mr van der Merwe

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1. This letter serves as an acknowledgement of receipt of your request to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education.

Topic: The effective use of instruction time in secondary schools: A case study in the Northern Free State.

Schools involved: Afrikaans Hoerskool Kroonstad, Afrikaans Hoerskool Sasolburg, HTS Sasolburg, Iketseng and Phiritona in Fezile Dabi District.

Target Population: School principals and 3 Heads of Departments per school.

2. **Period of research:** From the date of signature of this letter until 30 September 2017. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year.
3. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension.
4. The approval is subject to the following conditions:
 - 4.1 The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
 - 4.2 A bound copy of the research document or a CD, should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 319, 3rd Floor, Old CNA Building, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein.
 - 4.3 You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
 - 4.4 The attached ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
5. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours sincerely


DR JEM SEKOLANYANE
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DATE: 22/06/2017

RESEARCH APPLICATION MH van der Merwe PERMISSION EDITED JUNE 2017

Strategic Planning, Policy & Research Directorate

Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9300 - Room 318, Old CNA Building, 3rd Floor, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein

Tel: (051) 404 9283 / 9221 Fax: (086) 6678 678

APPENDIX C
LETTER TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

PO Box 647
Bethlehem
9700

School Principal of XXXXXXXXXX

Re: Request to conduct interviews on the optimal use of instruction time.

I, Michael van der Merwe, am currently registered at the University of South Africa for a Master's degree in Education Management. The focus of my study is the effective use of instruction time at secondary schools in the Northern Free State. I hereby request permission to conduct research on this at your school.

Your school is one of six schools in the Northern Free State selected for the research. I am required to conduct an individual interview with you, as the school principal, as well as conducting a focus group interview with two Heads of Department.

The Free State Department of Education has granted me permission to continue with the research. Please find attached a letter of permission as well as the consent form to be read and signed by all participants.

For any additional information please contact me at 076 105 8530.

Thank you in advance.

Regards,

Michael van der Merwe

APPENDIX D
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND HEADS
OF DEPARTMENT

Date XXXXXXXXXXXX

Title: The effective use of instruction time at secondary schools: A case study in the Northern Free State.

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is Michael van der Merwe, and I am doing research under the supervision of Prof HM van der Merwe, a professor in the Department of Education Leadership and Management, towards an M Ed degree at the University of South Africa. I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled, '*The effective use of instruction time at secondary schools: A case study in the Northern Free State*'.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could assist school principals in the management of a school's daily schedule through the optimal use of instruction time. The study will allow for the compilation of relevant intervention strategies on how to decrease the loss of instruction time and how to use available instruction time more effectively.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited to participate because you are the school principal or a Head of Department. As the school principal or Head of Department, you are an instructional leader of the school and are regarded as being an information-rich participant to the study.

I obtained your contact details from the school reception after I sourced the school's contact details from the internet.

The school principal and two or three Heads of Department will participate in the study.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves an individual interview with the school principal and a focus group interview with the Heads of Department. Participants can expect semi-structured, open-ended questions. Some of the questions pertain to the following:

- How much value does the school add to the academic performance of learners?
- What do you understand regarding the roles and responsibilities of an instructional leader of a school?
- Do you spend sufficient time on instructional leadership related responsibilities at the school? Motivate your answer.
- What are possible time wasting activities during the course of the school day at your school? Mention as many as possible and explain the influence on instruction time of each activity.
- How does the school prevent timewasters from influencing instruction time?

The duration of the individual interview is expected not to exceed an hour and the duration of the focus group interview is expected not to exceed an hour and a half.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

There are no possible negative consequences for the participants of this study. The only inconvenience is the time that you will need to avail yourself for the interview.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber and members of the Research Ethics

Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. The anonymous data collected may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. Please keep in mind that it is sometimes impossible to make an absolute guarantee of confidentiality or anonymity, e.g. when focus groups are used as a data collection method.

A focus group is an in-depth interview which involves two or more participants that will collectively attempt to answer the questions and probes from the researcher. While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet *at the University of South Africa* for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. If necessary, information will be destroyed. Hard copies of transcribed data will be shredded and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Unfortunately, no payments or incentives will be made available for the participants of this study.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Education, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Michael van der Merwe on 076 105 8530 or email mhvandermerwe17@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for a three-month period after the completion of the study.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof HM van der Merwe on 083 442 1503 or email vdmerhm@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet. Please complete and sign the consent form should you be willing to participate in the study.

Herewith, I, _____, give my consent to willingly participate in the above mentioned research study.

Signature of participant

Date

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Questions for the school principal and Heads of Department

1. THE ROLE OF AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER

1.1 How much value does the school add to the academic performance of learners?

Probes:

- Does the academic performance of the learners take priority over other curricular activities? If 'yes', provide an example where academics take preference over other curricular activities. If 'no', motivate your answer.
- How does the school further promote a sound culture of teaching and learning?
- How do learners and staff share in the academic vision of the school?
- How do parents support the academic culture of the school?
- Are there different interventions in place to support low performing learners? Motivate.
- Is there an academic culture in the school where learners strive to perform to their utmost? If 'yes', what created this sound culture of teaching and learning? If 'no', how can a sound culture of teaching and learning develop?
- How is academic performance or improvement rewarded at the school?

1.2 What do you understand regarding the roles and responsibilities of an instructional leader of the school?

Probes:

- What are your responsibilities as an instructional leader of the school?

- What is the role that you play in the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning?
- How do you pursue the academic vision of the school?
- How do you promote a culture of effective teaching and learning at the school?
- Are learner performance or teacher lesson preparation monitored? If 'yes', how do you ensure that this done? If 'no', motivate why not?

1.3 Do you spend sufficient time on instructional leadership related responsibilities at the school? Motivate your answer.

Probes:

- Out of all the different leadership roles that you fulfil, does instructional leadership receive sufficient attention? If 'yes', elaborate on the instructional leadership role that you fulfil. If 'no', which other leadership role(s) do you spend most time on and why?
- What impact do administrative responsibilities have on your available time?

1.4 On which instructional leadership related responsibilities at the school to you spend most time, excluding teaching?

Probes:

- On which instructional related activities do you spend the most time in an attempt to improve the academic performance of learners?
- On which instructional related activities which could improve the academic performance of learners do you spend the least time?
- Which instructional related activities do you believe have the greatest influence on the academic performance of learners?

1.5 Who else do you regard as an instructional leader at the school? Why do you regard such people as instructional leaders of the school?

Probes:

- Which other staff members assist in instructional leadership related activities at the school?

- Which other staff members enhance the quality of teaching and learning at the school?
- Are there staff members at the school who are not in a management position but contribute as instructional leaders? Elaborate on the role that they fulfil.
- How can other staff members contribute to a sound culture of teaching and learning?

1.6 As an instructional leader, how do you ensure the optimal use of instruction time at the school?

Probes:

- How do you manage Heads of Department to improve the effective use of instruction time?
- Which processes are you involved in or oversee to ensure the optimal use of instruction time?

1.7 Do you believe that you are able to influence the academic performance of learners as an instructional leader at the school? Motivate your answer.

Probes:

- Can you influence the academic performance of learners through your role as instructional leader? If 'yes', how are you able to do so? If 'no', what other roles will influence the academic performance of learners?
- Do you collaborate with Heads of Department with regards to more effective teaching and learning? If 'yes' do these meetings influence the academics of learners? If 'no', do you believe that collaboration with staff members can be meaningful?

2. TIME WASTING ACTIVITIES

2.1 How does the school value instruction time?

Probes:

- How do learners value instruction time?
- How do staff members value instruction time?
- How do parents value instruction time?
- Is the loss of instruction time a frequent topic of discussion amongst staff members?

2.2 What are possible time wasting activities during the course of a school day? Mention as many as possible and explain the influence on instruction time of each activity.

Probes:

- Which daily activities waste instruction time?
- Which activities do not contribute to the academic performance of learners?
- Which activities are not part of the school culture that values instruction time?
- To what extent does teacher tardiness influence instruction time?
- To what extent does learner tardiness influence instruction time?
- To what extent does learner absence influence instruction time?
- To what extent does teacher absence influence instruction time?
- Which activities during a lessons waste instruction time?
- Which non-teaching related activities during the school day waste instructional time?
- What are the school arrangements regarding visitors during the school day?
- How do announcements interrupt the school day?
- How do un-prepared lessons waste instruction time?

2.3 How does the school prevent timewasters from influencing instruction time?

Probes:

- What are the practical interventions put in place to inhibit timewasters?
- How does the school manage learner tardiness?
- How does the school manage teacher tardiness?
- How does the school manage learner absence?
- How does the school manage teacher absence?
- How do teachers manage lessons better so as not to waste time on non-instructional activities?
- How does the use of cell 'phones influence the optimal use of instruction time?
- How does maintenance influence the optimal use of instruction time?

2.4 What effect does a loss in instruction time have on the academic performance of learners?

Probes:

- How does a loss in instruction time influence the top performing learners?
- How does a loss in instruction time influence the low performing learners?
- How do staff members adapt when there is a subject curriculum change or if there is a major loss in instruction time?

2.5 How do you/other teachers ensure the optimal use of instruction time?

Probes:

- How does lesson preparation influence teaching effectiveness?
- Do you plan a teaching schedule to ensure the completion of a subject's curriculum?
- How do disciplinary problems affect the loss of instruction time?

- Do you make use of the school's disciplinary system or do you manage disciplinary problems within your class?

3. THE DAILY SCHEDULE OF THE SCHOOL

3.1 Is there sufficient time in the year to cover the required subject curriculums?

Probes:

- Do teachers finish the school curriculum in time?
- Do staff members have time for revision before the start of examinations?
- Would staff members benefit from more instruction time?
- Does the school adhere to the number of instructional hours per week as prescribed by the Department of Education?

3.2 How are staff members and learners made aware of the daily schedule of the school?

Probes:

- How does the school inform staff members or learners of the expected schedule for each school day?
- How does the school inform the staff members and learners if there are temporary changes in the schedule on a specific day?
- Do learners know exactly when they are expected to enjoy a break or attend assembly or continue with classes?
- How do staff members know what to expect during the course of the week regarding activities that might hinder instruction time?

3.3 How does the school ensure that the daily schedule is followed accurately?

Probes:

- Are bell times accurate according to the daily schedule?

3.4 When studying the daily schedule, how can it be altered to improve the optimal use of instruction time?

Probes:

- Does school day start early enough?
- Are there scheduled extra classes after school? If 'yes', are these classes compulsory? If 'no', are there other opportunities for learners who do not attend these classes to do extra work?

Motivate.

- What in the daily schedule causes a loss in instruction time?
- Is class rotation a problem?
- Is break time too short, sufficient or too long?
- Would staff members prefer shorter or longer periods?
- Would staff members prefer longer or shorter breaks?
- Would staff members prefer one or two breaks?
- Are bell times adjusted if there is an unforeseen loss of instruction time?
- How does the school ensure that learners are thoroughly prepared for examinations?